

# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES



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# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 1 INTRODUCTIONS

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

The group leader, or someone else, starts by introducing himself, for example:

*'My name is Peter.'*

The person sitting next to Peter then introduces himself, followed by Peter. For example:

*'My name is Edward and this is Peter.'*

The next person then introduces himself and Edward. For example:

*'My name is George and this is Edward.'*

This continues until everyone has been introduced.

### VARIATION

Group members have to introduce all previous people, for example:

*'My name is George, this is Edward and this is Peter.'*





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 2 HOW ARE YOU?

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

One group member starts by turning to his neighbour, saying hello and asking how he is today. For example:

*'Hello David, how are you today?'*

After David has replied, he turns to his neighbour and repeats the exercise.

This could lead to a group discussion on how the group is feeling today, and if there is anyone who may need special attention or kindness – for example, if someone is sad about something.

### VARIATION

Alter the question or add another question, for example:

*'How has your week been?', or 'What did you do last night?'*





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 3 WHO IS SITTING NEXT TO ...?

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

All group members start by observing who is sitting where in the circle. One group member turns his back to the rest of the group or shuts his eyes. Another group member (or group leader) asks him to remember who is sitting either side of someone in the group.

### VARIATIONS

- 1 Everyone changing places in the circle every few turns can make this activity more difficult.
- 2 Alternatively, group members could be asked to remember something else, such as:

*'Who is wearing a red sweater?'*

*'Who has got their legs crossed?'*





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 4 REMEMBER THE OBJECTS

### MATERIALS

A tray and a number of objects such as a cup, a pen, keys and so on.

### PREPARATION

The group leaders prepare a tray of objects. The number of objects will depend on the ability of the group members and it is recommended that you start with only a few (maybe five objects) and increase the number as appropriate to make the game more challenging.

### ACTIVITY

The tray is placed in the middle of the group for everyone to study for about 30 seconds. It is then removed and the group divides into pairs to try to recall the objects. These are then written down. Group members feed back and see who has remembered the most.

### VARIATION

Ask group members to recall the objects individually.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 5 GREETINGS!

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members move around the room, and at a signal from the group leader they stop and introduce themselves to someone standing near them. For example:

*'Hello, my name is Sarah.'*

This continues until everyone has introduced themselves to each other.

### VARIATION

Group members find out something about the other person, for example, how they are feeling, or their favourite food. This information could then be fed back at the end of the activity.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 6 MIRROR ME

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members stand or sit in a semicircle where they can see the group leader. The group leader then goes through a range of simple movements which the group members copy. For example:

Put hands on head

Stretch up

Flop head forward

Curl up

Touch the floor

### VARIATIONS

- 1 Take it in turns to be the group leader.
- 2 Ask the group to work in pairs, where one is the leader for two minutes and they then change roles.
- 3 Move around the room in different ways with the group copying.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 7 SILLY SAM

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members introduce themselves with both their name and a descriptive word beginning with the same letter, for example:

'My name is Silly Sam.'

'My name is Chatterbox Charlie.'

### VARIATION

To make it easier, ask the group to think of any word that describes them, for example:

'My name is Sam and I am friendly.'







# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

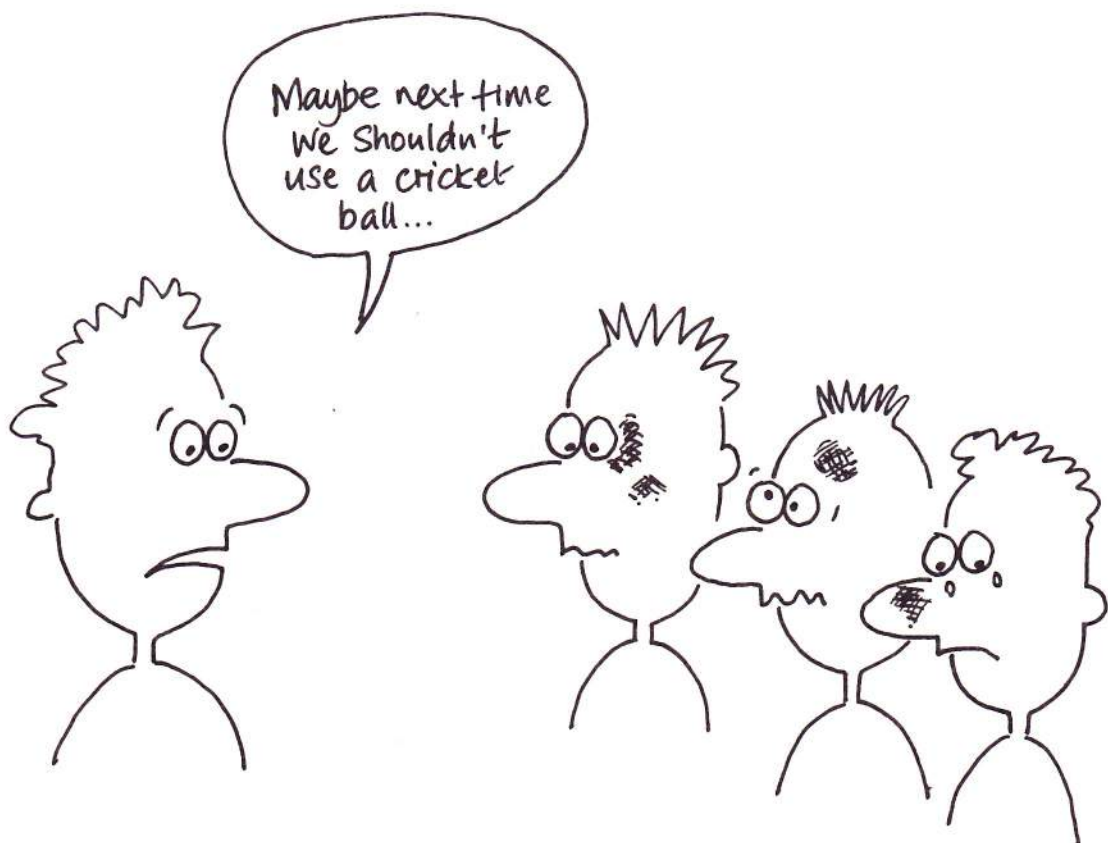
## 8 CATCH THE BEAN BAG

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

A beanbag or cushion.

### ACTIVITY

Group members introduce themselves (if this is the first session). The group leader throws the beanbag to someone while calling out their name. They catch it and throw it quickly on to someone else, calling their name as they do so. The activity continues until everyone is familiar with everyone else's names.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 9 CHANGE PLACES

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members introduce themselves, and then one chair is removed from the circle. The person without a chair is asked to stand in the middle of the circle. They call out two or more names. The people whose names have been called attempt to change places before the person in the middle can take one of their seats. The person left standing without a chair then calls out two or more further names. The activity continues until everyone has had an opportunity to change places.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 10 MYSTERY OBJECTS

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

A number of small objects (at least one for every group member) and a bag. Group members could be asked to bring in one or two objects from home, or the group leaders could bring all the objects – for example a brush, lipstick, or video.

### ACTIVITY

All the objects are put into a bag without anyone seeing them. Group members take it in turns to stand up with their back to the group and their hands behind their back. An object is then placed in their hands. The person turns to face the group and answers four or five questions from the group, such as:

- 'What does it feel like?'
- 'What size is it?'
- 'What colour do you think it is?'
- 'What shape is it?'

and finally:

- 'Do you know what it is?'

The activity continues until everyone has had a turn.

### VARIATION

Group members could take it in turns to ask the questions, or the group leader could ask all the questions.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 11 GET INTO THE RHYTHM

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

The group members first learn a rhythm which is demonstrated by the group leader, while counting to six:

Slap your knees twice (one, two)

Clap your hands together twice (three, four)

Snap your fingers, once with the right hand and once with the left (five, six)

Repeat the sequence as many times as necessary until everyone is in time. The slowest person should determine the speed. Once everyone has learnt the sequence the group leader explains that one person will say their own name twice at the same time as everyone snaps their fingers. They will then say someone else's name twice the next time everyone snaps their fingers. The person whose name is called then responds in the same way. For example:

Peter: (1, 2, 3, 4) 'Peter, Peter' (1, 2, 3, 4) 'George, George'

George: (1, 2, 3, 4) 'George, George' (1, 2, 3, 4) 'Edward, Edward'

Edward: etc.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 12 FRUIT SALAD

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

This activity is similar to 'Change Places' except that, in this activity, group members are asked to choose a vegetable or fruit. There should be no duplication. One chair is removed from the circle and the person without a chair stands in the middle of the circle. The person calls out two vegetables (or fruits) and those two must change places. The person in the middle tries to sit in one of the chairs before the other person gets there. Whoever is left in the middle calls two further vegetables. If the person in the middle calls 'Fruit Salad' then everyone has to get up and change to a different seat.

### VARIATION

A picture or the name of the fruit or vegetable chosen can be put on to a sticky label and placed on that person's chest to make it easier for group members to remember everyone's chosen fruit or vegetable.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 13 MY MATCHBOX IS ...

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

A collection of small objects: for example, a matchbox, comb, make-up and a bag.

### ACTIVITY

One article is taken from the bag and passed around the group. Each person is asked to describe something about the article before passing it on to the next person. Continue passing the same article around until all possible descriptions have been given. The next article is then taken from the bag and the activity continues.

