

# **Ice Breakers and Group Activities for Transitions @ MSU**

*Courtesy of Iowa State University, Lehigh University, Teampedia.net, & ResidentAssistant.com*

## **Fear in a Hat**

Fear in a Hat (Also known as Worries in a Hat) is a teambuilding exercise that promotes unity and group cohesion. Individuals write their personal fears (anonymously) on sheets of paper which is then collected in a hat and read aloud. Each person tries to describe his or her understanding of the person's fear. This leads to good discussion centered around the fears.

This teambuilding exercise requires writing utensils, sheets of paper, and a hat. Allow about three minutes of writing time, plus one to two minutes per participant. The recommended group size is at least eight, but no larger than 20. It's possible to run this activity with a large group, if the group is divided into smaller groups and if there are enough facilitators. This activity is for people ages 14 and up.

### ***Setup for Fear in a Hat***

Distribute a sheet of paper and a writing utensil to each person. Instruct them to anonymously write a fear or worry that they have about their 1<sup>st</sup> semester at MSU. Tell them to be as specific and as honest as possible, but not in such a way that they could be easily identified. After everyone is done writing a fear/worry (including the group leaders), collect each sheet into a large hat.

### ***Running the Fear in a Hat Teambuilding Activity***

Shuffle the sheets and pass out one per person. Take turns reading one fear aloud, and each reader should attempt to explain what the person who wrote the fear means. Do not allow any sort of comments on what the reader said. Simply listen and go on to the next reader.

After all fears have been read and elaborated, discuss as a whole group what some of the common fears were. This can easily lead to a discussion about what to expect your first semester and how recourses and activities around campus can assist with easing some of these fears. This activity also helps build trust and unity, as people come to realize that everyone has similar fears.

## **Never Have I Ever**

*Never Have I Ever* is an icebreaker game that helps people get to know each other better. Everyone sits in a circle and take turns saying something they have never done. Each player starts with ten fingers showing. Each time says something that you've done, you drop a finger. The goal is to be the last player remaining.

This *get-to-know-you* game can be played indoors or outdoors. The recommended number of people for this game is ten to fifteen, but all group sizes can play by dividing into appropriate sized groups. Recommended age is 8 and up. No special materials are required.

### ***Instructions for Never Have I Ever***

Instruct everyone to sit in a circle. If you have an extremely large group, tell people to form smaller circles of about ten to fifteen people. To start each round, each player holds out all ten fingers and places them on the floor. Go around the circle and one at a time, each person announces something that they have never done, beginning the sentence with the phrase "Never have I ever..." For example, a person could say, "Never have I ever been to Europe." For each statement that is said, all the other players drop a finger if they have done that statement. So, if three other people have been to Europe before, those three people must put down a finger, leaving them with nine fingers. The goal is to stay in the game the longest (to be the last person with fingers remaining). To win, it's a good strategy to say statements that most people have done, but you haven't.

Playing this game, along with the benefit of getting to know each others' experiences better, can be very humorous (e.g. saying silly statements such as, "Never have I ever skipped a class in school" or "Never have I ever eaten lutefisk.") Have fun!

### **Pass the Paperclip, Please**

**Short Description:** Divide the group into two equally numbered teams. Arrange the teams so they face one another. Team members then join hands. This leaves two "free" hands on each team (the two people at the ends of each line). Give a single paperclip to one of the "end" people on each team. The task is to pass the paperclip from one end to the other without unclasping the hands of the team. The Paperclip cannot be passed or kicked along the ground. If the paperclip drops, it must be picked up while all hands remain clasped.

### **Hands Down**

**Short Description:** (Do not introduce activity by naming it.) Arrange the items on ground in some order supposedly to indicate a number. Group members try to guess which number is indicated.

**Solution:** Both hands of leader are discretely placed on the ground near the objects or on their lap (if kneeling) with the number of fingers extended being the actual indicator of the number the leader is trying to get the group to guess.

