

Icebreakers

Activity Overview: Icebreakers (times vary)

Age Groups: ALL

Activity Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to provide educators with a list of icebreakers that can be used in a variety of settings, for a variety of purposes. In general, there are a few categories of icebreakers:

- **Get to Know You** – use when participants are new to each other
- **Energizers** – use when the group needs a little pick-me-up, or in between sensitive topic activities
- **Creativity** – use to get the brain juices flowing
- **Team-building** – use to build trust and communication between group members

Activities listed in this overview will provide a description and materials (if applicable) that are needed for the activity, what type of icebreaker it is, recommended group size (small = 1-10, medium = 10-20, and large group = 20-30), and the approximate time it will take to complete the activity.

Activities are listed in alphabetical order. Handouts (if listed) are located in Appendix A.

Icebreaker Title	Description/ Materials Needed	Type of Icebreaker	Group Size	Timing
A Friend That Strengthens Me	Participants will identify a positive person in their life, as well as identify their attributes. <u>Materials Needed:</u> post-it notes, pen or markers	Energizer	Small to Medium	5 minutes
Energy Ball	Builds trust and cooperation. It enhances creativity and divergent thinking by asking participants to use their imagination to pass around an imaginary ball.	Creativity	Small to Medium	5 minutes
Group Agreements	Together the group will come up with a list of agreements for group expectations. A Mandatory Reporting & Sensitive Topics Clause is included. <u>Materials Needed:</u> flip chart paper/ large sticky note, markers	Team-building	Small, Medium, Large	15 minutes
Healthy/ Unhealthy Relationship Brainstorm	Participants will list characteristics of Unhealthy & Healthy Relationships, as well as boundaries.	Team-building	Small to Medium	15 minutes

	<p>Materials Needed: flip chart paper/ large sticky note, markers (if recording characteristics)</p> <p>*Taken from We R Native's Teachers Guide, lesson 6 – Healthy Relationships, Personal Rules, and Consent.</p>			
Human Bingo	<p>Participants will introduce themselves to others, as they ask questions from their Bingo sheet to get to know each other.</p> <p>Materials Needed: Bingo sheets (see Appendix A), pen or markers</p>	Get to Know You	Small, Medium, Large	10-15 minutes
Media Wave	<p>Can be used to brainstorm various topical ideas. In this case, the objective is to brainstorm the different types of media youth use.</p> <p>*Taken from We R Native's Teachers Guide, lesson 2 – Media Literacy.</p>	Energizer	Small, Medium, Large	5 minutes
Mingle, Mingle, Mingle	A quick get to know you game that gets participants up and moving	Get to Know You & Energizer	Small, Medium, Large	5 minutes
Name Game	A memory game for getting to know each other.	Get to Know You	Small to Medium	5 minutes
Protection Brainstorm	<p>This activity should be used in conjunction with a sexual health activity, like one from Healthy Native Youth:</p> <p>https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/curriculum/</p>	Team-building	Small to Medium	5 minutes
Reflection On Learning	Closing down a lesson or activity with reflection questions.	Team-building	Small, Medium, Large	5 minutes
Rock, Paper, Scissor Tournament	This is a fun and loud energizer based on the well-known “Rock, Paper, Scissor” game - with a twist: the losing players become the fan of the winners as the winner advances to the next round. This goes on until a final	Energizer & Team-building	Small, Medium, Large	5 minutes

	showdown with two large cheering crowds!			
Sacred Circle Yarn Activity	<p>Participants learn how they are connected to each other through the visual of using a ball of yarn that is tossed to others in the circle after they've answer a brainstorming question.</p> <p><u>Materials Needed:</u> ball of yarn, The Sacred Circle story (see Appendix A).</p>	Team-building	Small to Medium	15 minutes
Snowball Activity	<p>On a piece of paper, participants answer a question (e.g. in what ways have you ever felt bullied?). Ball up their paper. Throw their "snowballs." Pick up someone else's snowball and read that paper aloud and respond with a word of encouragement for that person.</p> <p><u>Materials Needed:</u> half-sheets of paper; (see Appendix A), pens</p> <p>*Taken from We R Native's Teachers Guide, lesson 8 – Stand Up. Stand Strong.</p>	Team-building	Small, Medium, Large	10 minutes
Whoosh Bang Pow	Participants pass sounds around a circle with Whoosh, Bang, and Pow having specific rules.	Energizer	Small, Medium, Large	5 minutes