### VARIATION

Flashcards of different objects – for example, ColorCards® (Speechmark) – could be used instead of objects.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 14 DESERT ISLAND

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Each group member is asked to think of three items that they would wish to have if they were stranded on a desert island. These should not include animals or people. They could be given one minute to think of these or to write them down. They are then divided into pairs and asked to share their three items with their partner. The group reforms after a few minutes and each group member tells the rest of the group what three items their partner would want to take to their desert island.

### VARIATION

Each group member tells the group their own three items and the group leader makes a list. The group could then negotiate on a 'group list' if they were to be stranded together on a desert island – for example, choosing 10 items for a group of five people.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 15 THE PRAISE GAME

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

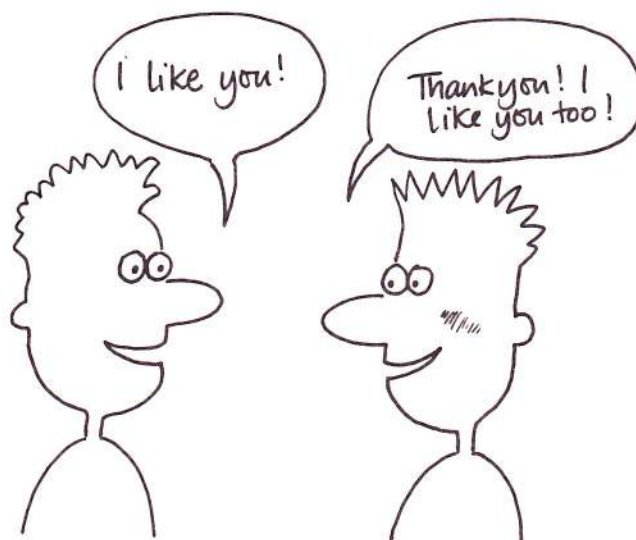
None.

### ACTIVITY

The group leader instructs the group that each member in turn is going to pay a compliment to the person sitting to their left, and that person is to respond appropriately. The group leader starts the activity and when everyone has had a turn, the group should discuss how it felt to be complimented and how it feels if a compliment is thrown away or negated by a poor response.

### VARIATION

A group member leaves the room and the rest of the group thinks of three compliments to pay to that person. The person is then called back into the room and one person from the group compliments that person. This continues until everyone has had a turn. The group can then discuss how it felt to be complimented by the group.







# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 16 CHANGE PLACE WINK

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

The group stands or sits in a circle and one person is chosen to be the 'director'. The director winks at two group members who then change places with each other. Group members need to watch the director to know when and with whom they should change places. After several turns, a different group member is chosen to be the director.

### VARIATION

The director could point to the two members who are to change places.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 17 HOW DO YOU RATE?

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

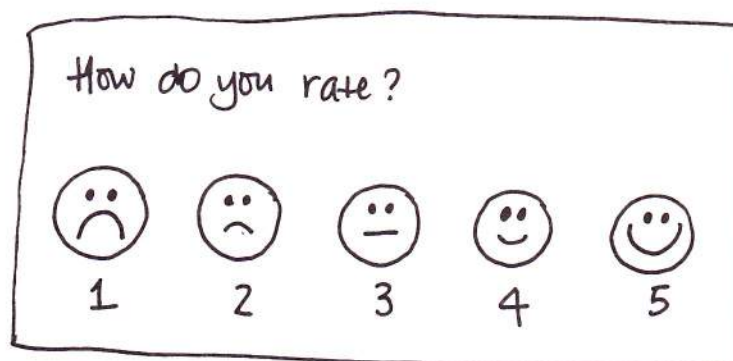
None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members are asked to rate themselves on a scale of one to 10. A rating of one would mean that they are feeling very low, and 10 would mean that they are feeling very good. Each member takes a turn to give their self-rating and can also give a reason for their rating. The group leader may also choose to add up the individual ratings and then divide by the number of group members in order to give an average group rating for that session. This can then be compared during various sessions.

### VARIATION

To simplify, use a scale of one to five and illustrate each rating on a flip chart using line drawings of faces.







# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 18 SHADOWS

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

The group members are divided into pairs and stand opposite each other. One person should be the leader while the other person is their shadow. The leader performs an action – for example, combing his hair. They should move slowly to allow their shadow to maintain eye contact and mirror the movements of the leader exactly. Roles should then be reversed.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 19 CHINESE MIMES

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

The group members are seated in a circle and all members are asked to close their eyes except for one, who is to think of a simple mime – for example, cleaning teeth. This person then taps the person on his right and performs mime to them. He then taps the person on his right and performs the mime to them. This continues until the final person, who then performs the mime to the group. The original mime is also performed, and the group observe and discuss the differences between the original mime and the final mime.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 20 DESCRIPTIONS

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

The group leader gives a simple physical description of one of the group members, for example:

*'This person has brown hair.'*

*'This person is wearing jeans.'*

After each description, the group is given the opportunity to guess which person is being described. When they have correctly identified the person, a new leader is chosen. The activity is repeated until all members have had a turn.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 21 GUESS WHO?

