

Games

- Try to play your games in a sequence that flows with the group and brings them down to quiet and calm before the end of the session.
- Do think through what you want to achieve by the end of the session and the games that will actually work to this effect.
- Start with some name games and then some other brief activities that will serve to introduce participants to one another.
- Try to avoid cliques developing, use "mix up" games like 'the sun shines on' to move people around the room and make new relationships in the group.
- "Go rounds" - in which the whole group is invited in turn to contribute verbally, "the worst bit about my journey here was...", "the best thing about the weekend so far is..." - are a useful stepping stone to Creative Listening.
- Take care with more physical games, don't ask players to do things you wouldn't, and respect everybody's private space; don't force players into being physically intimate unless it is clearly appropriate and they can handle it.
- Think quite carefully of your group - are you going to make someone feel isolated in any way?

Name Games

Circle introductions

In a circle, first person introduces him/herself. "My name is `A". A second person introduces him/herself and first person, "I am `B', this is `A". A third person says "I'm `C', this is `A' and `B", and so on around the circle until the last person introduces everyone all the way round.

Change places

Standing in a circle, or better still sitting on chairs, each person states their name in turn. The first person states their own name and then crossing the circle, calls the name of someone else, who then rises, letting person 1 sit in their seat. Person 2 then says their own name, calls someone else's and takes that person's place. And so on until everyone has been called.

Name Catch

The person with the ball must say another person's name and throw them the ball. Try it with two or three balls.

Personal baggage

Sit in a circle. First person introduces him/herself and says, "When I came here I brought (eg) a blue toothbrush". Second person introduces him/herself and says, "When 'X' (1st person) came s/he brought a blue toothbrush, and I brought ... ", etc.

Initials

Each person takes the initial letter of their name and finds two qualities that they feel describe them, using that initial, e.g. "I'm Pat and I'm practical and pensive."

My Name

Each person talks about their name and how they feel about it. Do they know if their name has any special meaning or the reasons why it was chosen for them?

Name Graffiti

Ask participants to sit in a circle and place a piece of flip chart paper in the middle. In turn, ask each participant to write their name on the paper, and then to say something about their name - eg "My name is Carol, and I was so called because I was born on Christmas Day." The flip chart paper can be displayed on the wall so participants have a ready reminder of names.

Triple Names

Standing or sitting in a circle. One person begins by repeating their own name three times and then naming someone else in the group eg " Emma, Emma, Emma, Richard!" At the same time everyone makes a rhythmic pushing movement with both hands held out in front of them. If in a noisy mood you can use hand claps instead. The newly named person then continues the sequence by repeating their own name three times and then adding another group member eg "Richard, Richard, Richard, Zoe!"

Guess my Name

(For a group who have got to know each other) Everyone writes their own name on a slip of paper. These are then collected up and mixed up well before inviting each person to choose a name. Without telling anyone else what is on their piece of paper the group members in turn makes statements beginning with 'I', about the person whose name they have, such as "I am ...", "My favourite food is ... ", "I like to" (encourage positive statements). The group then has to guess who the person is and the next person carries on.

Unusual Hobbies

Each person in turn says their name, and what their unusual hobby is. Their hobby must alliterate with their name. E.g. 'I'm Edna McRoss and I like eating mouldy rabbits'

Another Alliteration Game

Each person thinks of an adjective that alliterates with their name, eg. "I'm Super Sam'.

Five Facts

Split the group into pairs. Each person in a pair must find out five interesting things about their partner. After a couple of minutes, bring the group together again and each person must introduce their partner to the group and tell everyone the five facts.

Make sure they know before they start that they will have to report back to the group.

Two truths and a lie

One person in the group says three things about themselves, two of which should be true and one should be false. The rest of the group has one turn to guess which is false, so they need to discuss it carefully.

Warm Up Games

Line-ups

Get everyone to line up in order of by the first letter of their forename/surname, or by birthday, etc. Fun to do in silence.

Geographical

Someone stands in the centre of the room to indicate the place they are at now (eg Xbridge Friends Meeting House). Then everyone is asked to arrange themselves around the room according to where they come from.

The sun shines on

Everyone sit on chairs in a circle. A person in the centre says the sun shines on ... e.g. everyone who is wearing red socks, or everyone who came by train. Everyone in that category must change places (they cannot sit back down in the same place). The person in the centre also tries to find a seat, and the person then left over becomes "it" and calls out the next category.

Pile up

All sit in a circle on chairs. One person asks questions, eg: "Are you left-handed?", "Do you like sausages?", "Is red your favourite colour?", "Did you travel here by train?". If the person who is asked, answers "Yes", then they move one place to the right and sit on someone's lap, if "No", then they move similarly to the left.

Name Tag

Person 1 is the chaser, person 2 is the chased. Everyone else stands around in no particular order while 1 tries to tag 2. 2 becomes safe by standing in front of someone else and calling that person's name. This person, 3, is now chased and can become safe by the same ploy. Should the person being chased become tagged, s/he becomes the chaser, and chaser becomes the chased. And so on until everyone has had a chance.

Weather Forecast

Each person gives a forecast, based on how they are feeling. Your forecast might be, for instance, "fair weather all day, with frequent bursts of sunshine".

