Icebreakers and energisers.

Huddle Academy

Introduction.

Icebreakers and energisers can:

- Set the tone for the workshop (high energy, serious, fun).
- Help people to open up and relax.
- Motivate and engage people.
- Help people to get to know one another.
- Provide a feeling of safety that enables people to be vulnerable.

By creating a friendly and welcoming environment and sense of fun, the participants can let their work persona drop and bring more of themselves into the session.

Creativity warm-ups can also bring energy and fun to a room. More importantly, they help free us from the structured, analytical, convergent thinking we are often required to do in our 'normal' jobs, and prepare us for ideation, new ideas and divergent thinking.

These are a few of our favourite activities at Huddle. And they are just suggestions to get you going and act as a guide of what's possible. There are plenty of activities available on the internet and creating your own activities is highly encouraged as it's a great way to express your creativity. If you're nervous about doing something new, a quick prototyping session with your colleagues is a great way to test your idea.

That's what we do!

Have fun!

As with everything in your workshop, it is important to apply HCD stances.

Be in service with

Know your audience and build empathy for them and their context. When thinking about your icebreaker, think about the people and what you know about them. What experiences have they had in the past, have they worked together before, are there any physical abilities you need to consider, what is the context of the people joining your workshop. If people are turning up in suits, then crawling around on the floor won't make them feel energised and comfortable!

Be courageous

How you approach the activities will indicate to the audience how they should feel. People read you and your body language, so approaching the workshop and activities with confidence and a commitment will send a strong message to people about the behaviour and engagement you are expecting.

By being vulnerable yourself, (going first and/or joining in) you'll demonstrate a way of being and influence the behaviour of the group.

4x4x4.

Icebreaker

Great for **getting to know each other.**

Group size: 4—24

Resources: Pen/sharpie and paper or sticky notes to write down things in common.

Duration: 4 mins plus

The Activity:

Get people into groups of four.

Frame up: You'll have four minutes to come up with four things in common.

Try and go deep. Things like—we all have blue eyes, or we all work in the city are not deep. We want you to ask each other questions and uncover things common.

Give a one minute warning.
If groups finish early encourage them to continue to uncover things in common. Some groups come up with quite a long list!

At four minutes:

Get people to share their list of things in common. Then introduce themselves to the broader group in the room.

Notes:

After running this we mention that we go deep when doing HCD research. We seek to find things in common between people that are not at the surface.

Variations:

This can be run as 3 x 3 x 3 too!

Pizza storming.

Icebreaker

Great for **arranging people into groups.**

Group size: 12—24

Resources: Sharpie and sticky note

Duration: 10 mins

The Activity:

Get people to draw a picture of their favourite pizza topping ingredient on a sticky note.

When everyone has done this, stand people up.

Let people know: Now we are going to make some pizzas!

Ask them to walk around the room and share their ingredient with others and find three other toppings to make a pizza.

As people get into groups of 4, go up to the group and ask them to come up with a name for their pizza.

Once everyone is grouped, asked people to move their possessions to sit with their new team mates.

Once everyone is settled, ask each group to tell us their pizza and and what's on their pizza.

If this is part of introductions, get people to introduce themselves too!

Variations:

You could use sandwich ingredients. You could make groups of 3 or 5.

Shake it off.

Energiser

Great for **energy after lunch.**

Group size: 4—whatever

Resources: Taylor Swift—Shake it off

Duration: 3 mins

The Activity:

Frame up: Energy is a bit low, so we are going to shake it up for a minute.

Put Taylor Swift on nice and loud and then jump around and dance.

Encourage others to get up and shake their arms and legs and jump up and down.

Notes:

Confidence is key with this one—as is your ability to be vulnerable and lead the group!

Variations:

Any music you like or jumping jacks.

Secret leaders.

Energiser

Great for **self organising teams.**

Group size: 8—16

Resources: Enough room for people to move about freely

Duration: 5–15 mins

The Activity:

Frame up: An activity to get people moving around the room.