A Friend That Strengthens Me – 5 minutes

- Lead the full group in a brief energizer: A Friend That Strengthens Me:
- Give each student a small stack of post-it notes and a pen or marker. Say, “Let’s talk about ways that our friends can strengthen us or be positive peer role model. On your own, think about someone close to your age (a peer) who has helped you or has been a positive influence on you. Once you have someone in mind, write down one thing they did to support you or help you be your best or how they influenced you positively. Write each way they supported you on a separate post-it note and stick it up here on the board. Write as many as you can!” Pause to give students a few moments to think and write ideas. Once they have put their ideas on the board, ask, “Would anyone like to share something that your friend or peer has done- in just a few words- to strengthen you?” or “What do you notice about qualities and actions of friends that strengthen us?”.
- Thank students for participating in the discussion.

Energy Ball – 5 minutes

- Have participants stand or sit in a circle.
- Have all players hold their hands up, palms facing each other.
- Next, ask them to imagine that they are holding a ball of energy. Invite them to feel the energy pulsating and radiating light. Have them make it larger, and then smaller. After a few moments of practice, have everyone drop their hands and choose one person to create an energy ball and toss it to another player across the circle.
- Players can make their energy balls move quickly, or very slowly. They can be large or tiny. Players receiving the energy ball can transform the ball before tossing it to another player.
- The leader will toss an imaginary ball to a person across for them, making a unique shape and sound when its tossed. From there, the ‘ball’ will be tossed around the circle; each time it is passed, it must take on a unique shape and sound.

Source: <https://www.dramanotebook.com/drama-games/energy-ball/>

Group Agreements – 15 minutes

- Say, “Let’s talk about how we want to build our community and our relationship with each other in this program. What are some group agreements we can make together that will help us all feel safe, respected, supported and able to share and learn in this group?”
- Note student responses on flip chart paper/ large wall stick-note paper. Be sure responses include: Respecting each other, Active Listening, Practicing Confidentiality, Being Non-judgmental or Accepting/Embracing our Differences, Speaking for Yourself/Only Sharing Your Own Stories, Not Generalizing or Stereotyping, etc.
*If possible: have these responses with you every time you meet.
- Ask the group if they can all agree to make sure they are all onboard with the group agreements.

Mandatory Reporting & Sensitive Topics Clause

- Say, “I want to note one of the exceptions to confidentiality on our group agreements. If someone shares information that they may be in potential harm, either harming themselves or others, I, as your facilitator and as a mandated reporter, have a legal responsibility to report this information. It’s not to get anyone in trouble, but to make sure that you and others are safe. Does anyone have any questions about this?”.
- Say, “Also, before we dive into the content of this program, we want to acknowledge that some participants may be dealing with past or present challenges in their lives related to some of the topics we are going to cover. Different people handle and cope with challenges and trauma in a lot of different ways, and that’s okay. I am here to support anyone who needs assistance and to provide them with resources that can hopefully offer help.”
- Say, “Thank you for creating this list of group agreements to help keep our group safe and supported. I will be bringing this list to each session we have together to reference and to ensure that each of our agreements are being honored throughout the program.”
- Have youth individually sign the Group Agreements to show their commitment.

Healthy/ Unhealthy Relationship Brainstorm – 15 minutes

- Lead the group in a brief activity. Healthy / Unhealthy Relationship Brainstorm:
- Break students into 2 groups and have one group brainstorm characteristics of a healthy relationship and one group brainstorm characteristics of an unhealthy relationship. Give them 3 minutes to come up with as many characteristics as possible and record them on a flip chart or on the board.
- When they are done, ask each group to take 1 minute to share their responses.