The Mars Game

Each person around the circle will say "My name is " (their name backwards the group might need to help them) "and on Mars this means" (a word which describes how they are feeling). For example, Michael might say "My name is Leahcim and on Mars this means excited".

Keys

Everyone sits in a circle on the floor. One person is sat in the middle with a blindfold on and a set of keys lying on the floor just behind them. Those in the circle must carefully orbit the central person once and then grab the keys (no standing).

If the "guardian" hears them and points at them, the would-be thief must go back and take their place in the circle again. Anyone who manages to get the keys then becomes the guardian.

Mime Rhyme

One person thinks of a word and tells everyone what that word rhymes with, eg. "deep". Everyone else has to guess the word by miming what they think the word might be, eg. by leaping, sleeping, peeping, creeping, etc. Whoever gets it right chooses a new word.

Funny Faces

Sitting/standing in a circle, one person makes a silly face at the person next to them. This person has to make the same face to the next person along, until it reaches the beginning. It could involve sounds and movement, too.

Touch these

You call out three things at a time. Each player then has to get into a position touching all three things named. You will need to progress sensitively through a range of things, perhaps starting with things around the room - a bench, some metal, the wall, etc. - to things that might be on people - fabric, something red, someone else's shoe, etc. - to things that are on people, someone else's spectacles, knee, hair, etc.

Knots

In groups of no more than about 12, everyone closes their eyes, moves gently into the centre of the group and joins hands in the throng. When each person has caught hold of another hand in each hand, eyes are opened. The group must now work together to untangle the knots.

Pretzels

One person leaves the room, the others hold hands in a line. One end leads off and twists in and out, over and under, back through the line and then joins hands with the other end. The person is then called back into the room and without breaking any connections has to untangle the pretzel.

Hot potato

The players sit in a circle with one player in the centre. The players pass a beanbag at random across the circle, which the centre player has to catch. When s/he can have a seat in the circle, the last one to handle the beanbag has to go into the centre.

Gap stopping

All the players stand in a circle facing inwards except for the one who is ON. The ON player walk round the outside of the circle, and at any time s/he touches another player on the back. When this happens, s/he and the player touched, race round the circle in opposite directions to try and reach the gap in the circle first. Whichever one does not arrive first and fill the gap is ON next.

The Affirmation Interview

Focus on finding out about one group member at a time. One person is interviewed and receives the attention of the whole group. The questions should be simple, non-threatening and interesting - aiming to find out about the person and what they enjoy, eg:

- What is your favourite sandwich?
- What place would you like to visit?
- What is something you enjoy doing on Saturday/after school?
- What good films have you seen lately?

And What Else are you Good at?

Get into pairs. One asks the other, "What are you good at?". After the reply, they say "...and what else are you good at?". Continue this for three minutes and then swap roles. Then talk about how hard or easy it was and what people have learnt about themselves and each other.

Four Squares

Participants are asked to write a statement about themselves in each of the four corners of an A4 sheet of paper. Three of the statements must be correct and one must be untrue. They can be details about themselves, where they live, something about their personal history, their likes and dislikes etc.

Everyone is then encouraged to find a partner who must find out which of the details is untrue. When this is discovered the other 'partner' has a turn before moving around the room to find another partner. When everyone has had a conversation with everyone else, the exercise is complete.

Sharing

Ask all members of the group to bring an envelope or bag to the first session. It should contain 3 things - 1) something which makes me happy 2) something which makes me sad, 3) something I would like to share with the group.

Examples of 1) are pay slip, family photo, holiday pictures, hobby. For 2) it could be a newspaper cutting, photo or family object. For 3) it might be sweets, drink, a poem, book, tape or hobby. Then invite people to share what they have brought.

Spin the bottle

When a group is already getting comfortable with sharing, sit the group in a circle facing each other. The facilitator spins the bottle and whoever the neck of the bottle "points at" when it has finished spinning, tells the group their name and general things about themselves for one minute. That person then spins the bottle round to choose the next person, and so on, until everyone has had a turn.

Circle Games

Jelly on a plate

Everyone stands in a circle with arms around each other and imagines they are a jelly on a plate wobbling from side to side. Usually ends up with jelly on the floor!

Open the Box

An imaginary box is passed round to each person in turn. When a person is given the box, they must open it and take out whatever's inside, miming the object. Others in the group have to guess what it is.

Wink Ministry

Everyone sits in a circle. A detective is chosen, and this person goes out of the room (and this means out of earshot!). Those left choose an elder and a person to say "Friend, you have been heard". The detective is called in, and the elder must wink at someone without the detective noticing. Anyone who's winked at must stand and minister on the subject of their choice, until told "Friend, you have been heard". (Several people may be ministering at once.) The detective has three guesses as to who the elder may be.

A variation on the game is to have a theme that everyone ministers about, eg. garden sheds, bananas, car tyres. They must not be too explicit in their ministry, however, for it is the detective's task to guess both elder and the theme.

Caterpillar

Everyone sits on chairs in a circle, but one person leaves their chair, to stand in the middle of the circle. This person must try and sit back down on their chair, but one of the people either side shuffles onto it, the next person along shuffles onto their chair, and so on. The person in the middle has to be quick to try and sit down. If they sit down, the person who failed to shuffle onto the spare chair in time is now on.