**Variations:** Can have those who catch on, set up the objects.

**Equipment:** Five pencils or carabineers or twigs

**Processing:** Frustration-tolerance, perspective, observation,

Looking beyond the obvious when presented with a problem - don't develop tunnel vision.

Generally we see what we want to see or what has been shown to us – how we learn to think outside the box?

### **ANIMAL/BARNYARD SOUNDS**

Think of five or six different animals that make distinct animal sounds such as: cat, dog, snake, monkey, cow, pig, etc. Give each participant a piece of paper with one of the animal names and have them find each other by making that animal sound. For example, all the dogs would find each other by barking. You can use blindfolds to make it a little more interesting.

### **Fact or Fiction**

Fact or Fiction is a classic get-to-know-you icebreaker. Players tell two facts and one fiction thing about themselves. The object of the game is to determine which statement is the false one. Interesting variations of this game are provided below.

This game is a *get-to-know-you icebreaker*. Recommended group size is: small, medium, or large. Works best with 6-10 people. Any indoor setting will work. No special materials are needed, although pencil and paper is optional. .

#### ***Instructions for Two Truths and a Lie***

Ask all players to arrange themselves in a circle. Instruct each player to think of three statements about themselves. Two must be true statements, and one must be false. For each person, he or she shares the three statements (in any order) to the group. The goal of the icebreaker game is to determine which statement is false. The group votes on which one they feel is a lie, and at the end of each round, the person reveals which one was the lie.

#### ***Variations to Try***

"Two Truths and a Dream Wish." – An interesting variation of Two Truths and a Lie is "Two Truths and a Dream Wish." Instead of telling a lie, a person says a wish. That is, something that is not true — yet something that the person wishes to be true. For example, someone that has never been to Europe might say: "I often travel to Europe for vacation." This interesting spin on the icebreaker can often lead to unexpected, fascinating results, as people often share touching wishes about themselves.

### **LOLLIPOP**

Pass out dum-dum lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the participant has to say something about themselves to the group.

### **STRING GAME**

Participants select pre-cut lengths of string from the facilitator. Each member holds the string between his/her thumb and forefinger. For each “wrap” of the string around the finger, participants must share one thing about themselves.

### **HUMAN KNOT**

Participants should stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Each person should put his/her right hand into the middle of the circle and join hands with someone across the circle (and not directly to his/her right or left). Each person then places their left hand into the circle and joins hands with a different person, and not the person directly to their left or right.

When the participants have their hands tangled, inform them they need to be untangled without ever breaking grips within the group. Note that there are three possible solutions: a circle, two interlocking circles, or two circles with a knot in it. Participants should not make sudden or large movements since they’re all connected.

*Processing questions:*

Was this challenging? Why? Or why not?

How did the group approach this task? What was done effectively? What could have been done more effectively?

What role did you personally take in this exercise?

For those who were facing out, and couldn’t see what was happening, how did you feel?

How could each of you have increased participation in this activity?

How can you relate your freshman experience to this activity?

### **GOSSIP**

The group sits in a circle and Gossip begins with the facilitator sharing a secret with the person next in the circle. The secret is passed as each person shares it with the next person. In telling the secret, it may not be repeated twice to the same person (so the listener must get it all the first time.) When the secret is finally back to the facilitator, it is shared out loud. The facilitator then reads the original and a comparison is made.

### **PAT ON THE BACK**

Have everyone draw an outline of their hand on a sheet of paper, then tape it to their back. Have group members mingle and write things on everyone’s back that tells them something positive.

### **STAND-UPS**

Start off by breaking the participants into pairs. Have each participant sit back-to-back, link arms at the elbow, and stand up. Then have two pairs join together, introduce themselves, then sit down in a small circle and face outward so that all backs are in the center. Then connect arms at the elbow and try to stand up as a group. Then they grab another group so that there are 8 people, and do the same thing.

