



Icebreaker Activities Idea

I Love My Neighbor

Activity: The group gets into a circle. One person goes into the middle and says their name. Everyone else says hello to the middle person. The middle person then says something about themselves that might apply to someone else in the circle via the phrase: "I love my neighbor who _____. Example: "My name is Pam," ("Hello Pam!") "I love my neighbor who... really likes snowboarding." Everyone who likes the same thing, or has had the same experience has to run and find another spot. The last person left in the circle (without a spot) is the new middle person. Note: People cannot switch spots with their next-door neighbors.

Check it out! <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/i-love-my-neighbor/>

What's in a Name?

Activity: Take turns explaining the origin of your full name and/or nickname. Who are you named after? What does the name mean? Or a funny story that goes along with your nickname.

Speed Dating

Activity: Have the group form two lines facing each other, so each participant has someone across from them (their new partner). The facilitator gives the group a topic and the participants have 3 minutes to share their thoughts to each other. Example topics: ideal vacation, favorite food, weirdest dream, or most embarrassing moment. After a few minutes, everyone in one line moves one spot to the right (the person at the end moves to the other end). Everyone has a new partner and the facilitator calls out another topic.

Introduce Each Other

Activity: Pair up. Then each person learns the other's name, hometown, favorite type of pie, etc. Then have them introduce each other, and their respective characteristics, to the group.

Two Truths and One Lie

Activity: Have participants say three things about themselves. Two should be true and one should be a lie. Have participants guess which response was a lie and give their reasoning.

Snap, Clap and Slap

Activity: Form a seated circle and designate one person to begin by snapping their fingers. One by one, the rest of the circle follows suit. Once you have returned to the original snapper, the original snapper will change the sound to clapping hands. The clapping of hands continues around the group. Next, the leader slaps their legs, with the rest of the circle following suit. You can add additional motions or continue with this pattern.

Something New

Activity: Ask each person to share one thing they have learned about someone in the group. Have the rest of the group try and guess the person being described.

Name Association

Activity: Get into a circle. Say your name then the name of a fruit (or animal, character trait, appliance, etc.) that starts with the first letter of your name. Have people repeat the names that have been said before them. *Example:* Barney Banana starts the game, then Sandy Strawberry introduces herself and also introduces Barney Banana since he went before her. This continues until everyone in the circle has gone.

Action Name Game

Activity: The group gets into a circle. The leader begins by saying an action and then their name. *Example:* Saying “Disco Dan,” while doing a disco move. The next person says an action and a name, for example, “Jumping Julia” (while jumping). Julia then repeats the previous name/action “Disco Dan.” This continues until everyone in the circle has gone.

Action Syllabus

Activity: With the group standing in a circle, have the participants each choose an action for every syllable of their name. *Example:* Elvis has 2 syllables, so he does a hip shake with “El” and snaps his fingers for “vis”. Once Elvis has done his action while saying his name, the whole group repeats. After the second person does their name, the whole group repeats it and then does Elvis’ again. And so on until everyone has done it.

Breakfast Time

Activity: Get into a circle with your group. The leader starts clapping at a specific pace and the students clap in unison at the same pace. The leader starts by saying something they like to have for breakfast in tune with the clapping. The second person has to say another thing they like to have for dinner. The game goes on until someone either repeats something that has been said or speaks at the wrong time, making the clapping and speaking confusing.

Statuses

Activity: Assemble in a circle and ask each member to take off one of their shoes and put them in the middle of the circle (you can use anything for this activity really - a card deck, coins, post-its). After, volunteer to arrange the shoes in a way for people to guess what the pattern/trick is. Step to the center and arrange shoes in whatever way you want (it doesn’t matter) but when you sit back down, try to imitate someone’s pose when sitting down. After, ask - who should arrange this next based on my pattern? The idea is that the person who is supposed to arrange it first is who you are imitating, it has nothing to do with the shoes!

