

Karen's Favorite Ice-Breakers

The One Most Creative Thing You Have in Common

Form small groups (Maximum of 4 in each group is best)

Give a 5 minute time-limit

Ask the small groups to identify at least 1 thing they all have in common (not the obvious, like working for the same company or living in the same state).

Examples: All read magazines from back to front, all have been to Nigeria, all are the firstborn, etc.

Ask each group to share in turn

Debrief

How did you go about doing this? What worked/didn't work?

The "Endarkenment" Icebreaker

Do a 3 minute *Brainstorm* by asking the whole group or several sub-groups, "What do we already know about how NOT to _____?" (Fill in the blank with something relevant to the meeting outcomes)

Consider having them flip-chart their answers

Options might include:

- Build the team
- Solve problems
- Resolve conflict
- Create a plan
- Make a collaborative decision
- Run a meeting
- Make commitments
- Develop action/implementation plans

And for groups that will be working together over time and who have members from non-profit or community

organizations where relationship is almost more important than the task ...

The Something From Home Icebreaker

Preparation

Ask team members to bring something from home that represents them in some way. Let them know everyone will be sharing their objects and their meaning with the other team members at the beginning of the next meeting. Each person will have a several minutes, so with 10 people the activity should take about 30 minutes.

Directions

Start the activity by going first – be sure to give more than one or two sentences, so as to set the stage for how open you expect them to be.

For example: “I’ve had this tennis racket since I was 12. I used to go to the park and hit balls against the backstop when I was frustrated or angry. Later I played pick-up games and learned how to be a gracious winner and an in-control-loser. It really represents the side of my personality that is both competitive and emotionally controlled.