### **M&Ms**

Everyone loves M&Ms, so when the group is meeting for the first time, bring in a large bag of M&Ms to introduce the group to each other. Have the group sit in a circle. Pass the bag around and ask people to help themselves to the M&Ms, but not to eat them yet. When the bag has been around the full circle, each person must tell one thing about themselves for every M&M they took. A variation is to assign a number of things a

person must tell about themselves to every color. Of course, don't tell people about this aspect of the game until they have already grabbed a handful.

### **BLANKET NAME GAME**

Have your group divide itself into two groups. Tell them to sit on the floor facing each other. Hold up a blanket between the groups so that each team cannot see the other. A member of each team is quietly selected to move up to the blanket. On the count of 3, drop the blanket so that each of the selected members is facing each other. Then race to see who can remember the others name first. Whoever loses goes to the other team.

### **HOG CALL**

Break the group into two pairs. Each pair must choose two things: a machine and an animal. They then have to decide who is which. The pairs then divide up on opposite sides of the room. Everyone must close their eyes, and by only making the noise of their character would make, they must find their partner. When they find their partner, they can open their eyes and wait until everyone is done. When conducting an activity with eyes closed, have the group raise their hands in front of their chests as bumper guards, and have at least one person (leader) acting as a spotter.

### **SOLEMN AND SILENT**

The facilitator explains that this exercise takes self-control. Members pair back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eye, and try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person is left. If you get a pair at the end who are both keeping a straight face, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.

### **BIRTHDAY LINE**

Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to perform a single straight line according to birthdays. No lip reading or spelling in the dirt is allowed. When the line is completed, each person will shout out his or her birthday, beginning in January.

### **FAMOUS PAIRS**

In this exercise, group members will be asked to identify the names of famous pairs or persons. The leader tapes on the back of group members a nametag with the name of a famous pair or persons written on it (Fred and Wilma Flintstone, Hillary and Bill Clinton, peanut butter and jelly). The group member is not to see what is taped on his/her back. The leader then tells group members that their task is to find out who they are. Members are to mill around the room and ask questions that can be answered with only "yes" or "no." If the member receives a "yes" answer, he or she can continue to ask questions until a "no" reply is received. At that point, the member must move on to another participant. Questions may include, "Am I alive?," "Am I a movie star?," etc.

### **COUNT TO TEN**

Have the group come together into one group, side by side with each other. When everyone is together, tell them the game is to count to ten as a group. But the catch is that each person is only allowed to say one number. If two people speak at the same time you must start over. The same person cannot start the exercise twice in a row. To make it even more challenging, have the group members close their eyes.

### **MRS. MUMBLES**

The goal of this game is to never show your teeth. Participants sit in a close circle. All participants must hide their teeth at all times. If, at any time, a participant shows his/her teeth, that person is out of the circle. The first person to start looks at his/her neighbor and asks: "Is Mrs. Mumbles home?" Then the neighbor

responds: “I don’t know! Let me ask my neighbor.” He/she then asks the person seated next to him/her: “Is Mrs. Mumbles home?” and so on. If someone shows his/her teeth and thus leaves the circle, that person’s job is then to do all he/she can, except for touching people, to get others to show their teeth.

### **PEOPLE TO PEOPLE OR ANATOMY SHUFFLE**

The group is divided into two circles of equal size. One circle stands outside the other so that the members of the inner circle face out to the members of the outer circle, creating pairs. During the game, the circles walk in opposite directions until the leader yells out two body parts (for example, head to knee or foot to elbow) at which time the partners must find each other touch those parts. The last ones to touch are eliminated from the game and the others return to the circles. The game continues until one pair wins.

### **VALUES DISCUSSION**

Grab two other people who are wearing the same color as you. Sit down in a circle a little away from other groups. Instruct them they will be talking about some issues and you will give them new topics every few minutes.

