Leader Hints

Quick Tips

Icebreakers: What do they do?
Introduce Members
Create a Comfortable Environment
Explore Thoughts and Feelings
Break Up Cliques
Release Tension
Encourage Interaction
Acquaint
Kick Things Off
Evoke Laughter, Fun
Re-Energize
Share Information

LEADER HINTS

Are available on the following topics:

- Conflict Resolution
- Constitution & Bylaws
- Delegation
- Difficult Member
- Event & Program Planning
- Fundraising
- Goal Setting
- Icebreakers
- Meetings & Minutes
- Motivation
- Officer Transition
- Recruiting New Members
- Retreats
- Stress Management
- Team Building
- Time Management

For further assistance with all aspects of student event planning, scheduling and organizing please seek an appointment with the Student Activities Staff or the appropriate ASUN Executive Officer.

For more information, call 784-6589

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This information was compiled with leadership materials from the:
University of Texas San Antonio  University of Kansas
University of New Mexico  University of Nevada Reno
Icebreakers are activities designed to foster interaction among members. They are particularly useful in the initial stages of group development, but can be effective in later stages to challenge assumptions, break up cliques, and deal with problems. There are hundreds of ways to “break the ice.” Here are just a few ideas.

**STAGE 1: GETTING TO KNOW YOU**
At this stage, group members know very little about each other. Focus on names and low-risk disclosure.

- **NAME GAME:** State your name and some bit of information and repeat this information about each person preceding you.
- **GRAB BAG:** Pull out an object from a bag and explain how you are similar to it.
- **M&Ms:** Pass around a bag of M&M candies and have everyone take some. Each person must tell one thing about themselves for each piece of candy taken (can also be done with a role of toilet paper and the number of squares taken.)
- **MAKE “DO-IT-YOURSELF” NAMETAGS**
- **INSIDE/OUTSIDE:** Use a paper bag and magazines; cut out things describing how others see you (outside) and how you really are (for inside of bag)
- **MATCHED PAIRS:** Tape the name of one member of a famous pair to each person’s back. Participants have to find their “mate” by asking other people “yes” or “no” questions.
- **PEOPLE BINGO:** Make bingo cards with titled squares like “has lived in a foreign country,” “owns a pair of cowboy boots,” etc., and find people who fit each description, fill in their name in the appropriate squares.

**STAGE 2: GETTING TO REALLY KNOW YOU**
The group may experience hostility as relationships are formed and group roles are established. Focus on getting to know what each member is feeling.

- **CONTINUUM:** State a value and have participants share where they all on a scale of 1-10 (e.g., “Honesty is important” or “this group is my #1 priority” 1 = disagree, 10 = agree). Be careful to make sure group members don’t judge each others answers as good/bad, right/wrong.
- **GROUP CONSENSUS ACTIVITIES:** Consult the many books listing activities, e.g., Quicksilver by Butler, or Silver Bullets by Rohnke, or Teamwork & Teamplay by Cain.
- **GIFT GAME:** Have each member tell what gift s/he would give each member.
- **SET GROUP GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**STAGE 3: BEGINNING TO WORK**
The group moves toward cooperation and better communications.

- **PERSONAL SHIELDS/COATS OF ARMS**
- **POSITIVE BOMBARDMENT:** One member sits in the middle of a circle while other members say positive things about him or her.
- **PAT ON THE BACK:** Members write positive things about other members on “post-it-notes” and put them on each others’ backs.
- **GROUP CONSENSUS ACTIVITIES**

**STAGE 4: WORKING TOGETHER**
The group focuses on problem solving, interdependence, and reaching goals.

- **MURDER MYSTERY EXERCISES, ETC.:** Where the group has to work together to find the solution.
- **KNOTS:** Smaller groups, in a circle, everyone puts out their right hand and grabs another hand, then the left hand grabbing someone else’s hand. Can’t let go of hand. Work to undo the knot.
- **GROUP SELF-diAGNOSIS AND EVALUATION**
- **NONVERBAL PROBLEM SOLVING:** (broken squares, puzzles, lining up by birth month/day/year, etc.)

Arrange activities in progression, building upon each activity.

Trust Building activities should be used after the group is comfortable with one another and ready for a more intimate level of trust.