Mimic

Similar to wink ministry, except that instead of an elder, there is a "leader", who performs an action, like clicking his/her fingers. Everyone in the circle must closely mimic this person's actions eg: sniffing, clapping, stamping, crossing legs, scratching head, etc. and the detective must guess who the leader is. The leader should change their actions reasonably regularly.

Clapping In Unison

Still in the inward-facing circle, the aim of this game is to clap perfectly in unison. Everyone focuses on someone opposite them. No-one should clap before anyone else: the group should feel the right moment and clap as one.

Edelweiss

Sit in circle, arms out to the sides with elbows bent, right palm facing up, left palm facing down (palms of both hands should be a few inches over and beneath partners' palms). To the chorus of "Edelweiss", and in the rhythm, with left hand make 2 claps on to partner's right hand, 2 claps on own left thigh, 2 claps on own right thigh, 2 claps on palm of own right hand and 2 claps on top of right hand. After a few goes, reverse direction.

Smile

Stand in circle, one person in centre. Centre person has to make someone smile by going up to them and saying, "Smile if you love me, honey"; other person must respond, "I love you honey, but I just can't smile", without smiling. When person in centre gets someone to smile they change places.

Wink murder

Sit in large circle, eyes closed. One person chooses murderer by walking round the outside of the circle and tapping one person on the shoulder. When murderer has been selected, all open eyes and try to find out who the murderer is. To kill someone the murderer must wink at them. When winked at, that person must immediately fall to the ground dead with a blood-curdling scream. Detectives are allowed to say if they think they know who the murderer is, but if wrong they too must die. Aim is to kill everyone before being discovered.

Battery game

All sit in circle. One person goes out of the room. Group decides who shall be the battery and two or three electrical appliances (eg: door bell, hair drier, alarm clock, radio, kettle, toaster). Person from outside comes back into the room. Battery starts the current going around the circle by passing a squeeze. When the current gets to each appliance, they make the noise appropriate for their appliance. When the current returns to the battery, the battery person starts it going the other way around the circle. The person in the centre has to guess, by watching the current as it goes round, who is the battery.

Train game

Sitting in large circle, going round the circle, each person saying one of the following in fairly quick rhythm: "Diddlee /Dum /Diddlee /Dum /Diddlee /Diddlee /Diddlee /Dum". When people make a mistake they stand behind the circle and act as distracters to try to get the others still sitting to make a mistake. They can do this by waving their arms about, or pulling funny faces, etc. They must not actually touch those sitting.

Foot touch

Stand close together in a circle. First person moves a foot so that it is touching their neighbour's foot. Neighbour must move the touched foot to touch their neighbour's foot, going round the circle. Must not move other foot. Out if you fall over or cannot reach neighbours foot when your turn.

Communication Games

Chinese Whispers

Sit in a circle. A message is whispered to the first person who then whispers it on. Compare the end result with the original message

Passing Squeezes

Everyone sits in a circle holding hands. One person sends a squeeze in one direction and you wait for it to return to sender

Quarrels

In pairs, A says to B, "No you didn't", B to A "Oh yes I did", for a given situation, and develop the argument. Reverse roles. After several goes, give handicaps, eg hold hands, close eyes, sit on hands. Generates easy talk and makes people aware of ways of communication.

Mirrors

Divide into pairs and stand facing one another. Whatever one does the other must copy, eg brushing teeth, washing face - good with music.

Funny Faces

Stand in a line or circle and pass on funny faces or emotion around the circle. Add sounds and movement too.

Body Drums

Divide into pairs. Once starts up a rhythm on their own body and their partner's. The other joins in with another rhythm. See how many different sounds and rhythms you can get.

Body Greeting

Say hello to other people with designated or spontaneous parts of the body

Sharing Interests

Prepare a grid on flip chart paper. Make it big enough to draw or write in the boxes.

	Anne	Bob	Chris	David	Elaine
Anne	XXXXX				
Bob		XXXXX			
Chris			XXXXX		
David				XXXXX	
Elaine					XXXXX

Ask the participants to work in pairs and find two things (it could be feelings on a topic) in common. When each pair has decided upon the things they share, invite them to fill in the appropriate spaces in the grid in drawing or writing. Emphasise that either is acceptable. Encourage the participants to work with as many members of the group as possible, moving on to someone else when each pair has completed the task. At the end of the exercise, allow a few minutes for group members to look at the grid and talk with each other about their findings. This is especially important where there is a large group and insufficient time for everyone to work with everyone else.

Creativity Games

Magic Blob

Leader starts with magic blob - imaginary material that can be used to make anything. Mime it into a guessable shape which everyone else or the next person should guess before taking on the blob themselves.

Statues

One person sets up a movement and a pose and other people add to it to make up a machine or an animal, eg combine harvester, hippopotamus. An extension of this game is for the group to make a statue or tableau representing something abstract eg courage, the guilty secret.

Group mime

One person starts a mime which other join in to show an event or action.

Mime Rhyme

One person thinks of a word and reveals that it rhymes with (eg) "deep". The others try to find the word by acting out the word they think it is, eg by leaping or sleeping.

Spontaneous Stories

Sit in a circle and one person starts a story. Next person takes it on when the facilitator claps.

Group Fantasy

Everyone lies on their backs with eyes closed and hands touching in the centre. One person describes their fantasy and other listen, relax or add to fantasy.

Group Drawing

Each person has access to crayons, colours and a large sheet of paper in the middle for all to draw something which links with the others.