Brainstorm Debrief Discussion

- Discuss some of the following questions, taking a few verbal responses for each question.
- “In a healthy relationship, how do people show respect for one another?” **Response Options:** *They respect each other’s boundaries, they show they care about the other person, they listen to each other.*
- “How does this change for relationships with two people of the same sex?” **Response Options:** *It shouldn’t change. Respect looks the same in any kind of relationship.*
- “How does respect look in friendships?” **Response Options:** *Respect looks the same in most relationships, people respect each other, they listen, and show they care for each other.*
- “What does it look or feel like to respect other people’s boundaries and choices?” **Response Options:** *not pressuring each other, understanding that other’s choices or boundaries are their own, giving people the space and freedom to be themselves.*
- Say, “In any relationship, whether it’s a friendship, a dating relationship, a marriage, or even just with your fellow classmates, respect looks the same way. Thank the students for their responses and tell them we are going to discuss relationships more during this lesson. As we do, we’ll keep in mind that every person has do what is right for themselves

while respecting others and that we're all allowed to determine our values and boundaries for ourselves." Thank the students for participating.

Human Bingo – 10-15 minutes

- Hand out the **bingo** cards to each **player**. (Appendix A)
- Let each **player** go around in the group and interview the other players. If the **player** matches a box on the **bingo** card, you write their name in it.
- As soon as you have ticked off all the boxes on the **bingo** card, you are the winner!
- *Don't forget to introduce yourself first and say what tribe your from. 😊
- When someone has 'Bingo', ask everyone to return to their seats. Have participants share their answers.

Media Wave Energizer – 5 minutes

- Say, "Each of us uses lots of different kinds of media, some for fun (like social media apps and Netflix), some for education (like a library website or online research tool), some for information (like newspapers or news channels). We are going to very quickly go around the room and each of you will share what your favorite media platform is, such as, Instagram, Snap Chat, Google, a favorite website, etc."
- Say, "We're going to do this like "The Wave" in a stadium. When 'the wave' comes to you, stand up (if you are able) and/ or raise both hands up and shout out your favorite media."
- Quickly demonstrate "The Wave" with one other youth to make sure everyone understands. Then ask one side of the room to start by saying, "Ready? Go!". Be sure to include your own response so that you are also sharing a favorite media source.
- Thank youth for participating.

Mingle, Mingle, Mingle – 5 minutes

- Have group stand in a circle.
- To start the game, the leader will yell out "Mingle, Mingle, Mingle", and everyone will go around the room saying, "Mingle, Mingle, Mingle" (see YouTube video for tune and movements: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiTbz7PjqbQ>), until the leader yells out a number. For example, 4! (use numbers 1 thru 4).
- Participants will then have to grab a group of four (or whatever # is called out), as quick as possible, and link arms (use your judgement here).
- The leader will then ask a question and the each group member must answer.
 - Examples Questions:
 - Say Your Name & Your Favorite Candy
 - Say Your Name & The Song You Hear on the Radio The Most
 - Say Your Name & Your Favorite pizza topping
 - Say Your Name & Your Favorite ice cream

- Say Your Name & Your Favorite show
 - Say Your Name & Share Something You Love About Being Native
- Continue until everyone has 'met' each other.
- Have participants share one thing they learned about someone else.

Name Game – 5 minutes

- Get everyone to stand or sit in a circle.
- The first person says their **name** and a favorite thing.
- The second person then says their **name** and a favorite thing, as well as the **name** and thing of the person before them.
- Each person after that adds the **names** and items of all of the people before them until everyone has gone.
- Once the last person has gone, reverse the circle and have participants say the name and their favorite thing of the person before them.

