Energizers

Energizers are a great way to encourage interaction and involvement with a group. They are structured, yet fun activities that built team spirit. They can be used at the beginning of the day to bring everyone together or they can be used in the middle of the day to recharge the group. As always, these can be modified to the group you are working with.

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High five

Process: Each member of the group takes a turn holding up a hand and listing off information for each finger. For example, the thumb is name; the first finger is hometown, etc. Other types of information shared can include major/degree, residence hall, random fact, pet name, or anything the group decides on.

Additional Information: This activity is best for groups of 25 or less, but would work for larger groups as well.

Back to Back

Process: In pairs, have people stand back to back. One person is "it" and not paired up. They call out various body-part combinations (finger to toe, head to knee) and the pairs must follow those instructions. When the person says "back to back" they need to quickly try to find a new partner. Someone will be left without a partner and is now the new "it". When they pair up again, have them introduce themselves.

Partner Tag

Process: Have the group divide into groups of two; these two people are now partners and will ink arms. One pair starts as "it" and separates, with one of the two chasing the other. Everyone else in pairs walks around. The person being chased is "safe" when he/she links arms with anyone, but the person on the other side of the newly linked person is now solo and can be tagged by the chaser. The new person being chased becomes safe by linking with anyone he/she chooses, forcing someone else to unlink and become chased.

Rock, Paper, Scissors

Process: The group will pair off as they were playing rock, paper, scissors, and each group will face each other. The loser will share a fun fact about themselves, and the pair will continue to participate in two more games (best of three). Whoever wins best out of three will proceed to find another winner from a different partnership. The person who did not win would sit down and wait until the group has a champion.

Additional Information: This activity works best with an even group.

Coin Toss

Process: Divide the group into two lines and have the two lines sit, facing each other. Hold hands. The two front people watch a coin being tossed. If it's heads, they should squeeze and

pass the squeeze down the line. When it gets to the end the last person raises their hand. It's a race. Tails does nothing.

Stand Up

Process: Have the group divide into pairs. Have the two people sit on the ground with their feet pushed up next to each other firmly. The two people grab hands in the middle and pull each other up so that both are standing. When everyone has accomplished this successfully, have two groups combine and do the activity again, this time with four people. Keep combining groups until everyone who is participating is in one group and does it together.

Group Juggling

Materials: Balls

Process: Have the group stand in a circle. The leader tosses a ball to the person across the circle saying his/her name, and then puts their hands behind their back. This repeats until everyone has been tossed the ball and had their name said. The leader throws the ball again to the same person, and everyone must throw the ball in the same pattern as the first time, calling out the person's name and throwing the ball. Each time the ball returns to the leader, another ball is added in. Continue adding balls and see how far the group can get without messing up.

Additional Information: This can be tried nonverbally if everyone knows each other's names and other objects in addition to balls may be used.

Balloons

Materials: Balloons

Process: Have everyone in the group lie on their backs, heads facing inward in a circle. By using only their feet and hands, they attempt to keep several balloons afloat for as long as possible. Play again, this time using only feet. You can also try the following variations: sit in a circle holding hands, and hit the balloon without using hands; stand up, hold hands, and hit without using hands, etc.

Space Creations

Process: Have groups create a variety of shapes using their imaginations and their bodies. Ideas include round, oblong, flat, open, jagged, closed, parallels, intersections, semicircles, and diamonds. Larger groups might try stars, rectangles, cubes hearts, octagons and so forth. Another variation is to create emotions instead of shapes such as fear or intelligence.

Rain

Process: Everyone sits in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. No talking is allowed. The leader starts the exercise and each person joins in when they hear the sound the person to their left is making. The leader starts the exercise by rubbing their palms together. This continues in the circle until it comes back to the leader who then changes the sound (snap fingers, clap hands, slaps thighs, stomps feet, and then in reverse order). The sensations created are akin to the sounds of a rain storm.

1, 2, 3 Shoot!

Process: Everyone needs a partner for this activity. With your partner call out 1, 2, 3 Shoot! On the word shoot, both players hold out any number on their fingers (one hand, 1 to 5). The object of the game is to be the first to add up the numbers on both you and your partner's hand. This can be varied for subtract one from another as well. Gradually add in the other hand and combine people to make larger teams that try to add the numbers. See how many people can work together.

