

ICEBREAKERS, GROUPS AND MENTAL HEALTH! OH, MY!

**Brought to you by:
The Nicasa Prevention Team**



ICE BREAKERS MAKE THINGS HAPPEN

An icebreaker is a special-purpose ship that is designed to navigate through dangerous ice covered waters.

This is how the name “ice breaking” began to be applied to clearing the course for learning in a setting that could feel “dangerously” uncomfortable as members don’t know each other or know what to expect.



ICE BREAKERS

can be used whether
kids/people know
each other or not.



How did you
get your
name?



BENEFITS OF ICEBREAKERS

1. They are fun. Laughter is a positive thing!
2. Kids get involved quickly and more easily.
3. Barriers are broken.
4. People get to know each other or know more about each other.
5. Help clear out the cobwebs!
6. Icebreakers create interaction that is nonthreatening.
7. They can instill confidence.
8. Opening up communication is key to success.
9. Creativity will improve.
10. New ideas will be generated.



AND EVEN MORE BENEFITS.....

- Icebreakers create a rich learning atmosphere.
- They prepare kids to learn.
- Icebreakers improve facilitation skills. They are good for you, too!
- They can make kids feel special.
- Motivating through activities can create more learning success down the road.
- Many learning styles can be used.
- Isolative participants can engage more easily.
- Icebreakers make commonalities more evident.
- Out of the box thinking is a life tool.





And now
it's time for
M&Ms



Icebreakers are great
because they can be used
in all settings and across
the lifespan.



THE ONE WORD *Challenge*

CreatingaGreatDay.com



DO'S & DON'TS





FOR CREATING THE RIGHT KIND OF ICEBREAKER

- Plan ahead, make a good choice and practice.
- Have supplies ready.
- Allow sufficient time for completion and processing.
- Process everything.
- Relax! and have fun.
- Reduce complex instructions.
- Monitor what happens.
- Don't repeat it.
- Have a back up plan.
- If it doesn't work, don't blame.....process it!



AND NOW THE **Don'ts** FOR ICEBREAKERS

- ...forget to gauge who is in your group
- assume they must occur only at the beginning of group/activity
- force participation.... ask yourself; what does participation look like?
- provide painful feedback....this may be setting a tone for group interest.
- occur too many times without variety....
- no direct relevance
- lack of preparation or going in “cold”





AND FINALLY:

Carefully crafted,
icebreakers can be very
powerful. Create a fun
atmosphere for learning
and help people retain
information.





ESSENTIALS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND FACILITATING GROUPS

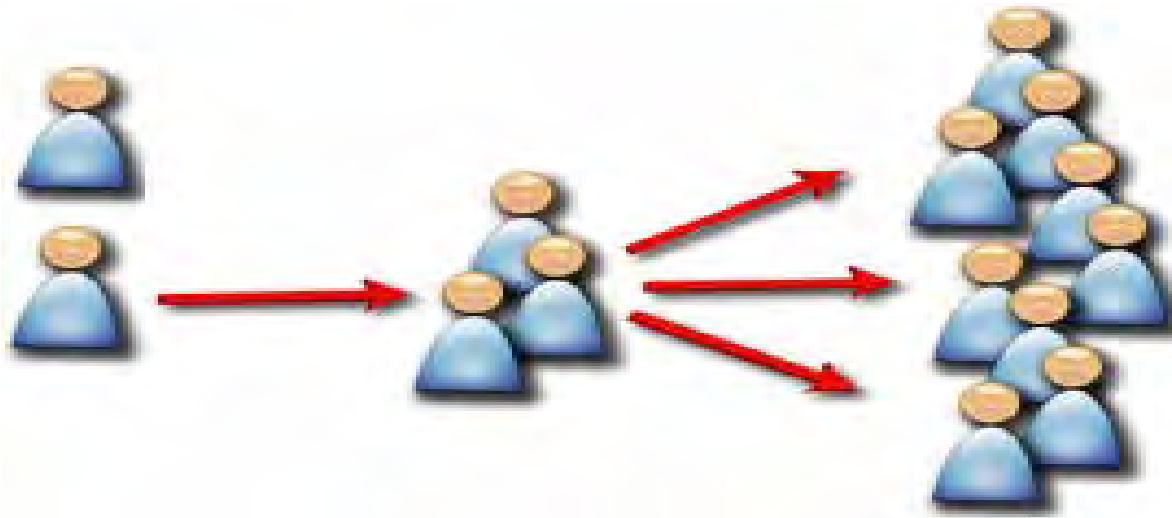
- Observe with eyes that honor people.
- Know that poor behavior might be a math problem: $\text{Frustrations} > \text{Skills}$
- Priorities, attitudes and goals can become more evident because of the group experience.



ATTRIBUTES OF FACILITATORS

- Open
- Honest
- Fair
- Consistent
- Focused
- Active listeners
- Accessible
- Flexible
- Assertive
- Enthusiastic
- Adaptive
- Proactive
- Responsive
- Resilient





Group Size?



What is your

?



“
If you don't understand
yourself, you don't
understand anybody
else.”

