



Team and community building activities

Note – *these exercises have been reprinted from various sources, including 201 Icebreakers, by Edie West*

Two Sides of the Room - Developed by staff at ROC-NH

Instructions:

Group leader asks members to divide up and stand on to opposing sides of the room. Group leader explains that he/she will make two statements and members move to the side of the room which describes them best.

If you are a person who is:

Quiet, reserved, thinker, go to the left side of the room

If you are a person who is

Out spoken, you say what is on your mind, go to the other side of the room.

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Group leader REPEATs procedure for each of the following:

Mechanically inclined

artistically inclined

Notice the people on your side of the room.

In the spotlight

behind the scenes

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Super organized, likes to plan

on the fly – seat of your pants

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Send a letter

Go knock on a person's door

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Petition at city hall – storm the
Governor's office

organize community garden

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Very comfortable with numbers, has a budget

Really rather not deal with math

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Just wants to flip on the light switch,
never wonders how it works

Wants to know the amps, and labels
the circuit breaker box

Notice the people on your side of the room.

Group leader holds a discussion using the following prompts:

- Relate the 'two sides' answers to roles in your ROC- you would not ask the person who doesn't like math to sit on the finance committee, but you would ask the gal who is an electrical apprentice to assess the meter boxes.
- Groups (community members) change depending on talents, personality, motivation, etc.
- Situation A needs for leadership may be different than situation B
- Different talents – match the task to the talent vs. matching a person to a task
- Apply these attributes/differences to recruiting volunteers
- **Different leaders for different situations**

Note – if there are members who have difficulty with mobility – they can self select to sit on a chair ½ way between the 'two sides of the room' and raise a card which says "I am on THIS side of the room" rather than walk back and forth.

Floating/Helium Stick - Developed by staff at ROC-NH

Props: long straight stick (similar to a tent pole).

Instructions:

1. Place the stick flat on the floor (or over a row of chairs for those with physical limitations).
2. Have the members stand on either side of the stick with an even number on each side.
3. Instruct the group to lift the stick above their heads.
4. People may only use the top pads of their pointer and middle fingers, they may not “grip” the stick, and everyone must have all four of their fingers on the stick at all times.
5. If you are working with a larger group it makes it interesting to create two teams and turn it into a contest.
6. Debrief:
 - ✓ Did a leader emerge?
 - ✓ Who made the rules?
 - ✓ Was “good” communication used?
 - ✓ Was there conflict?
 - ✓ Did the group utilize outside resources?
 - ✓ Did anyone give up? If so, did the rest of the group say anything about it?
 - ✓ It may be easier to accomplish tasks on your own, but ultimately it is wiser to work with others. Relationship building is crucial to community building. Increased participation increases ownership of results.

Gossip a.k.a Telephone – Developed by NeighborWorks America

The group sits in a circle and the game begins with the group leader whispering a secret to the person to the left of them. The secret is passed as each person shares it with the person to their left. If the listener does not hear the whole secret, the teller can NOT repeat it; the listener has to continue to share what they heard as best they can. When the secret is finally back to the group leader, it is shared out loud. The group leader then reads the original, and a comparison is made. Repeat if time allows.

Group leader encourages members to discuss this in relation to community-wide communications.

Look on the Bright Side - Reprinted from *201 Icebreakers*, by *Edie West*

Instructions:

1. The point of this exercise is to look at a negative situation and articulate possible positive outcomes. Work through 2 examples first, then use their own statements.

Examples:

- a. It's raining, damp, and miserable today!
- b. My car broke down on the side of the highway and I am without a cell phone.

2. Write "I hate it when" on the top of a flip chart, get 4-5 responses. Then ask the group to identify possible positive outcomes of those 4-5 situations.

Balloon Herding – Developed by staff at ROC-NH

Props: 20-60 balloons

Instructions:

1. Separate group into smaller groups of 5 people.
2. Give each group 20 balloons.
3. Each group has to get as many balloons from one side of the room to the other without using their hands and without allowing the balloons to touch the floor.
4. If a balloon touches the floor or hands are used, that balloon must go back to the starting line. The groups will have 2 minutes to complete.
5. If the group moves all the balloons to the finish line, they may begin moving them back to the starting line.

Group leader asks members to compare and contrast the different methods of accomplishing the task.

- Did a leader emerge?
- Did everyone participate?
- How much did people really want to win?
- What does this exercise tell us about working in teams?

