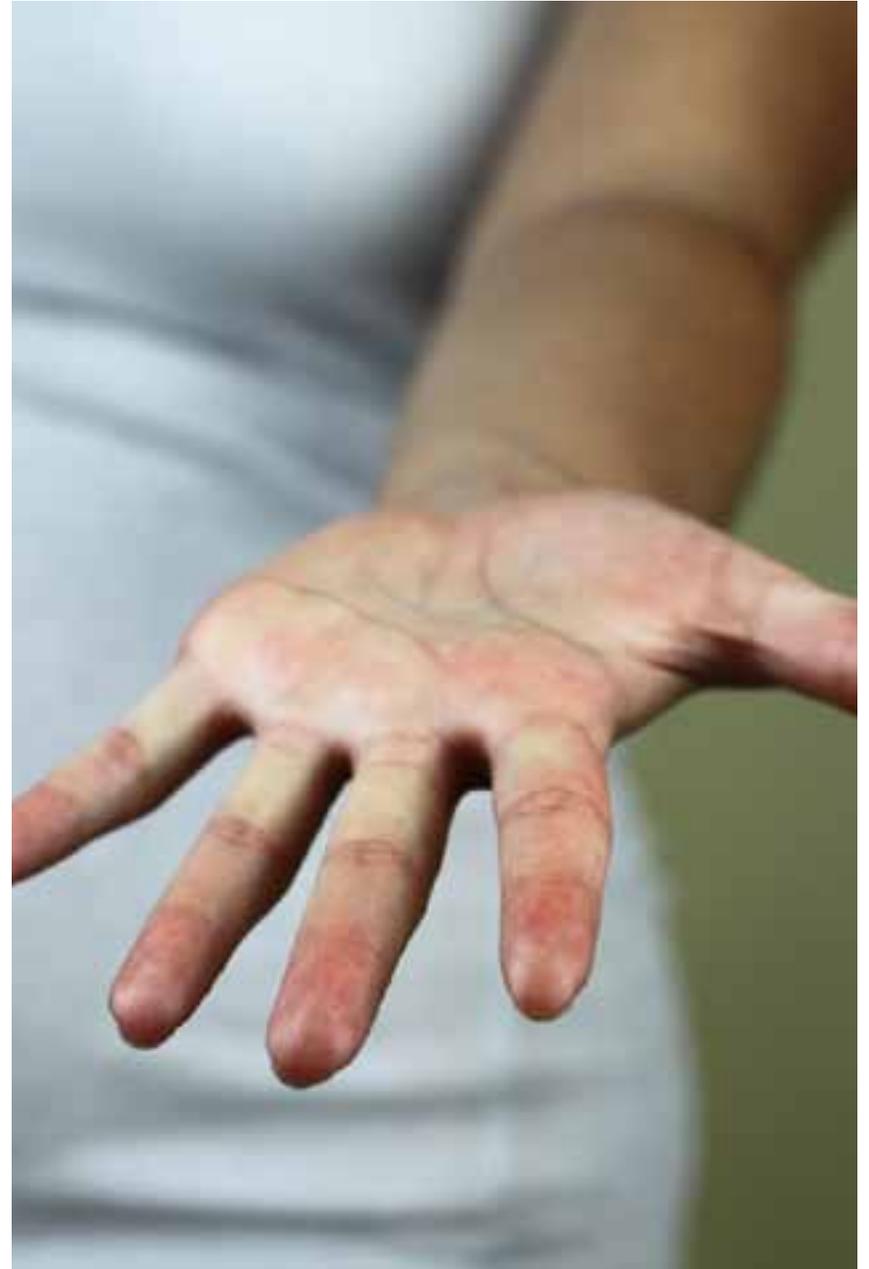


## **3.4**

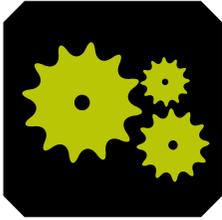
# ***Ice-breakers***



## 3.4 Ice-breakers



Title	Selection considerations	When to use	Timing
Calling out names	A fun way to build connections, high energy, light and fun, can get a little loud!	Day One or early on Day Two	15 minutes
Core movement	This is very nice way for the group to move and laugh together. It is high energy but also offers grounding and is a good release of tension. Consider physical differences and the preferences of participants and cultural adaptations	Anytime	20 minutes
Trust and boundaries	Good to address group dynamics and build connections	Anytime	30 minutes
Miming	Quick and easy, this is a good way to gauge the mood of participants; a nice way to lighten or shift heavier energy.	Anytime but good at the end of a day or a difficult session	15 minutes
Circle massage	Good for tension release, consider participants' physical preferences	Anytime	15 minutes
Human knot	Good for building the group, as a fun and energetic ice-breaker	Mid-workshop (not appropriate for closing)	20 minutes
Reciprocity web	A simple and useful way to close by connecting participants beyond the workshop	Closing	30 minutes
Goodbye cocktail party	A fun way to close and express appreciation for each other	Closing	30 minutes

EXERCISE:

# Calling Out Names

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 15 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

*This is a fun, upbeat icebreaker to shift group energy and build connections that involves shouting out the name of the person next to you in a circle.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to stand in a circle, look to their left, and ask that person their name.
- Explain that the name of the person on your left is the name you will use in the exercise.
- Next, ask everyone to gently bend over and clap quietly, repeating that one person's name to the left.
- Slowly, ask everyone to lift their bodies up, and to make their clapping and voice louder and louder until they are shouting out the person's name next to them.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Facilitators should take the group through the exercise once, so that everyone understands, then repeat it once, or as many times as the group wishes.