Energy Raisers

Use these when people are getting tired to extend their attention span

Stuck in the mud - a tig game

Someone is "it". When caught, players stand still with their arms stretched out sideways and their legs apart. They can be released by another player passing between their legs. (Large groups may need a rule insisting on a one-way system between those legs, say back to front only, so as not to crack heads.)

Hoopla Tig

A tig game much the same as above, but when caught players stand with their hands pointing to the sky. They can be released by a pair of other players getting together, holding hands and hoopla-ing their "ring" of hands over the caught person, taking it down to the ground, so that the caught person can step out to freedom.

Chain Tig

When caught, the player joins hands with the one who was "it", and continues until everybody is caught and holding hands in one long line. Best played with only the people on the ends of the line being able to tig. This game does not work well if the group is too large or small for its space.

Snake Tig

One person has to try to tig other people - when tiggered, player goes in front of first tigger, held by waist, and does the tapping, and so on.

Red Rover

Group tries to cross from one side of room/field to other and avoid being tiggered by "it" - those who are, have to help tig next time.

Stations

Set up a series of "stations", eg chairs - one less than the number in the group. One person stands in the middle and counts to 3, at which point everyone runs for a station. The person without a station then goes to the middle and counts to 3, etc.

Touch Blue

Leader says "touch blue" and everyone tries to touch something that colour, or whatever is said.

Storm

As a group, start making sounds or movements quietly, then louder/more furious, then quieter and to stillness.

Dawn Chorus

Everyone slowly awakens as their favourite animal, making noises quietly, then loud, then quiet again.

My Bonnie

Everyone stands up in a circle and sings "My bonnie lies over the ocean..." and crouches down at the first letter 'b', and up on the next, and so on.

Rhythm clap

Everyone closes their eyes and starts to clap randomly - listen to the changes in the rhythms as the group converges.

Sardines

One person goes to hide, everyone goes in search. When you find the person you join them and so on until everyone is there.

Handshake Chorus

Take turns around a circle to stand up and shake hands with 5 other people and sing a chorus of a well known song with the other 5 before sitting down in a different place.

Touch Noses

Leader says "touch noses" and everyone touches the nose of someone else, or whatever body part the leader says.

Snake Skin

Group stand in a line with their legs apart, and the front person crawls down between legs followed by everyone else, standing up at the end of the line.

Find Your Animal

Everyone is assigned an animal and has to find the others of their kind by making the right noise.

Hokey Cokey

In a large circle, sing and complete the actions to the song, "You put your left leg in..."

Streets and Lanes

Everyone stands in a grid pattern 2 arms length apart. Stretch out arms all in the same direction and set someone to run between lanes, being chased by someone else. On command change through 90 degrees.

Back to Back Rub

Stand back to back in pairs and rub backs up and down.

Hug Tig

Someone is "it" who chases the others, who are only safe when they are hugging in a pair. However, they can only hug to a slow count of 5.

Belly Laughs

Everyone lies on the floor with their head on the stomach of someone else - then the first person starts to laugh.

Quack quack

Everyone is a duck - so you make friends by rubbing bottoms together and saying "quack quack" to the other person through your legs as you greet them. Then go on to make friends with other people.

In the Manner Of

A person goes out of the room. Those inside decide on an ad-verb, eg. angrily, thoughtfully, joyously. The person outside the room re-enters and has

to guess the ad-verb by instructing people to perform actions "in the manner of the word". For instance, they might tell someone "brush your teeth in the manner of the word", or two people "play tennis in the manner of the word". A limit on the number of guesses may be imposed.

Freeze!

Two people are in the centre of the circle and they act out a scene of their choice (or of the BGF's prompting), eg. lifting a heavy box together, a dentist pulling someone's tooth out, a circus ringmaster trying to tame a tiger, etc. It can involve as much noise/speech as they like.

After they've had a little time to act, anyone in the circle can shout "FREEZE!" At this point, the actors must instantly hold whatever position they are in, and fall silent. The person who froze the scene taps one of the actors on the back and takes their place in the scene, accurately recreating their pose. The person whose place was taken rejoins the circle.

When the new actor is in position, everyone in the circle says "3,2,1, GO!" and a new scene then happens, completely detached from what was happening before. For instance, the people lifting the box together may now be teaching each other ballet, the dentist may now be a grave robber extracting bits to experiment on, etc. After a while, the scene is frozen again, and so on.

It is customary for the person who freezes the scene to take the place of the person who has been in for two scenes. Also, the more spontaneous/crazy the idea, the better!

Scene Replay

Best done with two base groups together. A small number of actors stand in front of the "audience" and the audience gives them a starting line and a finishing line, eg. "why are you holding my pineapple?", to "oh no! The tent's on fire!" and the actors must improvise a short scene (up to a minute long - 30 seconds is good), working from the first line to the second line.

The actors remember the scene they just acted and the audience has to shout out a new way for it to be acted, eg. in 15 seconds instead of 30, in a new setting (underwater, in a mosh pit, etc), or a different style, eg. mime, opera. After this has been done a few times, a new set of actors makes a new scene with new starting and finishing lines.