Interrupting Introductions (The Chain Game)

Activity: One person starts off introducing themselves and a little about their life. When someone else in the group has something in common with the speaker, they interrupt the

speaker, link arms with them, and begin their own introduction. Continue until everyone has become a link in the chain, and have the last person continue to talk about their life until the first person can link up with them, forming a full circle. Here's an example:

Speaker 1: "Hi. My name is Mary and I'm from Santa Barbara. I have two brothers, and 2 dogs."

Speaker 2: "I have two dogs. My name is Bobby and I'm from Seattle..."

Around the World

This is a riddle. Your group talks about taking a trip to different countries/places around the world. The group must take a trip to places that begin with the letters that eventually spell out, "AROUND THE WORLD."

Deep but Not Profound

This is a thinking game in which you list off pairs of things that you like and don't like (ex: "I like the floor, but not the ground," in which case you like the words with double-letter combinations). Everyone's goal is to figure out the pattern that determines what you do and do not like. Once a person thinks that they have figured out the pattern, they suggest a pair of words. The game continues until everyone has found the pattern or has given up.

Moon Trip

One player, the "Space Commander," announces that they are going on a trip to the moon and is bringing two things, and names two examples. The player then says that if you want to go then you have to bring two things, and as the "Space Commander," they will let you know if you can bring the items you suggest. Go around the group and ask them their name and what they will bring. If their items don't meet the criteria, the player can't come into space, and move on to the next player. Repeat this a couple of times around the group until most players guess the secret: the first item must start with the person's first initial and the second item must start with the person's last initial.

Ha Ha Game

Players position themselves by lying down with their head on another person's stomach. The first player begins by saying, "Ha." Next, the second person says, "Ha ha." The third adds, "Ha ha ha." And the fourth adds, "Ha ha ha ha." This continues around the circle with each person adding one more "ha." The "ha's" must be uttered without laughing.

Wink Murder

Choose one person to be the "murderer." Have the group mill around, standing or sitting. The "murderer" then winks at a person to kill them. The "murderer" should avoid detection. Try to identify the "murderer" before you die. Note: dramatic deaths are encouraged.

Bibbity Bibbity Bop

Person A walks to person B and says "Bibbity Bibbity Bop," person B must respond with "Bop," before the person A says "Bop." If person B is too slow, or doesn't say "Bop," at all, person B

switches places with person A. Person A can also try and trick person B by saying things like "Hibbity Hibbity Hop," or "Bop! Say Bop!" If person B says "Bop" when they shouldn't, they are switched to being person A.

Do As I Say, Not As I Do

The first person in line SAYS one thing they like ("I like to jump up and down,") but DOES another (flaps their arms). The second person DOES what was just SAID (jumps up and down), but SAYS something they like ("I like to rock climb").

Ah Soh Koh

Everyone learns the 3 commands and their movements

1. Ah - the person says "Ah" loudly, and takes their left or right arm across their chest, pointing at the person next to them.
2. Soh - the person says "Soh" loudly, and takes their left or right arm above their head, pointing at the person next to them.
3. Koh - the person puts both arms together in front of them and points to someone else, anywhere in the circle.

The phrases must always go in that order, and each phrase needs its correct hand motion. You go when you are pointed at by someone next to you using "ah" or "soh," or by someone across from you using "koh." When you are "koh"ed at by someone, you can either start again with "ah" or put your hands up and say "noooo." If you say "noooo" then the person who says "koh" has to start again with "ah." If you mess up, you step out of the circle/line and walk around trying to confuse people by shouting random words.

Ding, Dong, Dat

Split into 2-3 smaller groups. The leader picks a word and the groups think of songs that have that word in it. As groups, they have to sing a phrase of the song with that word. This continues with each group rotating until no one can think of another song with that word. The group with the most songs (without singing repeats) wins.

Grin Jack

Everyone needs to keep a straight face with the exception of one person who has a huge grin on their face. They "take off their grin" by rolling their hand over their mouth and making a straight face. They "toss" the grin to someone else who makes the next huge grin. If anyone smiles or laughs out of turn, they're out.