Protection Brainstorm – 5 minutes

- Lead the group in a brief activity to discuss methods of protection, "Protection Brainstorm".
- Say, "When people talk about protection related to sex, what do they mean?" Record responses on a flip chart or on the board under the heading: Protection. **Response Options:** To keep yourself safe, to prevent STDs/HIV, to prevent pregnancy.
- Say, "What are some methods or ways that people can protect themselves?" Record responses on a flip chart or on the board under the heading: Methods of Protection. **Response Options:** Abstinence, Birth Control/Contraception, Condoms, the Pill, the Patch, the Ring, IUDs, Implants.
- Say, "Thank you for this great list of ways to protect yourself from pregnancy and STDs. Often people know about the options for protecting themselves, but don't always know what method is right for them or how to get it. For more information you can go to the We R Native site to learn more."

Reflection on Learning – 5 minutes

- Say, "What is something new you learned today? What is something you can share with friends, family and your community from today's lesson?" Take 2-3 responses.
- Say, "If you or a friend, family member or someone from your community is struggling with alcohol or drug use, there are resources and support such as those on the Contact a Help Line worksheet. There are also local services like (name support services from your community) to help you. I am also here to support you and connect you to these resources in our community".
- Pass out list of community resources on topic (e.g. drug and alcohol abuse prevention and recovery: <https://www.wernative.org/>).

Rock, Paper, Scissor Tournament – 5 minutes

- Divide group into two groups.
- Select a leader for each group, they consult with their groups to select a team name.
- The two leaders face each other, with the rest of the group lined up behind them.
- The leaders play rock, paper, scissors (e.g. rock beats scissors, paper beats rock, scissors beat paper).
- The winner plays the next person in line. The losing player becomes a fan of the winner.
- The winner plays against the new opponent, while their fan cheers for them.
- The winner of the second game searches for a new opponent, while the losing team joins their fan base.
- Repeat until there are only two opponents with a huge fan base cheering for them. The last two have to play until one player has won 2 times.

Sacred Circle (Yarn Activity) – 15 minutes

- Lead the group in a brief activity: The Sacred Circle
- Ask youth to gather in a circle that provides everyone enough room to be in their own space but not too far apart. Tell youth that circles are ancient symbols in many cultures that often symbolize wholeness and connection to one another.
- Read The Sacred Circle story to the students (<https://www.wernative.org/articles/the-sacred-circle>)
- Say, “It’s important to understand the role that each of us can play in making everyone in our community feel safe to be themselves. When we do this, we help our community to be whole, just like the brothers in the story.”
- Take the yarn and say, “let’s each go around and say one thing we’ll do to help others in our community be themselves or prevent (insert topic – for example: bullying). Once you say what you will do, take this yarn and gently toss it to someone else in the group to share”.
- Go around the group until all students and facilitators in the group have shared something. Once everyone has gone, say, “Thank you all for sharing. It’s important that we remember that we all have a responsibility to include one another, look out for each other, and take care of our community when we see something negative happening. Just like this yarn, we’re all connected. Today, we’ll be talking about how we can stand up for one another in order to stand strong as a community. Let’s come together with the yarn and carefully put it away as a symbol for how we’ll care for each other.”
- Carefully gather the yarn web together and put it somewhere visible in the classroom.

Snowball Game – 10 minutes

- Say, “Now onto the *Snowball Game!* Without talking, I would like for you to think about a way you may have ever felt bullied by someone else or left out. I will give you 30 seconds to think about this.” Time students.

- Say, “I’m going to give you a half sheet of paper that asks you: *In what way have you ever felt bullied?* Without writing your names, I would like you to write your answer down. When you are done put your pencils down, so I know you are finished. Any questions?”
- Distribute ½ sheet: *In what ways have you ever felt bullied?*
- When you see everyone has finished, say, “Now I would like you to wad up your papers into a ‘snowball’ and respectfully throw them (give target area: in the center of the circle, or near the front/ back of room only). Remember our group agreements! Ready? Go!”
- Say, “Okay, now pick up one ‘snowball’ closest to you, then go back to your seats. Without talking to anyone, unwrinkled your paper and read it. Think about a response you could give this person that will either encourage or comfort the person who wrote it. Write your response on the back of the paper.”
- Pick, or have students volunteer to read both sides of their papers.
- If you have time, have students sit in a circle and go around sharing their ‘snowballs’.