- 1) Talk about the most important thing you did this summer/semester/year.
- 2) What are the easiest and hardest emotions for you to express and why?
- 3) What is something that few people know about you?
- 4) What do you value in a friend?
- 5) What do you want to be doing in five years?
- 6) What is one goal you have for next year?
- 7) What do you want to learn to do better?
- 8) What is a motto you try to live by?
- 9) What are five words a friend would use to describe you?
- 10) What is the greatest challenge you are facing?
- 11) What do you like most about yourself?
- 12) What do you value in a loving relationship?
- 13) What do you value most in life?

### **POSITIVE BOMBARDMENT (OR FEEDBACK)**

One member is selected to be the recipient of positive feedback from the rest of the group. Once everyone has had a chance to give that member the gift of feedback, another person is chosen and the process is repeated. This can be done in writing with a positive comment to each member and putting them all in an envelope with the person’s name on it. This can be adapted so that the member first gives some constructive criticism and then some positive feedback.

### **PROGRESSIVE STORY**

For this exercise, a group of people must know one another and feel comfortable discussing personal issues. Everyone must be able to hear the other members of the group, but people don’t have to see one another. So, the group doesn’t have to be sitting in a circle. A facilitator begins the story by setting the initial scene and mood:

i.e.: “on my way to class the other day . . . .”

“A good friend called last night and . . . .”

“I had them most amazing weekend! I . . . .”

In no special order, members of the group then take over the story. They add another element to the plot. The information that is added can be light-hearted, serious, true, fabricated, etc. The main point is to make sure everyone adds something. The progression of the story indicates where the group members are emotionally and is representative of what is high on their lists of priorities/concerns/thoughts. i.e.: If everyone returns to work-related examples, then work may need some discussion and processing. Maybe there are issues that need extra attention. If the story is hilarious, we can assume the group is feeling confident and secure – or at the other extreme, they may be on the verge of insanity.

### **LIGHTHOUSE-ROWBOAT**

Have one person volunteer to be the lighthouse. He/she should stand at one end of the room on a chair facing the group. Have another person volunteer to be the rowboat. He/she should stand at the opposite end of the room with their back facing the group. The rest of the group should then position themselves around the room standing, sitting, and or lying on the ground in between the lighthouse and rowboat. These are the “rocks.” The rowboat cannot talk and must close his/her eyes. It is the lighthouse’s responsibility to give the rowboat instructions on how and where to move so that the rowboat can make it safely to the lighthouse without tripping or falling. The lighthouse can give any kind of instructions they want, as long as they do not leave the lighthouse stand.

### **ELECTRIC FENCE**

Prior to beginning this exercise, the facilitator needs to tie a rope approximately 5-10 feet long between two poles or trees. The rope should be about shoulder height and should be tied very tightly. All members of the team should be standing on one side of the rope. The facilitator then tells the group that they are chased by a group of crazed maniac and their only means of escape is to climb over the electric fence. Each member of the team must climb the fence without touching the rope. If any member of the team does touch the rope during this exercise, the entire team must return to the starting point and begin the climb all over again.

### **LINE-UP**

Short Description: Line-up is a classic get-to-know-you icebreaker. Players try to line-up in order according to shoe size, birthday, age, or other categories designated by the facilitator. The object of the game is to line up your group using different communication styles. There are many variations to this game. Some groups must line up without speaking, while others must close their eyes and find other ways to line-up. Once the group agrees that they are in the correct line-up the facilitator will ask each member to indicate the correct date, age, etc. If the group is correct, you move on to the next activity, if the group did not line up correctly, give them another category to try.

Ideas for categories:

- Alphabetical by Last name
- Alphabetical by first name
- Birthdate (Month, day)
- Age (year and month)
- Shoe size
- Number in graduating class
- Birth place from West Coast to East Coast

### **Yurt Circle**

Short Description: Players stand in a circle, facing in, holding hands, and shoulder-to-shoulder. Starting with one player, have the group count off by two’s (1,2,1,2,1,2 etc.). Be sure that no 1’s or 2’s are standing next to one another. Each player places his/her feet closely together. On the count of three the 1’s lean forward and the 2’s back. The group is supported by the “cantilever” action of the opposing forces between the 1’s and 2’s. Players need to keep their arms and legs straight. Don’t let go of hands. At first, only lean a little and increase the angle of the lean with each “creation” of the yurt circle. On the next count of three or rutabagas (carrots, potatoes, rutabagas) the 1’s lean backward and the 2’s lean forward. Go slowly and mirror your two neighbors’ movements. This will allow for maximum support offered to each person. It is really a cool feeling to create and change the yurt circle.

