*Icebreakers*

**Do’s:**

* Do ask **simple questions** that reveal interesting information about people but does not require anyone to share overly personal information: “Name your favorite children’s book,” for example, or “If you could have one super power, what would it be?”
* Do have **people talk one-on-one**. A common weakness of most icebreakers is that it tries to get everyone to get to know everyone else, which dilutes the interactions. It’s far better for someone to feel more connected to one or two other people than to drive-by meet all participants in the room.
* Do **split people into groups**. Especially for large groups, it’s insanely boring and time consuming to get everyone to share something with the whole room. Breaking people into smaller teams allow them to get to know a few people better.
* Do **introduce elements of friendly competition**, especially in groups. Competing against other groups helps participants bond with their own group.
* Do **ask people to share one** thing they learned about someone else, if time permits. It’s very affirming when a stranger demonstrates that they listened and learned something about you and also got your name right.
* Do **be mindful of body language.**

**More icebreaker ‘do’s’ or ideas for good icebreakers on MLK Day:**

**Don’ts:**

* Don’t **make people touch each other**: Awkward, potentially unhygienic, and culturally inappropriate.
* Don’t **make people share anything too personal**: One recalls an activity involving “Going around the room and having to answer ‘Do you fold your underwear?’ Yes, that happened.” Yes, that’s horrible.
* Don’t **make people alliterate their names**. “Let’s introduce ourselves using an adjective and an object that begin with the same sound as our first name. I’ll start. Hi, I’m victorious Vu, and I like Vick’s Vapor Rub.” You can’t help but sound and feel dumb. And it’s not my fault there are few good adjectives that begin with V!
* Don’t **make people make animal sounds**: Hilarious for kids 8 and under; obnoxious and demeaning for everyone else. In fact, just avoid making people make any sort of sound besides talking.
* Don’t **make people make up silly motions**: I’m talking about ones where you have to invent a motion that goes with your name. No one feels good after being forced to flap their wings like a duck, because that’s the only motion they could come up with.
* Don’t **take too long**: “The ones that go on and on,” says a reader, “around the circle, everyone needs to chime in for two minutes, and the meeting doesn’t actually do anything until two hours later.” And the worst offender: “Everyone, pick up a handful of M&M’s. Oh, you picked up 38? You must now tell the group 38 personal things about yourself.”
* Don’t **make anyone throw or catch anything**: It’s anxiety inducing for people who don’t have even basic athletic skills and brings back terrifying flashes of childhood where an uncaught basketball slammed them in the face and other kids laughed and laughed and they stood there and vowed that one day they would grow up and become a nonprofit director and that will show the others that will show them all!!
* Don’t **pressure people into sharing out loud** in the group setting if they don’t want too.

**More Don’ts and icebreakers to avoid on MLK Day:**