*Alternative option:*

- Facilitators could have one participant stand in the middle in turn, and have the group call out their name as described above. This would take longer than 15 minutes.
- Participants could call out the name of the person to their left in the first round, then switch to the person to their right in the second round.

EXERCISE:

# Core Movement<sup>39</sup>

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 20 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

*This is a fun and energetic exercise, which is simply semi-structured, culturally and physically appropriate movement to get participants moving their 'core', or the center of their bodies. It can be adapted to any group, with care for cultural sensitivity and awareness of participants' mobility.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

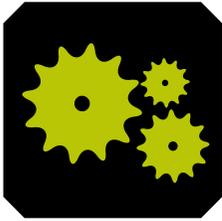
- Ask each participant to demonstrate a favourite dance move or any movement or stretch.
- One option is describing a South African tradition where older women teach young women about sexuality, using the term 'fuduwa', which means to mix. Adolescent girls are taught how to move their hips. Get everyone to move their hips in a mixing motion and shout 'fuduwa'!
- This is a fun way to get participants laughing and moving around, and reminds us of the importance of fun and pleasure. This could be adapted or completely replaced by dance movement from different regions (that is, you could incorporate Nepali arm movements, Arabic belly dance movements, Latin American flamenco or salsa).

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Use this when participants need an upbeat and somewhat physical energiser.
- Almost every culture enjoys some form of traditional movement (dance, martial arts, stretching) that releases the stress and tension that gathers in the 'core' of our bodies (the abdomen and pelvic area).
- Depending on the cultural context, gender mixture and the physical preferences of the participants, select an appropriate method to get the group moving their core area for five to ten minutes.

*Alternative option:*

- For a more reserved group, do a series of simple rotation and stretching exercises, begin by gently rotating the head, then the neck, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. Draw on martial arts techniques here (tai chi, qi gong, taekwondo or aikido), or on gentle movement from pilates or yoga. This should be done gently and with care.

EXERCISE:

# *Trust and Boundaries*<sup>40</sup>

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

*This is a strong exercise to support participants in expressing their boundaries and equally, to feel trust in others.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

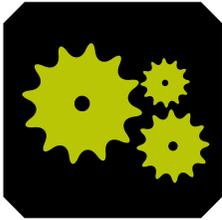
- Ask two people – preferably who do not know each other – to pair off.
- They should stand 10–15 feet apart, facing each other.
- Explain that one person is going to walk, one will stand still, and that the person who is standing is learning what feels okay to them in terms of physical space.
- Explain to the standing person that they can use three motions that are signals: first, both hands at your sides and up (stop!) – means the walker has to stop, even if they have not started walking; second, arms halfway down, palms out – they can come very slowly; and third, palms open, arms down – you can come towards me.
- Both partners have to maintain eye contact the whole time.
- Ask the other person to walk towards their partner very slowly.
- Ask the standing person to feel in their bodies the person coming towards them, and to use the signals that feel right to either stop them or to encourage them to come closer
- Some people may never be able to put their arms down – that is fine, the walker needs to know that. The

pair can repeat the exercise a few times to gauge this within themselves. They do not have to use all of those movements; they can mix them up.

- The partners then switch roles.
- Once the group has observed the exercise, ask everyone to pair up and to practice the exercise with their partners, making sure that everyone has a chance to play both roles.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- After the exercise, facilitators can give participants an opportunity to reflect on how it felt for them, in both roles. It should have given participants an opportunity to feel and clearly communicate their own boundaries, and to also understand their own power to protect themselves, to receive support and experience trust.

EXERCISE:

# Miming

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 15 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

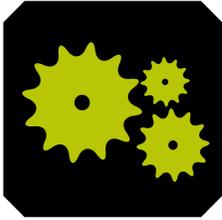
*This is a simple exercise that can be used at any point in the day to help participants to express their feelings without words. It is fun and easy, but also reveals a lot about the mood of the group.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask each participant to go into the middle of the circle and 'mime' how they feel (that is, show without words, just movement).
- This can also be helpful feedback for the evaluation process.

FACILITATION NOTES:

Participants may initially feel shy to express themselves, but as they warm up, they will tend to be very creative, moving and funny.

