

Container building / Ice breakers

Here's some ideas from Training for Change

https://www.trainingforchange.org/training_tools/closing-circles/

Some of the ones I have used are also copied below. Please add your own.

1. Positive Hands

Works best in groups of 5 or 6 but can be for as many as will. Sit in a circle. Each person chooses a piece of A4 paper - it's nice to be able to choose a colour (so have several colours), and a felt tip/marker pen. Each person draws round their hand to create a hand outline on the paper, and writes their name on the top.

They all pass their paper to the left, and write something positive about the person whose paper they have received on one finger (if there are five people), or somewhere on the hand (if there are more). They pass to the left again - each time they get a new piece of paper they write something positive about that person on the hand.

Eventually they will receive their own paper back - people can choose to read these out, or keep them for themselves.

2. Name Hands

I drew around my hand on flip chart paper and write my name inside it. I then told a story about my name. I asked the rest of the group to do the same one by one. They could explain the meaning of their name, why they were given their name, (if known), if they liked their name etc.

3. Finger Hold exercise

Ask everyone to shut their eyes and sit comfortably with their hands in their laps. Then ask them to start by holding the thumb of their least used hand with the other hand in a comfortable grip, not too hard, fingers around the thumb. Explain that we are going to use our hands to de-stress and relax. Ask people to start with their thumb and work through every finger till the little finger. As they hold each finger, they consciously let go of negative feelings. I find it helpful to 'accept' positive feelings instead or as well : for example, 'let go' of sadness, and 'accept' joy. I

My suggested positives are as follows:

Thumb	sadness / joy
Forefinger	fear / courage
Middle finger	anger / resolve
Ring finger	worry / peace
Little finger	self-doubt / affirmation

At the end, take a moment to hold the whole of one hand with the other, before opening your eyes.

4. Affirmation Circle

Stand in a circle. Each person gets a chance to share something they have appreciated about the person to their right. Then the person to their left affirms. (In this way, people give an affirmation and then get an affirmation: so they're not thinking of something to say while they're getting an affirmation.) Give people a minute to think of something and then, starting with the facilitator, go completely around the circle.

5. Postcards and phrases

Postcard and phrase activity - this went well as a check in - I had gathered a load of postcards and pictures and phrases from magazines and they chose a card that called to them, and a phrase. Provoked plenty of discussion and a bonding feeling.

Movement Builders Affirmation Closing (Learnt from NEON)

Group members stand in a circle facing outwards and close their eyes. One or two people are invited by the facilitator to stand in the middle and tap on the shoulder everyone who fits the description...

Facilitator calls out a number of statements based on what they want to affirm, e.g:

- People who have helped you learn today
- People who have been supportive today
- People who are a true fighter
- ..Who are going to change the world
- Who inspired you
- Who challenged your ideas
- Who helped you think differently

Etc. Everyone gets a go at being in the middle. Pick them non verbally by putting two hands on their shoulders from the front, they should then open their eyes and go into the middle. Call them back to the sides at some point and call different people into the middle.

Malteser Closing Round (from Haven House Bouncing Back Group, Sheffield)

Bring some sweets/maltesers

Pass the bag round, everyone takes a sweet and gets to eat it once they have answered one or two set questions, e.g.

'Something I have learned today'

'Something I am taking away today'

'Something I enjoyed today'

Opening round - possible questions

- Everyone puts a question on a slip of paper into a bowl/hat - and picks a question out to answer. I started it off with a few ideas, like the last time you went swimming, a dish you like to make, the oldest person in your 'friendship' group etc and they added in some of their own. Needed explaining a bit, as some people put in questions that they wanted to answers to e.g. what's the difference between and asylum seeker and a refugee, or what are human rights...when it was meant to be questions that anyone could answer. I had imagined it as one person answering a question and then moving onto the next questions with the next person, but the group wanted everyone to have a chance to answer the same question - which does more container building, but it did then take 30 mins to do a whole group of 9.
- What have your hands been doing today - before coming to the group? Have they been active or still?
- **Unique.** A go around question where everyone has to say something that they believe is unique about them- if it applies to someone else in the room then they have to think of a new one.

E.g. "we're gonna go around and all say something unique about ourselves, but if what you say also applies to someone else then you have to think of a new one.. so if you say 'I have a pet' the chances are someone else here has a pet, but if you have pet snails that's more likely to be unique."

And then when I go first I usually pick something that is probably true of someone else so I can demonstrate it e.g. "i'm clumsy" - chances are someone else there is clumsy and will call it out, so I say "I'm so clumsy that i knocked over a display in tesco"

One liners

- Who would you be and why?
- What item of clothing do you wish was more acceptable to wear in public?
- What mythical creature would you have as a pet?
- Tell me a believable lie
- Who would play you in a movie?
- What is something that makes you feel strong or powerful?

Quotes and pictures

Spread out all the quotes and pictures on the table as the group arrived, they then got to choose the one or two that called to them the most at that moment, and say their name and why they chose that one. We have a pdf of the pictures -

Inspirational

quotes <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tTenTG3jtwBOIJttPJh1Ao4uyjncAiJG>

Now hold one hand in the other, maybe clasp them together.
 With our hands we show love and affection.
 We can give encouragement to others,
 We comfort each other,
 We say hello,
 We wave goodbye,
 We cuddle those we love.

Now touch one set of fingertips to the other.
 Our hands help us feel everything around us.
 They are vital when our other senses can't do this for us,
 When we're in the dark or when we can't see so well.
 They help us find our way, help us understand the outside world.

So let us celebrate who we are
 Each of our special personalities
 Our ways of being in the world
 Our creativity
 Our kindness
 Our touch on the world. **Extra ones**

- **Affirmation plates/post its.** Like the affirmation round but anonymous and a bit sillier because you either write post its and stick them on the person receiving them, or tape paper plates to people's backs and write them on there.
 Obviously requires consent around personal space, but is a good one for younger groups. Alternatively can stick them to wall.
 Anonymises the process.
- The Big Wind Blows
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Online adaptations to these activities

Online Icebreakers + Container Building Master List (In progress):

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18HtGJUdD_NZrw965Kqb_hMLHtDi4x4WsSZgrtVNoZhc/edit?usp=sharing

Activity	Possible online adaptations
Positive hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On Google Slides: One slide designated per person, where people can write affirmations about the person ● Sli.do open response: People can submit their affirmations for others through this platform and the responses will be collated automatically

	<p>into Google Slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sli.do word cloud: You can make a word cloud for every person and ask people to describe the person in a few words- the words will change size depending on how many people have used the same terms
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Online adaptations of the activities in this document will now live in the link above, which is currently (21/9) being developed

As well as this fabulous list of questions - check in for for connection and care

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sefe64qQbKkm4b_zJF-GzH_4HOR0bya4nXQaUBr_Gug/edit