Frame up: In secret, you need to choose two people in the room.

Your job, as we move around the room, is to keep yourself equal—distance between the two people you have chosen.

I will let you know when to start moving and when to stop.

Let people walk for 30 seconds. stop people and get them to check in if they are half way between the two people they chose (using fingers to show how close they are to achieving it.)

Give another minute (watch the group to see how they move).

Truth truth lie.

Icebreaker

Great for **getting to know each other.**

Group size: 4—24. Working either as one group or groups of 4.

Resources: None

Duration: 3 mins

Overview/purpose:

Fun way to help people reveal things about themselves.

The Activity:

Frame up: We are going to play a quick game to learn a bit more about each other. Spend a couple of minutes thinking about some fun facts about your self. You're going to come up with three things, two must be true and one is not. (You can give an example)

Get people to note their "facts" down on a post it note. Important to allow people to do this before the conversation starts, so people can be fully present.

Go round the room (or groups) and get people to offer their facts, while the rest of the group guess which statement they believe is the lie. After a brief conversation, the person reveals which is a lie.

Yes / No storytelling.

Warm-up

Great for **warming up creativity.**

Group size: 4+

Resources: None

Duration: 5 mins (2 mins to group people, frame-up and demonstrate and 2 x 90 sec of activity).

The Activity:

People work in groups of two.

Frame up: You'll be working in pairs, a storyteller and a listener. When you are the storyteller, you are going to tell your partner a story that you make up as you go along.

The listener can either say:

'Yes'—in which case then you continue with your story;

or

'No'—in which case then you must immediately change the direction of your story mid-flow.

We will demonstrate this now. (Do the activity with your co-facilitator, or someone from the audience).

Give each people 90 seconds to tell their story before swapping roles.

Variations:

You can have groups of three with an observer. Allow another 90 seconds for a third round.

Squiggle birds.

Warm-up

Great for **building creative confidence.**

Group size: 4+

Resources: Paper or sticky notes, pen/texta/sharpie

Duration: 10 mins

The Activity:

Frame up: We are going to do a quick drawing activity to start working visually/get the creative juices flowing/to prepare ourselves for our next designing concepts.

Take a piece of paper and pen/sharpie.

You have 15 seconds to draw nine squiggles.

Don't think too hard, just squiggle away. (Show an example on a slide—or draw on butcher's paper.)

Once everyone is done...

Now we are going to turn these into birds. Just add a triangle for the beak; an eye; feet and a triangle for a tail.

Here's an example.

Take your time and turn your squiggles into birds.

Wrap up: How did you find that? How great are your birds?

What's important to note is that it is easy to visually communicate an idea, even if the drawing is not worthy of art. Our minds are awesome at seeing patterns and making meaning, so we can't help but see the birds once a few features are added.

If you aren't sure whether people will know what you've drawn, it's perfectly ok to add a label too!

Lining up.

Icebreaker

Great for **getting people moving and talking.**

Group size: 12+

Resources: Enough space for people to create a line.

Duration: 5–10 mins depending on numbers.

The Activity:

Frame up: We are going to do a sorting exercise on ourselves.

We are going to line up in alphabetical order.... of our middle name! (If you don't have a middle name, choose either your first or last name.)

Indicate a starting point for the person whose middle name is closest to A—and indicate the direction of the line.

People will need to find out each other's middle names and sort themselves into a line.

Notes:

You can also use this kind of exercise to understand where people are feeling about an idea. If X spot is 100% understanding/on board etc and Y spot is not at all supportive or totally confused.

Variations:

Can get people to order themselves:

- in age
- by shoe size
- How far away they love from a designated spot like the GPO

Gingerbread person.

Icebreaker and research.

Great for **connecting with beliefs and introductions.**

Group size: 3—12.

Resources: Gingerbread person template, coloured pens/textas.

Duration: 20 mins depending on group size.

The Activity:

Frame up: We are going to draw a picture of ourselves as learners (participants in the workshop/ human-centred designers/or some other context).