Human Knot

Activity: Have the group form a tight circle with arms outstretched. Everyone reaches out and grabs the hands of two different people across from them. The group then tries to untangle and form a circle without letting go of each other's hands.

Process: Did the group work together? What was difficult or easy about this activity?

Ultrabeam: Involved version of Rock, Paper, Scissors

Activity: There are four levels of this game, each of which has a sign.

Egg (squatting on the ground).

Chicken (flapping arms like a chicken).

Giant (flexing).

Ultrabeam (reaching arms as high as you can get them).

Everyone starts on the same level: an egg. To win you must advance to the highest level: ultrabeam. To advance a level, challenge someone of the same level (i.e. egg plays with egg, chicken plays with chicken, chicken moves to giant, etc.) and the loser drops a level. Continue until everyone becomes an ultrabeam.

Mega Rock, Paper, Scissors

Activity: Everyone pairs up and each pair plays a round of rock/paper/scissors. The winner becomes the champion, and the person who loses has to line up behind the champion, hold their shoulders, and cheer them on. The champion then plays a round of rock/paper/scissors against another champion, and the game continues until there is only one champion with everyone lined up behind them, cheering them on.

Lost Sailor

Activity: The captain explains that everyone is a crew member on a ship. As the captain calls out directions, the crew must follow with actions. If a crew member is too slow or does not complete the action, they are out of the game. The last crew member remaining is the winner. Here are the calls from the captain and the actions by the crew members:

- “Lost Sailor”: Everyone walks around the ship with their hand above their forehead and says “Lost Sailor”
- “All Hands on Deck”: Everyone drops to the floor and puts both hands on the ground
- “Lookout”: One person gets down on one knee; another person stands behind them, puts their hand on their forehead and looks into the sea.
- “Water Pump”: One person stands in the center and stretches their arms out. Two other people take one arm each and pump them up and down while everyone says: “Water Water Water.”
- “Lifeboat”: Four people stand in a circle back-to-back, linking arms. Then, they walk together along the circle saying, “We’re saved.”
- “Pirate Ship”: Four people stand to make a square to form a ship and pretend to row. A fifth person stands in front of them and acts as a mermaid of the ship.

Who Am I?

Materials: Index cards for each group member, tape

Activity: Write a celebrity name (or the names of cartoon characters) on all of the index cards. As people arrive, attach a card to each of their backs with tape. Each group member must figure out their celebrity's name by asking other group members “yes or no” questions. For a variation, use pairs like Sherlock and Watson and have them find their partner. You can also use categories, like colors or farm animals, and have them find others in their category.

This is a great activity to do while you are waiting for some members to arrive, as a new participant can enter easily without falling behind in the game.

Silent Switch

Activity: The group forms a circle and one person goes to the center. Without speaking, circle members must successfully switch spots with one other person around the circle. The person in the center must try to steal one of the now-open spots before the next person arrives. The person without the spot is now the center person.

Count to a Certain Number

Activity: Depending on the number of participants in a group, each member must count up to that number, making sure that no one interrupts or says the number at the same time. If two people say the same number, the activity restarts again. *Example:* there is a group of ten people, all sitting in silence forming a circle. The first person decides to count and says “one.” Another person decides to say the next number “two,” and so on until everyone says a number without interrupting or saying the same number. For an added bonus, try this with your eyes closed.

‘Tis the Morning

Activity: If you have a two-day meeting or event and need a quick warm-up for day two, ask everyone to pantomime something they did the night before. For example, individuals or groups act out a task they did together, a meal they ate, or recreate a scene they witnessed while volunteering.

Collaborative Storytelling

Activity: Begin by having your group form a circle. Select one person to begin telling a story. It can be about any subject in any genre—fiction, nonfiction, or fairy tale. They simply start a story. After a few sentences, they look at the person to their right and “hand off” the storyline. The next person must take the story in any direction he or she wishes. The storytelling continues around the circle until you reach the person who started the story. They get to create the ending.

