

## Quick Tips

### Icebreakers

*What do they do?*

Introduce Members

Create a Comfortable Environment

Explore Thoughts and Feelings

Break up Cliques

Release Tension

Encourage Interaction

Acquaint

Kick Things Off

Evoke Laughter, Fun

Re-Energize

Share Information

## Leader Hints:

are available on the  
following topics

- Agendas
- Advising Groups
- Budgeting
- Co-Sponsorship
- Community Service
- Conflict Resolution
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Delegation
- Difficult Members
- Elections
- Event and Program Planning
- Fundraising
- Goal Setting
- Group Performance Evaluation
- Icebreakers
- Individual Evaluation
- Meetings and Minutes
- Motivation
- Newsletters
- Officer Transition
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Publicizing Events
- Recruiting New Members
- Retreats
- Starting a New Organization
- Stress Management
- Team Building
- Time Management

*Leader Hints* is a publication of the University of New Mexico Student Activities Center. Copies are available at the Student Activities Center, SUB Room 1018. For more information, call 277-4706.

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# Leader Hints

Leadership Development Tips  
for Student Organizations

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## Ice Breakers



Icebreakers are activities designed to foster interaction among members. They are particularly useful in the initial stages of group development, but can be effective in later stages to challenge assumptions, break up cliques, and deal with problems. There are hundreds of ways to “break the ice.” Here are just a few ideas.

## Stage 1: Getting to know you

*At this stage, group members know very little about each other. Focus on names and low-risk disclosure.*

- **Name Game:** State your name and some bit of information and repeat this information about each person preceding you.
- **Grab Bag:** Pull out an object from a bag and explain how you are similar to it.
- **M & Ms:** Pass around a bag of M&M candies and have everyone take some. Each person must tell one thing about him or herself for each piece of candy taken (can also be done with a roll of toilet paper and the number of squares taken.)
- **Make “Do-It-Yourself” Nametags**
- **Inside/Outside:** Use a paper bag and magazines; cut out things describing how others see you (outside) and how you really are (for inside of bag).
- **Matched Pairs:** Tape the name of one member of a famous pair to each person’s back. Participants have to find their “mate” by asking other people “yes” or “no.”
- **People Bingo:** make bingo cards with titled squares like “has lived in a foreign country,” “owns a pair of cowboy boots,” etc., and find people who fit each description.

## Stage 2: Getting to Really Know You

*The group may experience hostility as relationships are formed and group roles are established. Focus on getting to know what each member is feeling.*

- **Continuum:** State a value and have participants share where they all on a scale of 1-10 (e.g., “Honesty is important” or “this group is my #1 priority” 1=disagree, 10=agree). Be careful to make sure group members don’t judge each others answers as good/bad, right/wrong.
- **Social Activities**
- **Group Consensus Activities:** Consult the many books listing activities e.g. *Quicksilver* by Butler, or *Silverbullets* by Rohnke.
- **Gift Game:** Have each member tell what gift he/she would give each member
- **Set Group Goals and Expectations**

## Stage 3: Beginning to Work

*Group moves toward cooperation and better communications*

- **Personal Shields/Coats of Arms**
- **Positive Bombardment:** one member sits in the middle of a circle while other members say positive things about him or her.

- **Pat on the Back:** members write positive things about other members on “post-it notes” and put them on each others’ backs.
- **Group Consensus Activities**

## Stage 4: Working Together

*The group focuses on problem solving, interdependence, and reaching goals.*

- **Murder Mystery exercises, etc.** where the group has to work together to find the solution.
- **Role-playing:** Members take on roles other than their own (leader, follower, tension-breaker, etc.) and work together to reach a goal.
- **Group Self-Diagnosis and Evaluation**
- **Nonverbal Problem Solving** (broken squares, puzzles, etc.)

- **“I Wish I Could...”:** Members share skills they wish to develop and how others in the group can provide support.