How are you feeling about it (the context)? What are you wearing? What are you carrying? What are you saying? What is around you?

Allow people 5 mins to complete their picture.

Ask people to explain their drawing. Ask them questions about what you can see in the picture.

Notes:

Drawing and making accesses our right brain and helps us dig into our sub-conscious mind. We create stories from what we draw, as the pictures represent metaphors for aspects of ourselves/the thing we are drawing about, from which we make meaning.

Variations:

Ask people to imagine if "Company-A" or "Service-X" was a person and then draw what they look like.

Prompt them with questions like: If you met them at a BBQ, what would they be wearing? What would they be carrying? How would they act? What would they say? What would their friends be like? Would they have friends? What are their hobbies?

Back to back drawing.

Creativity

Great for **communication and energy.**

Group size: 4+

Resources: Drawing templates.

Duration: 15 mins.

The Activity:

Frame up: You'll be working in pairs. And you need to sit back to back. I'll be giving one of you a picture and the other some blank paper. The person with the picture needs to describe it to their partner, who will draw their understanding of what they hear on their page.

Give 5 mins to do this.

Show each other the drawing and compare to the original image.

Then swap. Give out the second picture and repeat for the other person.

Get the people to reflect on the activity. Who was more successful? Why? What did they learn.

Notes:

Often groups that start with an impression of the overall picture (the big picture) do better. "It looks like a robot/dog". It shows how difficult it can be to build something without showing an image.

30 circles.



Great for **warming up creativity.**

Group size: Any

Resources: 30 circle template.

Duration: 5 mins

The Activity:

Frame up: We are going to give you one minute to fill in as many circles on this page as you can. You cannot use letters, or numbers. Every circle must contain something unique.

Go!

After a minute—stop them writing and compare how they have gone.

Notes:

It doesn't take long to warm people up for creativity. This exercise doesn't allow people time to think and filter their ideas.

Uses for a newspaper.

Warm-up

Great for **stimulating ideas.**

Group size: Any

Resources: Paper and pen

Duration: 5 mins

The Activity:

Frame up: I want to you to create a list. A list of as many uses as possible for a newspaper. Write all you ideas down. You have 1 minute.

Go!

After 1 minute. OK. Now count up your list. Who has the most?

Get that person to read out their list.

Hand up who has something not on that list? (most people will). It is usual for everyone in the room to have something unique on their list. This is part of the value of having many people involved when we ideate.

(You can get everyone to read out their lists... however this can go on a little long.)

Notes:

It is usual for everyone in the room to have something unique on their list. This is part of the value of having many people involved when we ideate.

Portraits.

Icebreaker

Great for setting intentions for the day.

Group size: 6+

Resources: Stack of blank A4 paper, Thick sharpie or whiteboard maker.

Duration: 15 mins

The Activity:

Frame up: We are going to create portraits of each other.

First I'll demonstrate what we are going to do.

Stand opposite a partner. Look each other in the eye and hold their gaze. Without looking, draw a portrait of you partner, without taking your pen off the page. When done, write a question on the page and don't forget to sign your portrait.

Hand it to your partner and ask them the question. When you receive a portrait, say thank you.

Go and find another partner and repeat the process.

Allow about 5-6 mins so people each have 5 or 6 portraits.

Get people to examine the portraits and choose one that represents how they want to show up in the workshop. Eg. I choose one with big ears because I intend to listen today.

Write ONE word on your portrait that expresses your intention.

Go around the group and get them to introduce themselves; say their word and how they intend to show up. Finishing with "I CHECK IN".

"Hi I'm Kylie. I chose this image because of the big ears. I intend to listen today. I check in."

Post all the images up on a wall.

At the end of the workshop—get people to reflect on how well they aligned with their intention, and then to say "I check-out."

Notes:

Looking people in the eye (eye gazing) breaks down barriers and builds connection.

The drawings are good fun and people get a good laugh.

Variations:

You could stop this activity after the drawing.



MELBOURNE SYDNEY

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