Touch This

You call out three things at a time. Each player then has to get into a position touching all three things named. You will need to progress sensitively through a range of things, perhaps starting with things around the room - a bench, some metal, the wall, etc. - to things that might be on people - fabric, something red, someone else's shoe, etc. - to things that are on people, someone else's spectacles, knee, hair, etc.

Pretzels

One person leaves the room, the others hold hands in a line. One end leads off and twists in and out, over and under, back through the line and then joins hands with the other end. The person is then called back into the room and without breaking any connections has to untangle the pretzel.

Large Group Games

Chineses Charades

Five people go out of the room. Those in the room agree on a short sketch, or scene, that is to be mimed out, involving one actor only. Preferably, it should involve large gestures, eg. digging, kicking, etc. An example might be that you get to work in the morning, only to realise that you're completely naked, begin cycling back home, but get stopped by the police and end up doing community service, cleaning up dog poo from pavements.

One person from outside is called in and told the scene in full. They go and call in the second person, who takes a seat with the audience. The first person acts out the scene, but doesn't tell the second person what is happening. The first person then sits down and the second person calls in the third. The second person now acts out the scene to the third, who then acts it to the fourth, who acts it to the fifth. Each time it is acted, it will be further removed from the original. The fifth person must explain what they think they have just acted.

Duck-Duck-Goose

The group sits in a circle and one person walks around the outside, tapping each person in turn on the head as they go. Each time they tap, they say "duck". When they feel ready, instead of saying "duck", they say "GOOSE!", and then, carrying on in the same direction, they must run around the circle, back to the goose's place. The person who has been tagged a goose must chase after the tagger and touch them before they get back to the spare place. If they do this, the tagger carries on as before. If they fail, they become the tagger.

Ladders

The group splits into pairs. In each pair, the people sit facing each other, with their legs outstretched, feet touching. Each person should sit next to the corresponding person in the pairs(s) next to them, but leave a gap of a couple of feet or so between their legs. The pair at the bottom of the ladder is pair number one, the next is two, and so on. When the BGF calls a number, both people in that pair must race each other to the top of the ladder. They then turn opposite ways, running down the outside of the ladder, before coming together at the bottom and racing each other back to their original places.

Multiple numbers could be called, or sums could be called, eg. $3 + 4$ (pair 11 would then go). Or, "multiples of three" - 3,6,9,12 etc. would all go.

It is very important that when participants are in the ladder, they keep their legs together and flat on the floor, otherwise people running up the ladder may trip. They also need to watch out that they don't get their fingers trodden on by people running down the outside of the ladder.

Sardines

One person goes off to hide and the rest of the group goes off individually (or in pairs/threes) to find them. Anyone who finds the hidden person hides with them, until everyone is together.

Hug-raid

Check that another base group is not doing anything too serious/involving, like discussion or creative listening, then open their door and burst in with your base group, giving everyone hugs. It's probably best to do this just before an activity you have agreed to do cooperatively with the other base group, or just before the session is due to end.

Stuck in the Mud

Someone is "it" and they have to tag everyone else. Anyone who's tagged stands on the spot with their arms out wide. They can only be freed by someone who's still free coming and shooting under their legs (or in some versions, hugging them) hugging them. If you have a very large group, you may need more than one "it".

Lap sit

Form a tight, even circle facing the same way, with one shoulder pointing into the centre of the circle. All sit at the same time. Now try to take a step.

Human Maze

Individuals form a maze for blindfolded people to pass through or be led through.

Giants Elves and Wizards

Get whole group to practice being giants - arms up, look big, shout "fee, fie, foe fum"; then elves (crouch down and go "ee ee ee"); then wizards (stand legs apart, points hand in front and say "zap"). Tell people they are to get into either two groups on opposite sides or several groups of say five, in spokes of wheel and decide which of the above they are to be. Giants crush elves, elves dodge wizards, wizards turn giants into stone. At count of three then all advance to face others and become giants, elves or wizards. If your team win then in the long line version you chase the other side and catch new members for your team or in the spokes of a wheel version you nominate which member of the team you want, before passing them and on to the next team. If there is a stand off, you must start again. Go on until you're bored or no one left in one team.

Sausage Machine

Lie down as close together as possible, on alternate sides with 'interlocking' heads. Pass people along outstretched hands to the other end. Need someone at each end to catch.

Fishpool

Circle of chairs with people identified as mackerel, cod, plaice or herring - on "fish in the sea!" all leave places and run round outside, if your fish is mentioned you have to run round outside too.

Emu Stomp

In threes, middle one bends over to touch ankles while two neighbours pat together from shoulders to feet and up again, quite hard - very refreshing.

Mobile Maps / line ups

Identify one point in the room as, e.g. Birmingham and get everyone to stand around the room from where they come from. Ask people to talk to neighbours to find out who else is from their area. Or can get everyone to line up in order

of by the first letter of his or her forename/surname, or by birthday, etc. Fun to do in silence.

The Sun Shines On...

Get people to stand (or sit) in a huge circle and shout out categories like - all those who've had shredded wheat for breakfast, or who've listened to Radio 1 this week, and get those people to change places. A variation means there is one too few chairs so someone is always left in the middle to shout a new category.

Pruee

One person is told secretly in advance that they are the Pruee and the rest are told that they have to shut their eyes and find the pruee. Everyone then goes around touching people and saying 'Pruee?'. If the person does not reply they are the Pruee! Then you work to the person's hand, hold on, open your eyes and become part of the pruee yourself. Game ends when everyone has found the pruee.