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

One group member volunteers to leave the room. Three people make positive comments about that person, which could include specialised information that not everyone might know. For example:

*'Lloyd is good at cooking pizza.'*

*'Lloyd enjoys playing golf.'*

*'Lloyd has a lovely sense of humour.'*

The subject is then called back into the room and the three statements are repeated to him one at a time, while he tries to guess who said each one. The activity is repeated until all members have had a turn.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 22 MENTAL GIFTS

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

Pencils and paper. The group leader writes each group member's name at the top of separate pieces of paper and these are then placed around the room.

### ACTIVITY

Group members are given a pencil and asked to go around the room and think of a gift for each person and write (or draw) it on that person's piece of paper. When everyone has finished, the group leader gives the respective pieces of paper to each group member. These can either be shared with the rest of the group or read silently by the individual.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 23 STRUCTURES

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members are divided into small groups of three to six and asked to construct a particular structure by linking themselves together. For example:

- A suspension bridge
- A tree
- A car/bus/lorry
- A ship
- A helicopter/aeroplane
- A church
- A crane

### VARIATION

Certain structures – for example, a car, ship, or aeroplane – could be asked to move around without coming apart or falling.





# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 24 CHINESE TALES

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

All but one group member leaves the room. The remaining person listens to the group leader reading a sentence, for example: 'For breakfast today I had sausage, egg, bacon and toast and I then had two cups of coffee.' Another group member is then called in to the room and the first person repeats what the group leader said as accurately as possible. The third person is then called in and the second person repeats the sentence to the third person. The activity continues until all group members have returned to the room and the leader then reads the original sentence. The group members then discuss their listening skills and what affected them – for example, attention and memory.

### VARIATION

Simplify or extend the sentence.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 25 I AM GOING TO THE MOON

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

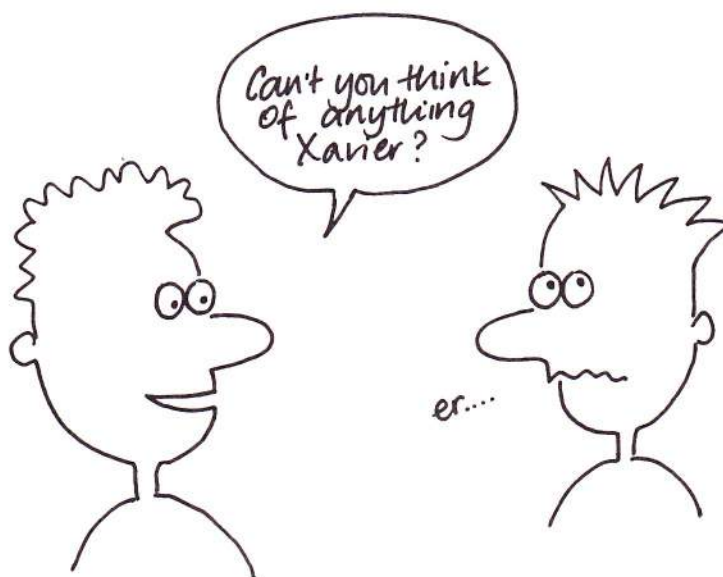
None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members sit in a circle and the group leader explains that they are going to the moon, but they are only allowed to take certain objects with them. They will all say their name and the object they want to take, and the group leader will say if they can take it or not. The aim of the activity is to listen and discover the 'rule'. The group leader starts by saying: 'My name is Alex and I am taking armbands.' The activity continues until all group members have discovered that they can only take something with them that begins with the same letter as their name.

### VARIATION

Simplify by reducing the length of the sentence. For example: 'I am Peter, I like peanuts.'







# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 26 THE ZOO GAME

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

Pictures of animals for the variation.

### ACTIVITY

Group members sit in a circle and the group leader assigns an animal to each group member. The group leader explains that every time their animal is called, they should stand up, turn around and then sit down again, and if they hear 'zoo', they should all stand up, turn around and sit down in unison. The group leader then makes up a story about a zoo.

### VARIATION

For people with limited mobility, use pictures of animals that they can hold up when their animal is mentioned.



# GROUP COHESION ACTIVITIES

## 27 I WENT TO THE MARKET

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

None.

### ACTIVITY

Group members sit in a circle and the group leader starts the activity by saying 'I went to the market and I bought a ... big hat' (mimes putting on a hat). The person to the right then says 'I went to the market and I bought a big hat (mimes hat) and a ...' (names and mimes another item). The activity continues around the group until everyone has had a turn.

### VARIATION

Define a category, for example, food or clothes.