Processing: Trust, caring for each other, laughing at yourself.

### **PEOPLE PLATFORM (15 minutes)**

Illustrates: Teamwork and the importance of listening to everyone's contributions.

Participants may only touch the ground on the outside of the outer square and the inside of the inner square as they complete the task. The area in between the squares is off limits. The entire group must participate. They may not stand or sit on each other's shoulders; everyone must be touching the ground. The objective is to have everyone on the inner square without touching outside of it. After the group creatively attempts this exercise, they must hold everyone off the ground for 10 seconds (the time it takes to sing "row, row, row your boat. . .") An inner 2' x 2' and outer 6' x 6' tape outline of a square should be arranged prior to the exercise. Facilitators should take great care in ensuring participant safety throughout this exercise.

Variations: If the group is slow to actively attempt the exercise, after a few minutes, announce a time limit by which they must finish. If a participant touches the area between the squares, tell them that they may no longer use that body part. If one member dominates the group, take away his/her ability to speak.

Processing Questions:

What were some of the challenges in completing this activity?

How did you overcome them?

What similarities do you find between this activity and your house operations?

What did this activity demonstrate to you about leadership?

### **SHERPA WALK (10 minutes)**

Illustrates: Industrial vs. Postindustrial leadership, empowerment (good transition activity from one location to another).

Assemble the group in a single line and then blindfold them. Each person holds onto the shoulder of the person in front of him/her. The leader is not blindfolded. He/she will lead the group from one place to another. The facilitator may choose to limit talking or allow talking only for safety commands. The leader works to navigate the surroundings and keep his/her group safe. At different points, the leader may change; the former leader will now join the rest of the group and be led.

Processing Questions:

How did it feel being led by only one person?

How trusting were you of the person in front of you? Of the leader?

Did anyone ever question where they were going or demand an explanation?

Why did so many individuals simply follow the person in front of them?

How many times in our organizations, do we just follow our leaders (i.e., President, RA/CA, Peer Mentor) because we are supposed to?

Why do they continue to "go with the flow" and not question what we are doing?

What happens if we trust certain leaders and they lead us astray?

How do we encourage more team-based leadership?

## **BLIND SQUARE**

Short Description: Each person is asked to close their eyes. You then ask if they feel like they would like a blindfold to wear, knowing that they may need to have their eyes closed for 10 minutes or more. Get them to raise their hands. Hand out the blindfolds. From this point on no one will be permitted to open their eyes or lift the blindfold. When everyone is ready, you tell them that you are going to bring them a rope. They must grab it with both hands and not let go. Their task is that as a group and without letting go of the rope they must make a perfect square using the whole rope to make the four sides.

When the group feels like they are finished they will lower it to the ground. You will instruct them when to remove the blindfolds. Tell the group that they must all agree that the rope is in a perfect square before putting it to the ground.

Equipment: 1 Blindfold per person and 1 Large Rope

Safety Concerns: Clear the immediate area of any obstacles that people may fall into. Monitor for people who may be psychologically uncomfortable with the close proximity of people and the blindfolds.

