



Building Blocks for Programming

WARM-UPS

What is a Warm-up?

- A non-threatening activity, which encourages interaction.
- Can be formatted (through use of name tags, verbal instructions, etc.) to mix members up and bring together women who might not otherwise readily mix.
- Can also be used as a method of dividing the group into smaller groups for a main body program.

What does it achieve?

- Tied to the morning's program, it can provide a nice lead-in.
- It allows quiet/shy members a chance to speak in the large group and hear their voices at a time when the comfort level is high.
- It can be a transition time to get people's thoughts moving in the direction of the main body of the program.
- It can stir up the group; get members moving and laughing.
- The sole purpose of a warm-up may be to have fun and it does not have to relate to the main body of the program (although this should be stated before the activity).

When/why is it useful?

- Is to be used before the main body of the program.
- Helps you to be conscious of your group dynamics – your activity should not make anyone feel unnecessarily uncomfortable.
- Encourages group interaction.
- Sets the climate for the morning.

What are some Warm-up ideas and activities?

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

- **The Name Game** – Each person says their name along with an adjective (beginning with the same letter as the person's first name) that describes them and then repeats the previous people's names and adjectives (e.g. Silly Sarah, Laughing Leslie...)
- **Mad Hatter Tea Party** – Members must be in two lines facing each other. Leader asks a question and each member must respond to that question or statement for 30 seconds and then the other member facing the first member must do the same. E.g. Where did you grow up? After both members have responded to the question one line shifts with each person moving down one spot so they are now facing a different member. Leader then asks a different question. This activity has also been used as a main body by some groups.

- **Sharing with Pictures** – Each member brings in picture of their baby/children. Everyone must try to match the correct family with the member of the group. The object is to help members get to know each other more intimately.
- **Co-hum** – list well-known songs on a flip chart (e.g. Happy Birthday, Yankee Doodle...) and give people coloured tags that correspond to songs. Everyone with a blue tag hums Happy Birthday, red tags hum Yankee Doodle all at the same time. The object is to find the people humming your tune and introduce yourselves to each other. This is also a fun method of dividing the large group into smaller sub-groups.

CHALLENGING MEMBERS AND/OR INTRODUCING A TOPIC

- **Magic Throw** – Everyone is in a circle; the leader starts by quickly throwing an imaginary object to another member while stating the name of the object and the name of the person to whom it is thrown, e.g. “I am throwing this box to Anne”, Anne catches the box, then changes the object and throws it quickly to someone else: “Catch this egg, Martha.” Continue for one or two turns each. This boosts group energy while having fun.
- **Too Many Cooks** – Cut up two recipes (separate the title, ingredients, instructions, etc.). Divide the group into two; each member of the group is given part of a recipe. Members must put themselves in order as quickly as possible (i.e. the recipe must make sense) and when they have done so, shout “bon apétit!”.
- **Scramble Words** – Divide the group into three or four small groups; each group must race to be the first to unscramble several words usually related to the main topic (e.g. topic is birth order – ldstee (eldest).
- **True or False Quiz**- for any topic, in a large group. Make a list of 5-10 questions related to the topic of the main body. Members must answer true or false either on paper or out loud. The object is to get members thinking about a topic.
- **Action Sociogram** – Members respond to a variety of questions by answering yes or no and going to one side of the room or the other. E.g. Have you had a shower in the last week? All those answering yes go to one side and those answering no to the other. Several questions related to the main body topic may be asked and answered in this manner. The object is to get members up and on their feet, moving about and also to get them thinking about the topic.

What are the key success factors of a warm-up?

- The group is now paying attention.
- Members are eager to participate in the main program after a good lead-in.
- Group members who might not normally connect can be brought together through a non-threatening warm-up.
- Can break up cliques (or members who like to talk among themselves) by moving people around before the main body starts.
- All members can find common ground by laughing through an amusing activity.