~ Nikki Giovanni ~

”
OkDay.com

The more you
understand yourself the
better you are able to
understand what
motivates others.



Go in cold or plan?





- How?
- When?





are the expected rules of conduct that are important for the group's full participation and success.

- Four walls behavior
- Control what you can




promote participation



A FEW KEY DON'TS....JUST DON'T DO IT!

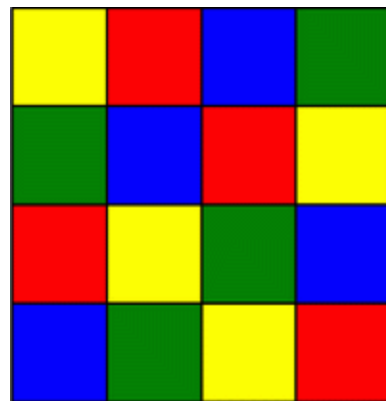
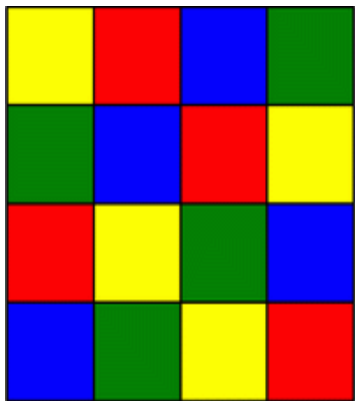
- Be afraid of disagreement
- Allow one person to dominate
- Let one point of view override the group
- Assume because of background, environment or culture
- Be the font of all wisdom
- Disclose your past as an adolescent



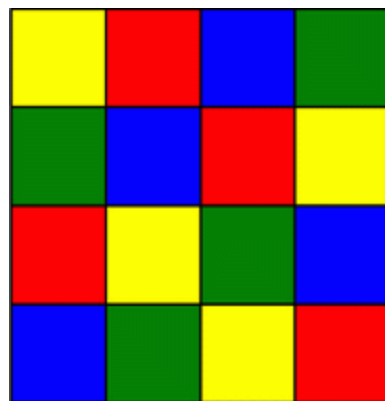
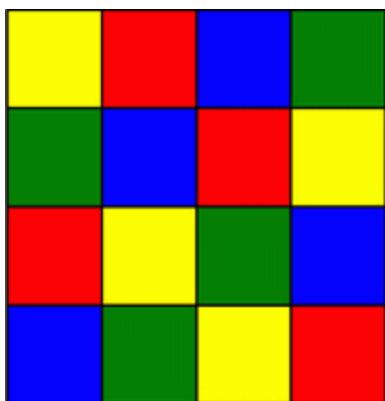


Food or no food?
Rewards or no rewards?





Leadership Squares





ACTIVE LISTENING AND BRAINSTORMING

○ Active Listening

- Expresses understanding
- States the problem

○ Brainstorming

- Generates new ideas
- Uses knowledge of the group

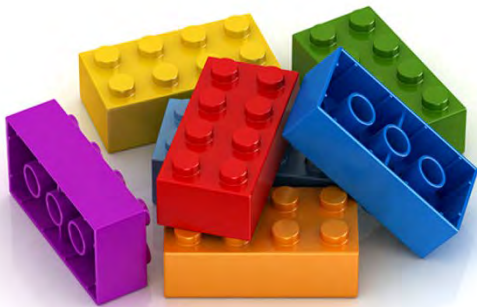


THE MOST THERAPEUTIC MATERIALS ON THE PLANET (NO KIDDING):

- Legos

- The Box o'Crap

- Uno



GROUP BEHAVIOR GOALS

- Be fully present
- Be responsible for your own needs
- Listen and respond
- Take risks
- Lean into discomfort
- Accept conflict as a catalyst
- Be open-minded
- Honor confidentiality
- Accept diversity
- Decide what participation looks like





Behavior, Grades and Relationships



COMMON SITUATIONS WHERE YOU MAY NEED TO INTERVENE

- Side bars
- On time
- Never ending
discussions
- Internal conflict



Process

PURPOSE
PROCESS

EVERYTHING!



RESILIENCY MODEL

- Problem solving
- Sense of future
- Sense of humor
- Social competence
- Mentor



- Model what you want to see.
- Control your own biases
- Predict what you want to see.



Ensure self care and co-facilitator care.



closing your
group with a
feedback *whip*



You will have an impact on every person you come in contact with either by design or by default.

Which do you choose?