Processing: Communication Listening Inclusion/Exclusion Process Management Leadership

## **Boat**

Tell everyone that you are going on a boat, and only certain items are allowed on the boat. Each person should take turns asking if they can bring certain things onto the boat, and you tell them if they can bring those things on the boat or not. Only allow people to bring items on the boat that start with the same letter as their first name (ex. Jessica can bring Jelly Beans and Catherine can bring a Cat, but Jessica cannot bring an oar or a suitcase). Keep going until everyone gets the trick. Variations include: people can only bring on items that have a double letter in their name (they can bring boots, books, balls, etc), or they can only bring items that have the same number of syllables as their names (Jessica has three syllables, so she can bring gasoline and tennis balls, and Bob has one syllable so he can bring books, bats, and gas).

## **Assumptions**

Have everyone in the group pair up, and without speaking write down the answers to questions about the other person:

1. What kind of car does your partner drive?
2. What is your partner's major?
3. What is your partner's best friend like?
4. If your partner could do something completely out of character, what would it be?

After each person takes a few minutes to write down the answers to these questions, the partners should discuss and reveal the right answers to the questions to see how close they came. As a large group, discuss making assumptions.



### **Brownie Recipe**

This activity helps emphasize how information can be changed through the course of communication or lack of communication.

The entire group starts outside the room expect for a facilitator and the first person. Do not let the group know what you will be reading to them. The facilitator reads the Brownie Recipe to the person word for word. The person then must verbally repeat the recipe the next person who comes into the room from the hallway. (It is somewhat like the telephone game). As participants finish passing off the recipe, give them a sheet to record items that added, deleted, or distorted.

Equipment: *Copies of the Brownie Recipe for participants to read after they are finished*

#### GRANDMA'S BROWNIE RECIPE

Preheat oven to 350 degrees (F)

Melt 8 squares of chocolate and 3 sticks of butter in a pan

Beat 6 eggs until frothy and add 3 cups of sugar

Add 3 teaspoons of vanilla and the melted butter and chocolate

Beat in 1 ½ cups of flour and 1 ½ teaspoons of baking powder

Stir in 1 package of chocolate chips and 2 cups of chopped walnuts

Pour into greased pan and bake 40 minutes

Check with toothpick – if it comes out clean it's done

Cool on a rack

Cut into squares

Sprinkle with powdered sugar

ADDITIONS	DELETIONS	DISTORTIONS
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Processing: Communication Listening Inclusion/Exclusion Process Management Leadership

### **Monkey, Bear, Elephant**

This game starts with a tight circle and one person in the middle. Their job is to stump the person they are calling to act as an animal so they can take their place in the circle.

The center person points at someone in the circle and yells out of the three animals for them to act out. They count 1001, 1002, 1003 and if someone on the team goofs they enter the center and the pointer takes their place in the circle.

Demonstrate the animal actions before the pointing begins. Monkey: Person pointed to makes the “eek Yeeek” sound while scratching their armpits monkey style. The people to the left and right of the monkey must immediately begin picking nits off the monkey’s head or shoulder and gesture at eating them. Bear: Person pointed to shows claws out in front and growls. People on either side of the bear must cower back with horrified looks on their faces. Elephant: Person pointed to stretches out one arm with their head in their armpit while flopping the wrist to emulate a trunk and making the elephant sound. People to the left and right of the elephant immediately use their arms to form the elephant’s ears on either side.

### **THREE'S A CROWD**

Short Description The group is divided equally into three smaller groups. Each of these groups is then instructed to huddle together and come up with a very simple action and simple sound that goes with it. The action and sound should be done together and only last a second or two and everyone must be able to do it. Each group must decide on one action and sound for their whole sub group.

Once the three groups have selected their action and sound instruct them to get in a big circle that still keeps the groups separate. As in the following diagram;

Choose one group and instruct them that when you say, "One, two, three's a crowd!", that you would like them, and only them to show the other groups their action and sound. Do this once. Then get them to do it again. Now get everyone to do this group's action and sound. Repeat this process for the second group. (Get them to say it twice and everyone to say it once. Repeat this process for the third group. (Get them to say it twice and everyone to say it once. Say, "Now that you have learned everyone's action and sound, the real challenge starts." Instruct them that when you say, "One, two, three's a crowd!", the next time you want everyone to do the first action/sound, then everyone to do the second action/sound, and then everyone to do the third action/sound in sequence. (Everyone does all three in the order you choose.) Do this enough times so that they get it down clearly and so that each action and sound is distinct. (Usually 2 or 3).