What's in Your Wallet?

Activity: Pair up (this can also be done individually). Each person pulls something out of their wallet, purse, or pocket and tells their partner about it (where they got it from, any sentimental value, etc.). Then have each person tell the whole group about their partner's item (or their own item, if done individually).

Pterodactyl

Activity: Have everyone stand in a circle facing each other and have each person cover their teeth with their lips. One person starts by turning to the person next to them and saying “Pterodactyl” with their lips covering their teeth. The next person in line continues by either saying “Pterodactyl” to the next person (in which case the game continues in the same direction) or turning to the previous person and making a Pterodactyl sound and movement (in

which case the game reverses direction). If you show your teeth or miss a turn, you are out. Play continues until two people are left.

Head to Toe (The Staring Game)

Activity: The group gets into a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder. One person is the caller. They say, "toe" and everyone looks at the feet of someone else in the circle. The caller then says, "head" and each person looks up into the face of the person whose feet they were just staring at. If the person you look at is looking at you, you are both out and have to leave the circle. If the group is even, then the last two people are both winners.

Added Bonus: Every time two people are out of the game, they become "Staring Partners" and have to get to know each other and uncover some interesting facts about each other. At the end of the game, have everyone share a fun fact about their "Staring Partner."

Squeeze Murder

Activity: Circle up and hold hands with the people next to you. Place your hands behind your back so you cannot see them from the middle. With the group's eyes closed, the leader secretly picks a "murderer." Have the group open their eyes. The "murderer" will start to send pulses to the right and left by squeezing his neighbor's hands a random number of times. A person feeling X number of pulses sends that same number of pulses minus one to the next person. If you receive only one pulse, you die dramatically, and leave the game. The people on each side of a "murdered" person joins hands. Try to identify the "murderer" before you die!

Alphabet Letters

Activity: Players should be in groups of four. When the leader calls out a letter, the groups must form that letter using their bodies.

Big Booty

Activity: Everyone stands/sits in a circle. Everyone counts off counter clockwise (to the right), starting with the leader who is the "Booty." The Booty starts off the song with, "Ohhhhh, Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty!" From here the leader sends the call to another number by saying "Booty to the [number]" and the call continues to be sent around the circle by each player until someone messes up.

For example: Ohhhhh, Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty! Uh, huh, Big Booty! Booty to the Five! Five to the Three!

Three to the Ten!

And so on.....

When someone messes up, they go to the "back" of the circle, to the left of the Booty. All the numbers rearrange without counting off and the Booty starts again immediately (i.e. if the Six messes up, they move to the left of the Booty and Seven becomes the Six, Eight becomes the Seven and so on, with Six taking the last number).

***King Lizard Variation**

Everyone sits in the circle and picks an animal, a motion, and a noise for that animal. One person “sends” the action to another person by making their own noise/motion, and then someone else’s noise/motion. That person, in turn, makes their noise/motion, and then another person’s. For example, in a game with a cat, a dog, and a monkey, the action might be as follows:

Cat, Dog

Dog, Cat

Cat, Monkey

Monkey, Dog

Dog, Cat

And so forth....

If someone “messes up” (i.e. stumbles over the noise, does the wrong combination of noise and motion, or hesitates too long), they’re out for that round. The last person still in is the winner.

Non-competitive version: no one gets out (no matter how much they mess up)—the game continues until everyone gets bored. Animals will get sillier with time!

Zip Zap Zop

Activity: Everyone stands in a circle. One person starts by pointing to someone else in the circle and saying “Zip.” That person then points to someone else and says “Zap.” That person points to someone else and says “Zop.” Play continues in the same word order (“Zip Zap Zop”) until someone messes up, at which point they are out of the circle and the cycle continues.

Name Variation: If a person receives the word *Zip,* they must say the name of the person on their left before continuing. If a person receives the word *Zap,* they must say the name of the person on their right before continuing. If a person receives the word *Zop,* they must say the name of the person who just said *Zap* before continuing.