L.Tobin





Depression

Abuse of
alcohol/
drugs

Physical
complaints

Self-injury/
Cutting

Threats to
run away

Frequent
outbursts

Intense fear
of becoming
obese

Aggression

Nightmares

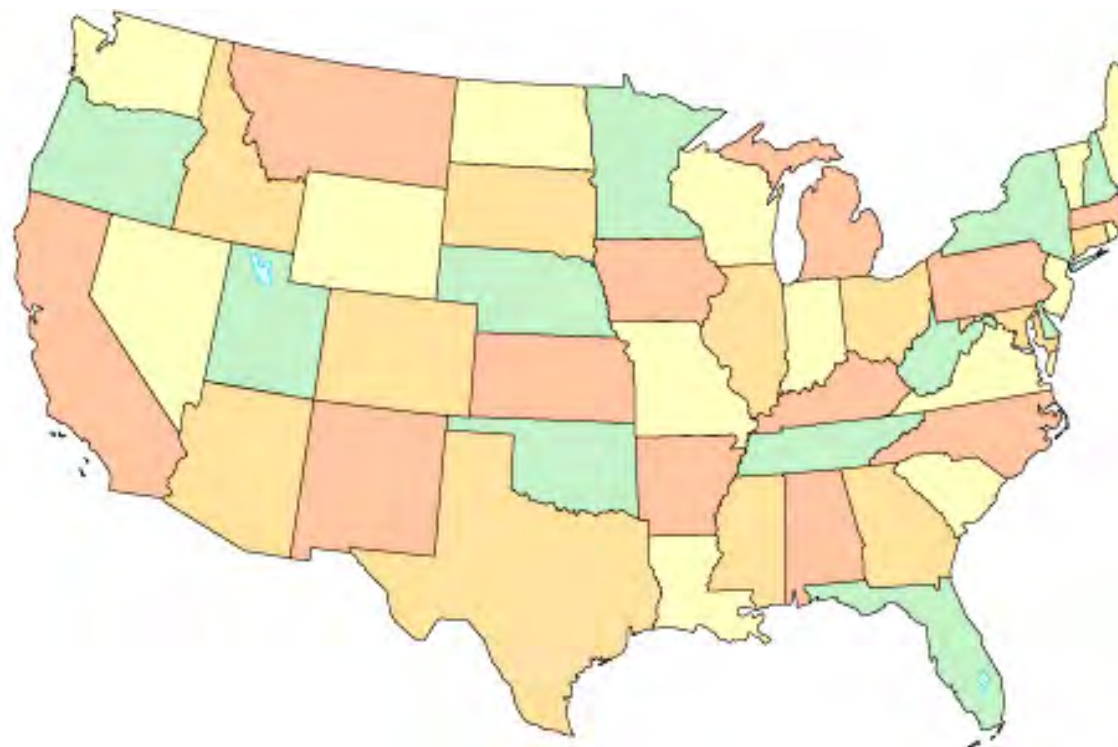
Inability to
cope

Marked change
in school
performance

Threat to
harm self
or others

Sexual
acting out

Unusual
behavior



**At least 1 in 5
children and
adolescents has a
mental health
disorder**

**1 in 10 has a
serious disorder**

**90% of people who
develop a mental
disorder show
warning signs
during their teen
years**



For the most part children can develop the same mental health conditions as adults, but their symptoms may be different.



SOME KIDS DON'T GET HELP BECAUSE.....

- Many mental illnesses may look like typical adolescent behavior
- Stigma is alive and living in your neighborhood
- Families don't know about available treatment
- Kids may not have the vocabulary to tell us that something is wrong
- Families may be afraid of medication



SOME ILLNESSES THAT AFFECT KIDS ARE:

- Anxiety disorders
- ADD/ADHD
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Mood disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Substance Use Disorders
- Behavioral Disorders

- Non Suicidal Self-injury





CLINICAL DEPRESSION

- Deep despair, sadness, crying
- 1 in 13 teens experience symptoms

BIPOLAR DISORDER

- Extreme changes from happy to sad
- 1 in 100 teens have it
- Hard to diagnose, looks like depression



ANXIETY DISORDERS

- Overwhelming fear with no cause
- Risk is greater with family history

EATING DISORDERS

- Unrealistic thoughts about weight
- 1 in 20 teens suffer; 90% females
- Untreated it can result in hospitalization or death



SCHIZOPHRENIA

- Strange thoughts, unusual behaviors
- High functioning, then big decline
- Distrustful, no longer social, voices

ADHD

- Problems paying attention
- Can seriously impact ability to learn



OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER

- Stubborn, argumentative, hostile
- Major distraction in the classroom

CONDUCT DISORDER

- Verbal/physical aggression
- Junior sociopaths
- End up in detention centers

WATCH OUT FOR:

- Sadness, withdrawal, moodiness
- Intensity in feelings or anxiety
- Anger or risk taking
- Talking about suicide, subtle talk as well
- Difficulty concentrating
- Weight loss
- Changes in appearance
- Bruising, cuts.... Changes in how clothing is worn
- Change in peers
- Physical symptoms



A SHAMELESS PLUG FOR:



- Assess for risk of suicide or harm (What is your approach?)
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies





KEY UNDERSTANDINGS:

- What is your role and what does your role allow?
- What do you know about your community for professional help and self-help?
- Are you prepared for a mental health issue?
- Do you have an agency protocol?



WHAT IS

Normal

?

- Change
- Weirdness
- Inexperience
- Self-consciousness
- Risk Taking





Steps YOU Can Take



NOTICE

TALK

ACT



“Adolescence is like
having only enough
light to see the step
directly in front of you.”

— Sarah Addison Allen, *The Girl Who Chased the Moon*



Breakfast Club End Speech



REFERENCES

- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Surviving Your Adolescence
- A Tribe Apart
- Maslow
- The Brains of You Nicasa Prevention After School Team

