

Appendix : Icebreakers

Let's move!

Get participants to stand together randomly in the room. Let participants know that we are going to say 'hi!' to one another with our bodies. Invite participants to walk around amongst each other. At the facilitator's call, say 'hi' with a wink to the people you pass by. Next, at the facilitator's call, say 'hi' with a touch of the elbows. Again, after giving participants a minute to say 'hi' with a touch of the elbows, invite them to say 'hi' to one another with a touch of the shoulders. Then, with the touch of the hips. Next, with the touch of the back. And finally, invite participants to say 'hi' to one another with a hug.

Pleasure rituals

The following icebreaker is a great way to 'randomly' break up participants into smaller groups for conversation.

Get participants to stand together randomly in the room. Ask participants, 'What are some of the things you enjoy doing every day?' Invite participants to call out their pleasure rituals. Some participants will call out the same pleasure rituals, react in resonance to the responses of others, or give similar types of rituals in relation to others. Name some of the common rituals or types of rituals that have been called out, and ask participants to stand with the people in the room they've noticed who enjoy doing the same things. Each group gets a chance to name their pleasure rituals.

Yoga or stretching:

Lead participants through some yoga stances for 10-15 minutes, or through some gentle stretches that engage diverse muscle groups of the body. Work your way from the top of the head down to the feet. Movement releases tensions in joints, alleviates muscle pains and stiffness, and invigorates blood flow and oxygen to the brain. This is particularly useful if participants have been sitting for a long time, or have just returned from a lunch break.

F-E-M-I-N-I-S-T:

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Each participant gets a turn to do the exercise one at a time, or together if in a big group, which is to spell the word, 'F-E-M-I-N-I-S-T,' with your hips!

Moment of gratitude and energy sharing:

Ask participants to stand in a circle and bow in gratitude to one another. Then, invite participants to open their arms and bring their hands towards their heart, bringing in the gratitude of everyone in the room. Then, invite participants to open their arms out again, and spread their gratitude back out. Next, ask participants to open their arms wide and upwards to the sun and the air, and lower their arms, putting their hands on their abdomen, bringing that energy into their sacral area. Next, invite participants to bend forward and open their arms down to the ground, giving thanks to Mother Earth. Let participants bring themselves back to stand up straight, distributing that energy through all their chakras. Allow their hands to run up the central line of their bodies, and continue to lift their hands up to the heavens, the stars and the cosmos, and then bring that energy back to themselves in hands of prayer. Lastly, invite participants to bow and say thanks to everyone in their presence.

Quick conversations:

The following icebreaker is particularly relevant when coming back to the conversation after a break, or at the start of the second day of conversation in the case of multi-day conversation sessions.

Ask participants to find someone in the room that they have not yet spoken to, and introduce themselves. Tell your partner about your experience of the previous session. Each person gets one minute to speak, and then switch.

Power circle:

Invite all participants to stand in a wide circle. Ask the group, 'Who of you have at least one collaborator in your activism/work?' If you do, take one step forward into the circle. Next, ask the group, 'Who of you feel you are part of a collective or have more than one collaborator?' If you do, take another step forward into the circle. Third ask, 'Who of you are part of an organisation?' Take another step forward. Who of you is part of an institution? A national community? A transnational community? A global community? With each question, those who identify take a step forward towards the centre of the circle. Next, ask participants to take a moment to see who is closer to the centre of the circle (i.e. closer to power), and who is on the outskirts.

Clapping rhythm:

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Each participant creates a sound and a simultaneous body movement to describe feminism. Create a coordinated rhythm by slapping thighs or clapping hands, and creating a break in the rhythm that provides space for each person in the circle, one at a time, to express their sound and movement. Go around the circle once, twice or three times, depending on the number of participants and flow of the exercise.

Name game:

All participants stand in a circle. A ball/small stuffed toy is thrown from one person to their person of choice, while saying the name of the person they are throwing the ball to. Each person must throw the ball to the same person every time, and the ball must be thrown to every participant once throughout one round. Each round is timed and must be completed faster than the previous round.

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