



Warm Up: Make the Letter H

1. Ask participants to form groups of 3 or 4 people.
2. Give them the rules of the game before you give them the task:
"Before I give you your task, you must know that there are three rules:
1) No talking. 2) Everyone in the group has to be involved in completing the task.
3) You only have 5 seconds to complete the task."
3. Instruct them to make the letter H.
4. Count down from 5 at an even pace (don't make it too hard by speeding through).
5. Once each group makes an "H," instruct them to do it again – to make a different letter H.
6. Then again. Then again. And so on.

Cues:

"Think about scale. How big of an H can you make? How small?"

"Think about capital H's, lowercase H's, cursive H's. Get creative!"

"Look around the room. What are other groups doing? Be inspired by them!"

1,2,3 – Hop, Clap, Wiggle: I Made a Mistake!

1. Split the group into pairs.
2. Instruct each pair to count to 3, over and over again, one number at a time.
(Person A: "1.", Person B: "2.", Person A: "3.", Person B: "1", Person A: "2", Person B: "3", Person A: "1"...))
3. Once they get the hang of it, layer in replacing the number 1 with a hop.
(Person A: *hops*, Person B: "2.", Person A: "3.", Person B: *hops*, Person A: "2", Person B: "3", Person A: *hops*...))
4. Replace the number 2 with a clap.
(Person A: *hops*, Person B: *claps*, Person A: "3.", Person B: *hops*, Person A: *claps*, Person B: "3", Person A: *hops*...))
5. Introduce the concept of celebrating mistakes:
"Any time someone says or does the wrong thing, or hesitates before acting, stop everything and joyfully exclaim as loud as you can, 'I MADE A MISTAKE!' When everyone else hears this, stop what you are doing and give that person a big round of applause. Then go back to the game."
6. Replace the number 3 with a wiggle.
(Person A: *hops*, Person B: *claps*, Person A: *wiggles*, Person B: *hops*, Person A: *claps*, Person B: *wiggles*, Person A: *hops*...))

Cues: "I see some people are making mistakes but not celebrating them. I won't call you out, but I want you to notice if this is happening for you. See if you can notice what's keeping you from sharing your mistakes. And if you feel like you have the environment to try something new and uncomfortable today, do it! We'll be here to cheer you on."

“Yes, And” Party Planning

1. Split the group into pairs.
2. Instruct each pair to plan a party. They have an unlimited budget, unlimited resources, the sky is the limit. They can plan any kind of party they want, to celebrate anything they want. It can be a birthday party, a special occasion, or a party because it's Tuesday.
3. For the first round of planning, Person A is going to give the first piece of information (in improv, we call this the “initiation.”). Person B will respond by saying, “No, but...” and then give more information. Person A will respond back with “No, but...” and so on. Keep planning until I say stop.
4. After a few minutes, stop the planning.
5. Set up Part 2: “Now we’re going to try a different approach. Person A will give the same initiation – so, you’ll start with the same first piece of information – and Person B will respond with “Yes! And...” and add information that way. Person B will then respond with “Yes! And...” and so on. We’re replacing “No, but” with “Yes, and.”
6. Optional: While the “Yes, and” planning is happening, stop the group and say: “I’m going to give you some theatrical direction to try now. Keep planning as you were, but this time, I want you perform REALLY EXCITED when you’re saying ‘yes, and.’ Imagine that what the other person just said was the BEST IDEA YOU’VE EVER HEARD. So your ‘yes, and’ is going to be like ‘YES!!! AND...’”

Debrief: Tell me about your parties. What was that experience like? What difference did you notice from going from “no, but” to “yes, and”? What about when you added in the theatrical performance? How did you feel when the other person acted really excited to hear your idea?

Anthropologist

1. Split the group into pairs.
2. Instruct everyone to imagine they are 10 years in the future and that all of their professional goals at work have come true.
3. One person will perform as an “anthropologist” and interview the other person about what had to happen in order for those things to come true.
4. This person should ask questions like: What changes had to happen? Who had to step up? Who were the leaders that emerged? (Optional: Place sample questions on a slide or flipchart to cue the anthropologist. The person being interviewed should have their back to the questions so only the anthropologist can see the questions.)
5. After a few minutes, switch partners to give each person a chance to play anthropologist.

Debrief: What was that like? What surprised you about your imagined future? When you were playing anthropologist, what did you notice about your ‘subject’?

Creative Silence

1. Split the group into pairs.
2. Instruct Person A to share something meaningful about their lives with Person B: "It doesn't have to be personal, though it can be. It could be that you're dealing with a particular situation with your family, or you've been thinking about making a change in your life, or anything else."
3. Person B's job is to listen for 10 full seconds before answering. (Use the timer on your phone to demonstrate what 10 seconds feels like... it's longer than we think!)
4. After pausing for 10 seconds, Person B can respond to what Person A said: "Try not to ask a question. Think about simply sharing with Person A how what they said is impacting you. For example, you might say, 'I never knew that about you. It must be really hard to be going through that right now.'"
5. Person A will also wait 10 seconds before responding back to Person B.
6. The conversation will continue like this, very slowly, with 10 seconds of silence between every interaction.
7. "Now comes the hard part... To the best of your ability, try to maintain eye contact with the other person throughout this activity. It will likely feel uncomfortable and might not go smoothly. That's okay. Simply notice what's coming up for you as you do this and try to keep going."
8. After a few minutes, do it again, with Person B sharing something meaningful first.

Cues: "People laugh when they are uncomfortable, so I'm not surprised that there is some laughter in the room. Notice this is happening. Then return to the exercise."

Gift-Giving/Building with Offers

1. Split the group into pairs.
2. Instruct Person A to give Person B an imaginary "gift." Pantomime its shape and size.
3. Person B, without thinking too much about it, will excitedly receive the gift, name what it is, then say 'thank you!' For example, "Oh, a kitten! I've been wanting one since I was a child! Thank you!"
4. Person B will then "place" the "gift" off to the side, and give Person A a gift back.
5. Person A will do the same thing - excitedly receive it, name it, and say thank you.

Cues: "Remember, don't think too hard about what the gift is. The goal here is not to come up with the best or most funny idea - the goal is to keep the game going back and forth as quickly as possible." "Remember, the gift can be ANY size or shape. Get creative with your pantomiming!"