Sing Down

Process: Teams are created of anywhere from three to ten in a group. The leader will give the groups a word (i.e. love, boy, dance, etc.), and give the teams one minute to think of as many songs as they can with that word in it. Once the minute has passed, one team begins by singing a part of a song with that word in it. All team members must sing it. The other team then responds. NO SONGS MAY BE REPEATED. The group that has the most songs wins. The process then can be repeated with another word.

Story Time

Process: The facilitator starts a story by saying a sentence. It then goes in a circle, each person adding a sentence onto the story after repeating each sentence that's already been added.

Jump Up and Run

Process: Again, this starts out with everyone seated in a circle and one person in the middle. The person in the middle hollers out a description (i.e. everyone with glasses or everyone who forgot their underwear this morning). Everyone who fits the description has to jump up, run around, and leap into a chair vacated by someone else. The lone person who didn't find an empty chair goes to the middle and thinks of a new description.

Move It or Lose It

Process: Start with a circle of chairs, one fewer chairs than participants, and one person standing in the middle. This is a variation on the classic musical chairs. The person in the middle calls out "shift left, shift right, shift right" in random order, and everyone seated has to quickly scoot over to the chair on their right or left. As soon as the person in the middle spies a gap, he scoots himself onto that chair. The person who's been out-scooted then goes to the middle, and the exercise continues.

Strike the Funny Bone

Process: Have the group sit in a circle and tell them this exercise is to be done without laughing. Person #1 says, "Ha". The person to his right repeats his "Ha" and adds a new "Ha". Person #3 repeats the two "Ha's" and adds another. The exercise ends when all participants, trying not to laugh, have repeated the "Ha's".

Kindergarten Relived

Materials: Finger-paint, large poster-board

Process: Have a group finger-painting session. Stretch a large piece of poster paper over the table(s) and allow each person to have their own little section of the paper. Instruct them to paint their feelings towards the group, a particular project they foresee the group accomplishing, or what they feel the group represents. Hang the completed project in your office or cubicle.

The Farmer and the Bunny

Process: Have one person teach the group how to do the bunny hop. Instruct the group to do the bunny hop while they all sing "The Farmer in the Dell". This gets people laughing and increases energy for the meeting as well.

Multifunctional Spoons

Materials: Spoons, yarn

Process: Break the group into two teams. Each team has a spoon attached to a long piece of yarn. The first person on each team "threads" the spoon down his shirt and out the bottom of his pants. The next person in line threads the spoon up her pants and out the top of her shirt.

Catch Me if You Can

Process: Participants should be paired up. All players divide into two lines (facing inward) shoulder to shoulder, with partners facing each other. Participants should be given approximately 30 seconds to look at their partners, taking in all details about the individual. The leader then instructs the two lines to turn and face away from the center. One or both lines have 15-20 seconds to change something about their appearance. The change must be discrete, but visible to the partner. The players again turn in to face each other and have 30 seconds to discover the physical changes that have been made. Players get to interact with each other and have fun.

Confusion

Process: This is a great high energy game that helps participants begin to feel more comfortable in the new group. Give each participant a sheet with various tasks and ask them to complete it when you say, "GO!" The first person to complete the sheet wins. Here is an example:

> Get a male to do five push-ups and sign here.
>
> Stand on one foot with your arms outstretched for 20 seconds.
>
> Have someone time you and sign here.
>
> Leap frog over someone five times
>
> Get someone to whisper the pledge of allegiance and sign here.
>
> Play "Ring around the Rosy" with two other people and have them sign here.
>
> Get a female to recite a nursery rhyme.
>
> Shake hands with someone you do not know and continue holding hands while debating the merits of your favorite ice cream flavor.
>
> Have someone teach you a dance step (even if they make it up).