Now instruct the groups to get back in their huddle. They must now select one of the three action/sounds, they could select their own or another group's. They have 40 seconds to select one and they cannot tell the other groups, it is a secret. When they have selected tell them to return to the large circle.

The next thing you are going to do is tell them that the action they just selected is what we call the fourth action. They already know the first three (we practiced the sequence 1, 2, 3.) Instruct them that the next time you say, "One, two, three's a crowd!" you want all groups to do the first, then the second, then the third action/sound and then the fourth action/sound which is the one their group just selected.

Now you tell them the goal: "The object is, without checking in with the other groups, that our fourth action and sound is the same." If they are successful great, if they are not instruct them to return to their small group and reselect the fourth action/sound, it can be the same or different. Continue until they are successful or until it is hopeless. If they are successful in getting the fourth, then allow them to choose a fifth or even a sixth, but no more than that.

Processing: Cooperation and Competition, Conflict and Compromise

### **Rock, Paper Scissors Showdown**

Everyone pairs up with a partner initially and plays RPS (1, 2, 3, Shoot!). The person that doesn't win must become a cheerleader for the winner. The winners then take on a new opponent. Eventually it will come down to 2 people with everyone else cheering on one side or the other.

### **Eye Tag**

Everyone forms a larger circle shoulder to shoulder. There is one facilitator who says "eyes up" and "eyes down". Everyone begins with their heads down. At "eyes up" everyone looks up and stares directly at another individual's eyes. If they are looking back at you and you make eye contact, then both individuals are out and the circle becomes smaller. Then "eyes down" everyone looks down at the ground. You must look at another person and not up in the sky or outside of the group – that is cheating! The last person remaining is the champion Eye Tagger!

## **Farkel/Tarkel**

Short Description:

This activity helps to illustrate the challenges of clear communication within groups.

The group sits in a tight circle with a facilitator also in the circle, starting with both objects. The facilitator says, "I have two objects in my hand. In the right is a Farkel and my left is a Tarkel. Both objects must travel around the circle through each person and end up back to me. The Farkel must travel counter clockwise and the Tarkel travels clockwise. When I pass the Farkel to my right I will tell (insert name of person next to you) that "This is a Farkel." Now before I can give it to him/her they must ask again for clarification. They say "A what?" I repeat "It's a Farkel" and of course (name) says "THANK YOU!" Now you continue to pass it by following this script except when the person asks for clarification by saying "A what?", that question must travel back to the facilitator for the answer (since you all have amnesia and I am the only one with a good memory of course!). This will continue for both objects until they arrive back to me!"

The facilitator then proceeds to start the Farkel around the group counter clockwise and the Tarkel clockwise.

Equipment: *Two objects (balls, cones, etc) that will be the "Farkel" and "Tarkel"*

Processing:

- What was difficult about this activity?
- How could you have simplified the process?
- What does this say about communication?
- Who was in the easiest location and who was in the most difficult location?
- Who does the facilitator symbolize in your organization?

How might this activity be similar to your 1<sup>st</sup> year at college?

In class,

in your social life

What skills/offices can students utilize to help clarify some of these questions/issues

## **Crossed or Uncrossed**

Short Description: Task is to discover the obvious. Have group sit in a circle (in chairs preferably). Leader begins by passing the two sticks and saying "I'm passing these to you crossed" or "uncrossed" as they hand them to the person seated next to them. Each time the sticks are passed the passee will state "I am passing these to you crossed" or "uncrossed" and the leader will either confirm or disagree with the statement. Solution has nothing to do with how you pass the sticks and whether or not you cross them, it is whether the person who passes the sticks has their legs crossed or uncrossed.

Equipment: Two pens or pencils

Processing: Frustration tolerance; observation skills.