Ducks and Geese

A quarter of the group go into the middle of the circle, hold their ankles, close their eyes and walk backwards to try to find the gap in the circle. The rest can move to make the gap harder to find. Once a duck gets out it can open its eyes and quack loudly to encourage the others to the gap.

Murder in the Dark

One person draws the card as the murderer and another sits out as the detective. All the lights are turned off and after a short pause a murder is committed - someone screams and everyone is supposed to freeze - but the murderer may move quickly. After a count of say 5 the lights come on and the detectives ask questions to find the murderer. Only the murderer may lie.

Spirals

To suitable music eg singing "building bridges" break the large circle in one place and take everybody slowly in a big spiral in to the middle, and then out again - leaves a lovely feeling of togetherness.

Body Ball Pass

Lie in large circle and try to pass a ball from one to the next without using hands.

Hearts, clubs, spades and diamonds

Sitting in circle, each is identified as heart, club or whatever, which someone shuffles a pack of cards and shouts out top card. those who are called out eg spades, must move one seat to the left. If someone is sitting on them, they cannot move. It is a race to get back to your original seat.

Monarch of the Court of Silence

Everyone sits at one end of the room with the monarch at the other end sitting on a throne (a chair). They invite a person to approach as silently as possible. If the monarch hears them they are told to sit down, but if they do it silently they are welcomed and invited to choose the next person to approach.

People to People

In large group of concentric circle facing someone else. Shout out things to touch without, if possible, falling down. eg elbow to elbow, hand on foot. On people to people, all change.

Thus and so?

Leader performs various actions saying "Thus does the policeman" (while making traffic signs) or whatever, which everyone has to imitate. If they say "So does the guitar play" (beginning with `so'), or whatever, they must not. Those who get it wrong start an inner circle eventually composed of everyone.

Cat and Mouse

Stand round in pairs, side by side. One person chosen to be the cat who chases the mouse. Mouse can stand next to a pair, whereupon person at other end of (now 3 people) becomes the mouse and is chased. Note that the mouse is very hard to catch, so swap cat and mouse over if necessary to give the cat a rest.

Follow

Everybody selects one other person in the group secretly and then follows the round. Then select two people and try to be equi-distant from both. Then select one to keep near and one to be as far away as possible from. Can also each select a person to keep as far from as possible and have a timer which when it goes off kills you if you are too close to the person you were avoiding.

Zip Zap Boing

Stand in circle. One person puts hands together and points them at person next to them and goes Zip. Person next to them points at next neighbour going round the circle with both hands and goes Zip. This continues around circle until someone decides to point across circle to someone and go Zap. Receiving person must go Zip to a neighbour or Zap across the circle. (You cannot Zap the person who zapped you.) Receiver can also reject the Zip or Zap by raising both hands, palms outwards and saying Boing. Zipper or Zapper must the zip or Zap someone else. Lives lost for mistakes (saying eg Zip instead of Zap, and slowness).

Splat!

Person in centre of circle two handed points at someone and says Splat! Receiver must duck, and the two either side must double handed point at each other saying Splat! Slowest sits out. Game gets confusing as circle becomes a mix of players and non players. Last two standing have a back to back duel to determine winner.

Team / Group games

Machines

Each group forms a machine for the others to observe eg helicopter or something of their own choice for others to guess.

Amoeba Race

Needs protoplasm. At least four people, surrounded by at least six people who make the cell wall - joining hands and facing outwards, and one person is the nucleus who sits on the protoplasm directing movement. Form several amoeba and race.

Points of contact

In groups of say five, how few points of contact can you make with the floor? eg six points, then four and so on.

Bring up to the centre

Give prize or thank first group's runner to bring up to the centre something you want eg kings, ring, penny etc.

I hope so - as a knockout

In each group one person goes in to the centre and faces another and says 'most worthy [auditable adjective] this is a solemn and serious occasion', meeting the other people's eyes. All in circle bow, hands together and say 'I hope so, I hope so, I hope so'. Then the person faced goes in and repeats the session. Anyone who laughs, and later on smiles, has to sit out.

Dragons

Form long lines holding each other's waists, try to catch the end of the tail with the head.

More...

Various party games from TV and radio will entertain everyone else, like the three chair improvisation, just a minute etc. (Three chair improvisation - occupants of the chairs assume certain character, eg restaurant diners. Fourth person joins them and changes scene by their actions - eg to vicar sermonising. If another member of those watching has a good idea they come in and one of the others sits down.)

Parties

Two people hold a party. Guests arrive in pairs, each having decided what their foible is. Hosts have to decide from the actions of each pair their foible (eg fear of carpets, no trousers, chain smoking).

Mind Games

Going to Italy

Sit in circle. Leader says that they are "going to Italy" and they will take anyone with them who brings the right clothes. They then describe clothes they are going to take. Other players must try to guess right clothes for them. Leader says if they can come or not, if they are correct. You take clothes of top half of person on right and bottom half of person on left or make up your own variation.

Crossed or Uncrossed

Sit in circle. Leader passes on a pair of scissors and says "They are uncrossed". The game is for the other players to take scissors and try to discover the secret. Secret is for players to guess you are not referring to scissors but to your legs.