Stinger

Process: Have the group form a circle and close their eyes. The facilitator circles the group and selects a "stinger" by squeezing an individual's shoulder. The group then opens their eyes and spends time introducing themselves to others while shaking hands (and trying to spot the stinger). The stinger tries to eliminate everyone without getting caught. The stinger strikes by injecting poison with their index finger, while shaking hands. A person stung may not die until

at least 5 seconds after they are stung. The more dramatic the death the better. When someone thinks they have discovered who the stinger is, they may announce that they know. If they get a "second" from someone else in the group within 10 seconds, the two of them may make an accusation. If the person does not get a second, he/she must wait to challenge again, after another person dies. If another person does step forward to second the challenge, both point to who they think it is on a count to three. If they do not point to the same person, or they both point to the wrong person, they both are automatically dead. If they select the correct person, the stinger is dead and the game is over.

Mumble Jumble

Materials: Pictures cut up into puzzle pieces

Process: Before the activity begins, the leader will cut up a few pictures into puzzle pieces. Each group member will grab a piece of a puzzle from a bag. The group members will keep their puzzle piece to themselves until the leader says, "GO!" At this point, the group members will try to locate the other members of the group with the pieces to form the appropriate pictures. Whichever group does it first, wins. This is a good activity for breaking into retreat/activity groups.

Bang! Bang!

Process: One person starts by saying (in a rather dramatic way and in any version of these words he/she would like), "Bang, click, click, click, bang, click, bang! Who's dead?" The person can pretend to shoot an individual or individuals if they would like. The group must figure out who is dead. The person who is dead is the FIRST person who speaks following the "dramatic" act. It may take the group some time to figure out how the game works… be patient and encouraging. The game continues until everyone figures it out.

Birthday Line

Process: Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to form a single straight line, according to birthdays. For example, persons with January birthdays will be at the beginning of the line, earliest January dates first followed in order by later dates. The line progresses by months and days with December birthdays at the end. Persons with the same birthday share the same place in line. You must communicate nonverbally with no lip-reading or spelling in the dirt allowed. When the line is completed, each person will shout out his/her birthday, beginning in January.

Blindfold Line-Up

Process: Ask the group to close their eyes and keep them closed for the remainder of the game (if they feel comfortable). You may also use blindfolds. In the bumpers position for protection, ask the group to mill around without talking. After 10-15 seconds, ask them to stop and put their hands down. Assign each person a number by tapping them on the shoulder and saying the number at the same time. Then tell them to line themselves up by number without talking or opening their eyes.

Body English

Process: Split the group into two groups. Each group must plan and spell out the words by using their bodies only (no hand signals or signs). The other group must figure out what they are spelling. Start with single words and move onto phrases as the groups get better at spelling in this fashion.

Chicken, Chicken

Process: One person starts by saying (dramatically), "(Clear throat) Chicken, chicken, who's got the chicken?" Players must guess who has "got" the chicken. In order to have the chicken, the player must say a phrase STARTING WITH A CLEAR OF THE THROAT. This can be done rather inconspicuously at fist and much more dramatic as people begin to get frustrated from not being able to figure out the game. Players can make whatever motions they want and say the phrase however they want.

Count Off

Process: Ask the group to count to 20 without pre-planning who is going to say each number. There is a catch… there are no verbalizations or signals allowed, and the group must do it without any two people saying the number simultaneously. See how fast they can do it.

Height Line

Process: Ask the participants to close their eyes (if they feel comfortable). Without opening their eyes, the group is asked to arrange themselves by height in a straight. They may choose to arrange by feeling height or some say their heights out loud. The only restriction is that they may not open their eyes.

How're Ya Doin? Just Fine Thanks

Process: Ask the group to close their eyes and get into a circle (shoulder to shoulder). Have them count off and remember their numbers. Ask each person to shake hands with the person

to their immediate left and ask them, “How’re ya doin’?” The person should answer, “Just fine, thanks.” Continue to do this between each pair three or four times. Then ask the group (eyes still closed) to mill around din the “bumpers up” position until they are thoroughly scrambled. Ask them to stop and return to their sequential order with their eyes still closed. The only thing they can say is, “How’re ya doin’? Just fine, thanks”.