How does it feel to not know the solution?

How do you deal with frustration of not being able to figure out the solution?

How does this compare to parents or employers who aren't consistent, rules seem to always change or are difficult to discern?

### **The Bus (Which Side of the Road Are You On?)**

Short Description: Group stands between parallel lines. At each stop have all of them get off the bus to the left or right according to their preference. Have different interests, activities, or events at each stop. As they choose a side, they discover a commonality with those who join them.

Loud or Quiet

Running or Walking

Save Money or Spend Money

Canoeing or Driving a Jet Ski

Vanilla Ice Cream or Chocolate Ice Cream

Pepsi or Coke?

Sleep in or Get up Early?

PC or MAC?

Left or right?

See or do?

Liberal or conservative?

Plan or build?

Formal or informal?

Movies or TV?

Scary movies or romantic comedies?

Breakfast or dinner?

Today or tomorrow?

Spring or fall?

Summer or winter?

Fly or drive?

Facebook or Twitter?

Sweet or Savory

Beautiful or smart?

Taller or shorter?

Fruit or Vegetables?

Outside or Inside?

Basketball or Football?

Marathon or Sprint?

Lecture or discussion?

Watch the movie or read the book?

Messy or clean?

Introverted or extroverted?

Wendy's or McDonalds?

Talk on the phone or text message?

Beatles or Elvis?

Detail oriented or big picture?

Pepperoni or cheese pizza?

City or country?

Dog or cat?

Beach or pool?

Pop or Country?

Processing: Did everyone choose the same?

Is there are right or wrong answer?

How would this relate to your situation?

How does this activity make you look at a situation differently?

### **Giants, Wizards, and Elves (Bears, Fish, Mosquitoes)**

Short Description: A game with three characters –

Giants. Stand on your tippy toes, raise your arms like a giant, and make a menacing growling noise: “Rarr!”

Wizards. Crouch slightly, as wizards are a bit shorter. Wave your fingers as though you’re casting a magical spell, and make a magical noise: “Shaazaam!”

Elves. Crouch down very low, cup your hands around your ears, and make a high pitched elf noise: “Eeeee!”

The group is divided into two teams and each team for each round chooses one of the three characters that they want to be (also have them choose a back-up each time to minimize time spent in a huddle choosing another character). Explain to the group that none of the three characters has more power than any other, but this is the status they live by – the giants can overpower the elves, elves are too quick for the wizards, and the wizards outsmart the giants. Have them practice acting out each of the three roles and make sure they are clear as to the order of status in their kingdom. Once both teams have chosen a character (& a back-up) they come to the centerline. Here they begin a four-part chant started by the facilitator, in which everyone says, “Giants, elves, wizards” (and they act each of these out as they say them). On the fourth count each team shouts the name of the character they have chosen, while taking the appropriate stance. If you end with giants and elves, the giants begin running after the elves, who flee for their goal line (safety zone). Or you may have wizards chasing giants or elves chasing wizards. Any player that gets tagged before reaching the safety of their goal line becomes part of the other team. If both teams make the same character, restart the four-part chant and have them use their back-up. Play as many rounds as you desire or until one team is engulfed by the other.

Variations: Play 3-D by forming three teams and having a triangle at the center instead of having a centerline – this version great for high school age groups. Can change the characters to “bears”, “fish” and “mosquitoes”. Have the participants create the stances for each character. This second version is great for use in teaching students about food chains. Can also have the group come up with three characters that form a food chain.

Equipment: Three pieces of rope (1 for centerline and the 2 others for end lines).

Safety Issues & Spotting: Watch for collisions when folks run the wrong way. Define “tagging” vs. “pushing, shoving or tackling”.

Processing:

What is your perception of a game where the playing field is leveled by having all roles being equal?

What was your mindset as you approached the centerline each time?

Offensive or defensive in thinking?

What helped you to focus on what you needed to think about each round?

How are these tactics helpful in our daily lives?