The Moon has a Big Round Face

Sit in a circle. The leader takes a stick and draws on the floor an imaginary moon, as he says, "The moon has a big round face, 2 eyes, a nose, a mouth and 2 enormous ears". He then passes the stick to the next person and asks them to copy it. The drawing and what is said in this game are not important and the secret is that the leader must pass the stick on by passing it from one hand to the other and then handing it to the next person.

Chinese Numbers

The leader takes 10 matches and arranges them in a patterns on the floor. The more complicated and carefully placed the better. Leader then says "That is 5" or whatever number he chooses. He then changes the pattern and says "That is [another number]". The number of fingers that are put subtly on the floor after arranging the pattern is what the leader is really talking about.

Magic camera

Sit in a circle. Leader sends an accomplice out of the room, and tells people to sit in interesting poses and stay still. Takes a photo of someone and hands the "camera" to someone to give to the accomplice. Leader then sits in same pose as the person they took the photo of. Accomplice talks about image coming clear and says whose photo has been taken.

My Aunt likes Coffee

Leader says "My Aunt likes coffee but doesn't like tea; what does your aunt like?" Other players say things that their aunts like until they guess what the essential ingredients are for their aunts to like things. The essential ingredient is that she likes things which contain a double letter, eg feet, cotton (coffee but not tea).

The Hobbies Game

Sit in a circle and each person thinks about initials of their first name and surname. The object is to make up an imaginary hobby with the same set of initials, eg Martin Scott - marvellous singing; Dawn Geron - drawing giraffes. Make it just the first names if the children are younger. Or get them to guess what their hobby is and they have to realise that the rule is using their initials.

Closing Games: For Reflection and Evaluation

Slam Dunk Suggestions

Put a stack of blank sheets (all the same colour) on a table and also provide pens. Ask participants to take a few sheets and to honestly share on paper something that occurred during the day that was either meaningful, or perhaps could have been improved. The contributions are anonymous. Then scrunch up the pieces of paper and shoot them/place them (your choice) into a receptacle in the middle of the group. Someone then volunteers to shake up the contents, remove a rumpled sheet and read aloud the wrinkly words. This activity should bring up discussion on sensitive issues or earlier events which may have been difficult to comment on at the time. Good for sorting things out.

Story-Line Closure Technique

The facilitator begins a factual story (2 or 3 sentences that relates to what the group has just experienced). Indicate that as your story travels around the circle each person in turn should add a sentence or two that either outlines or clarifies something that has occurred. Keep the Story-Line going, centred on the shared experience and keep it brief.

Sundowner

At the end of a day/workshop/session/event ask the group to split into smaller groups whose task it is to identify those topics they have experienced which are most important to remember, and then come up with some mnemonic to help remember the most important facts. Another variation is to come up with a limerick/poem/telegram of the important points. These can be fed back to the whole group to illustrate what has been learnt.

Freeze frame

Ask the group to imagine they are putting on a video tape from the day or event into the video, pressing the REWIND button and then PLAY. If it helps, they can close their eyes, or look at the timetable. Encourage them to watch the day/event, fast forwarding or rewinding as they wish. Ask them to PAUSE at anything that seems significant or important to them and remember those pictures for later on. When they have finished ask the group to mentally enlarge one of the pictures and encourage them to share with the group:

- a verbal representation of the picture, including colours/perspectives/people
- with whom back at home they could most easily share the picture
- if the picture was developed and framed, where would they hang it.

Some individuals could model the scene using other group members.

Vortex

Everyone holds hands in a large circle. Leader drops hands with lefthand person and starts leading the group clockwise round circle, leaving last person static until rest pass them. Make a tighter spiral into centre, and finally double back, leading everyone out again - the vortex being where everyone reverses direction. A good one to sing/chant to.

Whoosh!

Everyone crouches down in a circle, holding hands. All together stand up and raise arms shouting "whoOOSH!".

For Affirmation and Winding Down

Knitting

Bring a brightly coloured ball of wool with you and ask the group to sit in a circle as close to each other as possible. Say that you are all going to give a last positive message to another member of the group. As you finish your message throw the ball of wool to the person you have just addressed, whilst holding on to the end.

The second person then gives someone else some positive feedback and throws the ball on to them whilst retaining the loose end round his/her finger. Three people will now be joined by the ball of wool. The feedback continues until everyone in the group has been included. By this stage the wool will be very tangled, representing the cohesiveness of the group. Use a pair of sharp scissors to cut the strings, symbolising that we must all return to our own lives, but that which was once connected can become so again.

Two strokes and a wish

Go round the circle each saying two positive things about yourself and a wish based on something that happened during the event.

Key Words

Everyone in the group brainstorms a list of key words that describe their experience. This could be done as a whole group or people could do it individually on a symbol, for themselves or to give to someone else.

Backwriter

Ask everyone to find someone else to pin a piece of paper on to their back. Then, with a felt tip pen go around writing a brief message on the backs of those people who made some impression on them in some positive way, or a positive message on everyone's piece of paper.

Verbal Gift Giving

Pick a person in your group and share a positive characteristic or attribute they have, or give an imaginary gift (thing, quality, whatever) to the person on your left. Make sure everyone is included.

You Fill Me Up

Provide a full clear glass jug of water, an empty jug, and some cups. Participants pour water into the receiving jug in turn, stating the ingredient they added to the group and what they would like the others to take away. After everyone has spoken, stir and ask everyone to pour a small drink into a cup and give an appropriate toast that everyone can drink to.