Whoosh Bang Pow – 5 minutes

- Players pass sounds around the circle, each with a unique rule:
 - **WHOOSH** passes to the right or left, always continuing in the same direction.
 - **BANG** reverses the WHOOSH and sends it back in the opposite direction.
 - **POW** passes across the circle to whomever you’re pointing at.
- Pro Tips:
 - Go fast. Mistakes and confusion are part of the fun.
 - You can add physical gestures along with the sounds: WHOOSH with both hands in the direction of the next player, BANG with your arms held up in an X, and POW while pointing and clapping across the circle.
 - Once you get good at the game, find ways to make it challenging again by adding restrictions or new rules.
 - Common restrictions are that you can’t BANG a BANG or BANG a POW.

Source: <http://www.improvhd.com/whoosh-bang-pow>

Appendix A

BINGO

How to Play

1. Ask someone if they match the info in a box.
2. If they do, write their FULL name in the box. If they don't, ask someone else.
3. Keep talking to people until you have BINGO (all squares filled in)!

*Don't forget to introduce yourself first. 😊

Someone who has visited another country.	Someone who has had a pet other than a dog or cat.	Someone who knows their Native language.	Someone who is wearing something from their tribe.	Someone who has broken the same bone twice.
Someone who has locked themselves out of their car.	Someone who is learning to make traditional art.	Someone who loves eating airplane food.	Someone who is left-handed.	Someone who has danced in a pow-wow.
Someone who is part of a Native youth group.	Someone who has more than three siblings.	Someone who doesn't like chocolate.	Someone who goes on an annual camping trip.	Someone who likes reading comics.
Someone who has traditional dances.	Someone who has the same favorite TV show as you.	Someone who wants to go into the medical field.	Someone you've never met before.	Someone who has the same birth-month as you.
Someone who knows how to cook a traditional food.	Someone who doesn't have Facebook.	Someone who sings traditionally.	Someone who doesn't like dessert.	Someone who has a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher.

The Sacred Circle



PHOTO CREDIT: [19MELISSA68](#)

A young man sat alone near the river, apart from his three brothers, peering out over the troubled water. His isolation did not go undetected by his grandmother who watched from the house, though. She had a keen sense about her and went out to meet him.

“What’s wrong, Isaac?” she asked, settling her skirts around her as she sat next to him. “Why aren’t you playing with the others?” She indicated where his brothers were running headlong in a game of basketball. Sure, he was shorter than his siblings, maybe a little smaller, too, but he was tough and headstrong.

Isaac gave a dismissal little shrug of his shoulders, but Grandmother could see more deeply than the young man imagined..

“You feel alone,” she said wisely. “Different, like you aren’t like them.”.

He began to nod, but the feisty woman continued, “Well, you’re not like them. No getting around that.” .

Isaac furrowed his brow, a little annoyed. Perhaps he expected Grandmother's soothing words to come in a different form. But she went on, "Why would you want to be exactly like anyone else? You see—" she picked up his palm and drew a circle with her turquoise-ringed forefinger, "All of you together are like this circle. When one part is cut off, the whole circle is thrown out of balance. You have to be you to complete the circle. You can't be your brother, your uncle, or your cousin. Just you. That's all it takes."

The corner of Isaac's mouth twitched. Grandmother figured that was good enough, and went back to her sewing inside. But she watched from the window, and a little while later, Isaac joined his siblings.

Four brothers. One family. One circle.

Special Thanks:

Misty Lynn Ellingburg (Shoalwater Bay) is a student at Seattle Pacific University, majoring in English (concentration Literature) and minoring in Professional Writing. She has two brothers and two sisters--Brandt, Shana, Hope, and Hunter. Her mom, Lory, is a Tribal artist, and her dad, Todd, is becoming fluent in Salish, a local Tribal language. Her favorite Native writers are Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, and Sherman Alexie. She even met Mr. Alexie in Seattle at a book reading where she got his autograph and a picture taken together.

L8 Class Activity: In What Ways Have You Ever Felt Bullied?

In What Ways Have You Ever Felt Bullied?



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