Pass the Pebble

Process: All players stand about while one goes around pretending to drop a pebble into the hands of each of the players, who hold their palms together. When the pebble has been completely around the group and has been left in one player’s hands, the one who has it slyly slips away and runs for the goal previously determined by the group, and all try to catch him/her. The one who succeeds passes the pebble in the next round. If no one succeeds in catching the player, that player passes the pebble in the next round. Ask players to spread out so no one knows who holds the pebble.

Scissors

Process: Split the group into small groups of any number you would like and have each group sit in a circle. The first person starts by turning to the person to his/her right and saying, “I am passing these scissors to you…” And they fill in either “crossed” or “open”. The phrase they choose to end with depends on whether their legs are crossed or open. They can do whatever they want with the scissors in terms of how they pass them to the person next to them. The person who is receiving the scissors must say, “I am receiving these scissors…” (The ending should reflect how the person before had his/her legs positioned – NOT how they passed the scissors). The game continues around the circle. Play until everyone has figured out the game. NOTE: Participants can easily get frustrated if they cannot figure out the game… be patient and encouraging.

Shoe Sort

Materials: Blindfolds

Process: Creatively divide the groups into two smaller groups. Then tell a space story while handing out the blindfolds. They then need to describe that everyone has been left speechless from some sort of space disaster. The leader continues to tell the group that they need to be fitted for space boots before they can go on their voyage to return to earth. The group must line up in order of shoe size from smallest to largest – without the use of sight or sound!

Warp Speed

Process: The group starts in a circle formation. Warp Speed has the same beginning as Group Juggling. Instead of adding objects, the group must comprise a way of moving the object in the same name pattern under time constraints. Let the group come up with the time constraint. The object is to move the ball (or whatever) through EVERYONE'S hands as fast as possible. One person cannot hold onto the object at all times.

Concentration

Process: The rhythm for the game is slap, slap (on the knees), snap, snap (one on each hand, right then left). The group sits in a circle. One person is designated as the leader, and he/she sets the pace. The object of the game is to get to the leader's spot. The leader begins the rhythm, and on one set of snaps says his/her name on the first snap, and someone else's on the second (the names MUST always be said on the two snaps). The person whose name is said must respond on the next set of slaps and snaps by saying his/her own name and then someone else's. If the player does it correctly, the game continues. If the player does not do it quickly enough, that player must move to the seat to the right of the leader, and the rest of the group moves up a seat (toward the leader's spot) to fill in the seats. The game continues until the group has learned names well. The pace can be as fast as desired.

Whomp 'Em

Materials: Styrofoam tube or rolled up tube of newsprint

Process: One person is the "Whomp 'Em Master". That individual stands in the middle of circle with the "Whomp "Em Sword". You could use a Styrofoam tube or a rolled up tube of newsprint. The rest of the group sits in a circle with legs out toward center of circle, leaving enough room for the person standing in the middle. The object of the game is for the "Whomp 'Em Master" to get stuck in the middle of the circle. Someone starts off the round by saying the name of a member of the group. The Master must "Whomp" (hit) the legs of that member, before that member says the name of another member. The game goes on until the Master hits an individual before that individual can say another person's name (cannot repeat name that has been said in round already). When the Master succeeds in "Whomping" an individual, that individual becomes the new Master. Quite crazy but loads of fun! Best if played following another name game, so individuals have a sense of who each person is.

Artist, Clay, Model

Process: Participants divide into groups of three (an artist, a model, and some clay). One person is the model and "strikes" a pose. The artist must close his/her eyes or is blindfolded

and turns the person who is clay into the replica of the model. Note: You can have the person blindfolded BEFORE the model strikes a pose to make it more difficult.

Chain Backrub

Process: Participants must form a circle, shoulder-to-shoulder, and turn to their right. Next, players take an additional step toward the center of the circle, so they are relatively close. The leader then tells the participants that, because they have worked so hard at all of the other activities, this activity would be used as a thank you. The leader instructs them to reach forward and give the person in front of them a well-deserved backrub. After two to four minutes, the leader tells the players to turn to their left and "repay" that person with a final backrub.