Postcards

People could commit themselves to sending one other person a postcard in the next fortnight, encouraging them and wishing them well - and these could be provided from the event and self addressed.

Counting

Lie down, perhaps in the dark. Start counting up from one. Anyone can call out a number, but if two call the same number, then the group has to start at one again.

Find a game quick:

Risk level	Name	Description
Energy Raisers		
Low	Stuck tag	When caught, freed by person going between your legs
	Chain tag	When caught, join on catching chain
	Snake tag	Person caught joins on from of chain to become catcher
	Touch blue	Everyone has to touch something blue on someone else
	Touch noses	Everyone touches someone else's nose
	Dragon	Leader of conga tries to catch tail
	Red river	People caught help catch others as they cross to other side of room
	Stacks on the mill	Person on chair chants 'stacks on the mill' x 3, and then 'more on still' and next person sits on lap. Repeat
	Whoosh	Circle, crouch, hold hands, - whoosh up to crescendo
	Storm	Start slow and quiet sounds and progress to loud and furious
	Dawn chorus	Everyone wakes slowly and makes favourite animal sounds, getting louder
	Snail	Hold hands, spiral round centre and unwind
	Pruee	Eyes closed. People look for silent 'pruee' by asking 'pruee?' of those touched. If no reply join on and keep looking until pruee found
	Rhythm clap	Eyes closed. Clap vigorously and randomly. Listen for changes.
	Sardines	One person hides. Everyone looks and when they are found you hide with them.
Handshake chorus	Take turns to stand up, shake hands with 5 people and sing chorus of well known song with them. Then sit in a new place.	
Med	Silly walk tag	Chaser makes up silly walk. When caught, new chaser makes up new silly walk
	Snake skin	Person at front of line crawls between legs to stand at back of line, etc
	Animals	Groups of 3 or 4 choose animal noise, close eyes and find each other by sound
	Monkey, elephant, palm tree, toaster	Person in centre of circle pints to person who has to perform action with people on each side. Sit down if mistake made
	Emu rumble	2 people percussion massage down and up back and legs of third
	Car wash	People crawling between legs of front to back circle are scrub massaged
	Circle massage	All massage person in front's back
	Back to back rub	Partner, stand back to back and rub backs up and down
	Street and lanes	Form grid, arms out. Cat chases mouse, but grid can rotate 90° on command
Through the wall	Two teams. Team A sit in a line, facing outwards in alternate directions. One of team A chases team B. Team B can go through gaps in line; chaser cannot. Chaser can sit behind one of own team and they take over. When caught, 'Bs' retire	

High	Hug tag	It. Cannot be caught of hugging someone else (for count of 5)
	Belly laughs	All lie with head on other's belly and tell jokes
	Quack quack	Be ducks and greet by rubbing bums together and saying quack quack to each other between legs. Repeat
Trust Games		
Low	Knots	Circle, close eyes, grab two other hands, open eyes and untangle
	Leading blind	Half group leads other blindfolded half round room, then swap over
	Circle lap sit	Form tight even circle and all sit down on each other together
Med	Rainforest massage	Small group gently finger tip massage all over person standing in centre
	Cradle rock	Person lying on back picked up and gently rocked by group
	Circle fall	Person standing in centre caught and passed abck and forth across centre
	Line pass	First person in line is passed back down line over heads in turn
	Puppets	People in outer circle progress round moving hands arms or heads of inner circle
	Wooden dolls	Doll person is moved hands, head, face & walked step by step by partner
High	Robot chase	Blind robot orally directed by partner to catch another blind robot
	Group lift request	Person supported in air by group as she rolls, tumbles, sways, etc
	Missile	Group in 2 lines catches person who runs and dives and lands between the lines
	Find your partner	Pair off, close eyes, separate & walk randomly and find partner by touch
	Body rolls	Take turns to roll along a line of people lying on their backs
Introduction games		
Low	Pillow throw	Throw pillow to person and circle has to say their name
	Name both sides	Say your name and names of the people on either side of you
Med	Mime intro	Say name and mime job or hobby
High	Circle memory	Introduce everyone before you and yourself
Communications games		
Low	Chinese whispers	Pass message round circle or along line
	Pass the squeeze	Hold hands and pass a squeeze round circle (or race down two lines)
	Train stations	Pass the squeeze plus noises
Med	Elephants	One person communicates via pre-agreed noises to 'blind' conga line to move them round instructions
	Mirrors	Pair off and face each other. One moves, the other mirrors them. Swap. Try with music.
High	Passing faces	Pass a funny face or emotion round a circle. (Option: add to intensity or sound)
	Body greets	Say hello with parts of your body
Creativity Games		
Low	Magic glob	Pass imaginary magic glob round circle and mime it into something to be guessed

	Statues	Static silent group formation or tabloid
	Machines	Individuals add to the group machine (or beast) with position, movement or sound
	Group drawing	Everyone draws on a large sheet so that one drawing results (can do in pairs or more)
Med	Circle story	Each in turn contribute to a fantastic story
	Group mime	Everyone joins in a group mime
	Group fantasy	On backs, silent, eyes closed, heads touching. Relax. One person tells fantasy; others listen and relax (or join in)