Giants, Wizards, Elves: Tag with Teams

Activity: Split your group into two sides. Have each group face off a line about 30 yards apart. Have each side secretly take on the role of a giant, a wizard, or an elf. After everyone decides who they are, the groups approach each other repeating, “Giants, wizards, and elves, oh my,” three times. After the third time, they act out like their chosen creature. Giants stand with their hands on their hips; Wizards have their arms outstretched in front of them as if casting a spell; and Elves stand sideways and mimic shooting a bow and arrow. Giants beat Elves, Wizards beat Giants, and Elves beat Wizards. Think of life-sized rock, paper, scissors. The winning side chases the losing side back to their line. Anyone caught goes to the side of the captor.

Sing-a-Long

Materials: Paper and Pens

Activity: The leader splits the groups up unto at least 4 smaller groups of 4-9 people. The leader states a word and the groups think of songs that have that word in it (ex: “Love” or Sitcom songs). The groups are given three minutes to brainstorm (and write down) all songs they can

think of with that word in it. After three minutes, they must put away their pens. The facilitator points to a group at random and the group must sing about 5-10 seconds of one of their songs. They must all sing. This continues with each group rotating until no one can think of another song with that word or until they repeat another group's song. The group with the most songs wins.

Sing Activity

Activity: Have everyone form a large circle, with one person in the middle. The person in the middle begins by singing a song, and everyone joins in. If a person on the edge of the circle thinks of a song related to the one that is currently being sung, they switch places with the person in the middle and begin singing the new song. For example, if the person sings "Quit Playing Games With My Heart," the second person might sing "Heart Attack" or "My Heart Will Go On," because all the songs have "Heart" in them. The third person might sing either another One Direction song, another Titanic song, or another song with the word "heart." Repeat this process until everyone is singing and dancing and having a great time.

Thumper: Keep the Rhythm

Activity: The group sits cross-legged in a circle. The rhythm of the game comes from the group patting their knees. Each person chooses a signal, such as a peace sign, I love you, fingers in ears, etc. Then one person performs their signal and someone else's signal as quickly as possible. That person must then do their signal and someone else's. If someone messes up, (i.e. does the signals in the wrong order, a nonexistent signal, etc.), they are out.

Toilet Paper Tell

Materials: Toilet Paper

Activity: Have each person take some toilet paper. After everyone has some toilet paper, each person must say one thing about themselves for each square of toilet paper that they have. A popular variation of the game uses M&Ms or Starbursts instead of TP. A slight variation of this game when using M&Ms or Starbursts is to have each person in the group tell an interesting fact about themselves for each letter or color of the flavor (example: L-E-M-O-N has 5 letters, so the person would tell five facts).

Hot Seat

Activity: Everyone will take turns being in the hot seat. When a person is in the hot seat, everyone else has two minutes to ask them any question they want.

Affirmation Cards

Best incorporated into one of the final meetings of the year

Materials: A piece of cardstock paper (make it colorful!) for each group member.

Activity: Have the group sit in a circle. Give everyone their own affirmation card and have them pass it clockwise. Then give each student one minute to write on a student's affirmation card. Once the minute is up, have the group pass the cards clockwise again. Continue the rotation until everyone has had a chance to write on everyone's affirmation card.

Wrap-Up of Year or Trip

Activity: The group stands in a circle, and each person gets a chance to summarize their experience with MEDLIFE this past year, or a recent Service Learning Trip, with one final statement. Potential prompts: What did you learn? What will you take away from this experience?

Added BONUS.... Bring a ball of yarn with you and have each person who speaks hold the ball of yarn, and then pass the ball to the next speaker while holding on to part of the yarn. By the end of the activity, there should be a web connecting everyone. Close off with a statement about the community you have built and how you plan to continue to spread the MEDLIFE mission in the future. Afterwards, have everyone cut off a piece of yarn to keep with them as a reminder of your amazing group.