Chubby Bunny

Process: This activity starts by one group member volunteering to stuff his/her mouth full of marshmallows. The leader will give the volunteer one marshmallow at a time. Without swallowing, the volunteer will place the marshmallows in their mouth one by one. Between each marshmallow placed in the mouth, the person must successfully say, "Chubby bunny!"

Egg/Balloon Toss

Materials: Eggs or balloons

Process: Split the group into two teams. Have all of the members of each team spread out so they are about ten feet away, but still in a straight line. The first person in each line tosses an egg or balloon to the second, who will catch it and pass it on. If the balloon or egg breaks, the group must begin again with a new balloon or egg.

Dead Fish

Process: The group starts by getting into a comfortable position that can be sustained for a long period of time. Once everybody has established a position, the leader will count down from ten to zero. At zero, the game will begin. Once the game has begun, nobody is allowed to talk or move, with the exception of the eyes and chest for breathing. If the leader and only the leader should notice anyone talk or move, they will verbally remove the person from the game. Anyone removed from playing may persuade others to talk or move, but they may not physically touch those players still in the game. The winner is the last person remaining, and they become the leader of the next game. NOTE: This is a great game for those low key early mornings, but a group activity is still necessary.

Ha!

Process: Have the group lie on the ground or floor. Position each to lay their head on another's stomach. One of the end people will start. The one that starts says one "HA!" The person that has his/her head on their stomach goes next and says, "HA HA!" With each person, add one "HA!" If there are 30 people, then the last person should say 30 "HA's!"

Hagoo

Process: Separate the group into two even groups and have them stand in two separate lines (shoulder to shoulder) facing the opposite group. The two groups should be about three or four feet apart. The players at the opposite ends of each line are opponents. They will step out of the lines, so they are facing each other and looking down the middle of the two rows. They will both say, "Hagoo" and start to walk down the row toward each other. They must not break eye contact and the object is to get to the opposite end of the line without laughing or smiling. When the players pass each other, they must continue to maintain eye contact. If a person does break eye contact, laughs, or smiles, they then must join the end of the line of the opposing team. The teams can do or say any silly things to make the opposing player crack up, but they must be careful not to make their own player lose concentration. The teams may NOT touch another player. This process will continue until everyone has had a turn. The team with the most players at the conclusion of the game wins.

Human Twister

Materials: Two different colored slips of paper for each person in the group (3in. X 5in.), tape

Process: As people arrive, give them each two different colored cards, and two strips of masking tape. Ask players to tape the card to two places on their bodies. When everyone has taped on the cards, challenge the group to line, up, matching (and touching) their cards to someone else's of the same colors.

I Love You, Baby

Process: The group forms and sits in a circle. The "it" player approaches one person and says, "I love you, baby." That person must respond by saying, "I love you, baby but I just can't smile". If that player smiles while speaking these words, he/she becomes "it". If the player does not smile, "it" must approach a new person until "it" makes someone smile. "It" is not allowed to touch a player as he/she speaks, but anything else is fair play. This is a funny one, but make sure participants feel comfortable with one another first.

Killer

Process: Everybody will start close together with their eyes closed and thumbs up. The leader will squeeze the thumb of one group member. That group member is the "killer". With eyes still closed, the killer will squeeze the thumb of another group member twice. That group member becomes the sheriff. Once the two positions have been established, everyone can open their eyes. Nobody should know who the sheriff and the killer are. Everyone begins walking around, making eye contact with everyone else. The object of the game is for the killer to kill everyone without getting caught. The killer does his/her killing by winking one eye at someone. If the killer winks, that participant that was winked at is dead. Anyone killed by the killer must count to twenty and only the sheriff may guess who the killer is. The sheriff can also be killed by the killer if the sheriff's guess is correct, he/she wins. If they guess wrong, they immediately die, and the killer wins.

M&M Soup

Materials: Spoons, M&Ms

Process: Have the group form a circle standing up. After everyone is given a plastic spoon, the first player is given four or five M&Ms to hold in his/her spoon. Everyone must put the spoon into their mouths holding the handle between their teeth with the scoop of the spoon facing up the group must pass the M&Ms from the first person to the last, without using their hands. The object is to get ALL of the M&Ms to the end, without dropping any.