EXERCISE:

# Circle Massage<sup>41</sup>

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 15 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

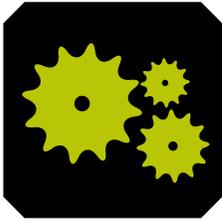
*Circle massage is an energising and fun exercise that is good at a point of low energy or after an emotional session. This is a simple massage process, done in a circle with everyone working on the shoulders of the person in front of them. It is good for group trust building.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Invite participants to stand up and turn to the right. Move closer into the circle so that each person can comfortably reach the back of the person next to them.
- Ask participants to give the person in front of them a massage. They must first ask the permission of the person to do this, and also ask them to tell them if it is too strong or too light.
- Tell them to keep it simple, but if they need instructions, facilitators can suggest that they can work on the trapezius muscles and the back; then a head rub; and finish with brisk back circles (clockwise for energy, counter-clockwise to relax) down the spine.
- After a few minutes, ask everyone to turn to the left, and to do the massage for the person who is now in front of them (this will be the person who had given them the first massage).

FACILITATION NOTES:

- A massage circle can be lots of fun. It is very helpful if the group is tired and needs to be energised. Within this playful context, most people do not have the fears they might have with a one-on-one massage. This is also a good dynamic for some participants who might be embarrassed to touch each other during a seated massage.
- In using different kinds of massage, it is important for group leaders to be aware of reactions. Always work slowly and respectfully with the person's permission. Some individuals might choose just to observe the group doing massage, because they fear being touched or their own emotional reaction. Participants should feel completely free to make choices that are healthy for them and should in no way feel pressured to participate in any activity.



EXERCISE:

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FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

# *Human Knot*<sup>42</sup>

TIME: 20 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: NONE

## SUMMARY:

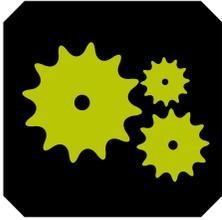
*This is an energetic, and slightly complex exercise that builds trust and cohesion in the group by asking participants to form a 'human knot' by joining hands as a group, and then untangle the knot without unclasping hands.*

## KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to form a circle, shoulder-to-shoulder. Encouraging/urging participants to stand closer can be a subtle way of helping to prepare them for what is about to happen.
- Ask participants each to place a hand in the middle of the circle and to grasp another hand.
- To learn names and spark some fun, ask participants to introduce themselves to the person with whom they are holding hands.
- Then ask participants to put their other hand in the middle, grasp a different person's hand, and introduce themselves.
- Don't let participants let go of hands – if they do, some will be tempted to think the activity might be over, but it is only just beginning.
- Explain to participants that what you would like them to do is to untangle themselves, without letting go of hands, and form a circle.
- There will be a mixture of reactions, often including nervous laughter, amusement, excitement, trepidation, strong suspicion that it cannot be done; others may view the task as a somewhat sadistic or inappropriate joke. Some group members will have conducted the task

before, but this does not really matter – each time it is unique.

- Participants may change their grip to increase their comfort, but they are not to unclasp and re-clasp in a way that would undo the knot.
- Stand back and see what happens.
- Be prepared to see little progress for quite some time (up to 10 minutes). However, once the initial unfolding happens, the pace towards the final solution usually seems to quicken.
- As each occasion is unique, there are also odd times when a very fast solution emerges – too easily. In such cases, ask a group to try the task again – it is typically a bit harder the second time around. Occasionally, the task seems too hard and participants seem to make almost no progress. Let them struggle for about 10 minutes, then offer the group one unclasp and re-clasp – they need to discuss and decide what would be most useful.
- Most of the time a full circle takes shape, but occasionally two or even three interlocking circles emerge. So, the task really is to sort the knot into its simplest structure.

EXERCISE:

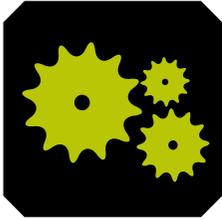
PAGE 2/2

FORMAT:GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

# *Human Knot*

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Be aware that the activity involves close physical proximity and touching potentially in sensitive places!
- The ideal group size is about 10, but it can be done with anywhere from seven to 16 people. Much higher or lower and the task does not really work. The more members of a group, the more difficult the task, partly because of the complexity, and partly because there is physically less room to move.
- If there are two or more groups doing the task simultaneously, have the groups reasonably spaced out, so they do not feel distracted by a sense of competition.
- Stay at a moderate distance, allowing the members of the group to engage in the activity without feeling that they are being too closely observed; but maintain good hearing contact and be ready to step in to answer questions or change the direction of the activity quickly when appropriate.
- Slowly wander around the circle, moving in and out as appropriate – for instance, if you want people to use names in every communication, this needs to be reinforced in a friendly, but firm, way, several times.
- It is relatively easy to notice who is talking, who is not, who seems comfortable, who does not. Also note that sometimes, the natural leaders are not in a good position to lead – do they try to dominate inappropriately or do they sit back appropriately and just do what they can?
- Often this activity speaks for itself as an ice-breaker. However, because it can be quite challenging, and because people often will have been pulled in all sorts of directions (literally), be prepared to have at least a short debrief, asking, for example: ‘how well did you think the group worked together?’; ‘what could have been done differently?’; or ‘what do you think you have learned from this activity that can be applied in future activities?’

EXERCISE:

# *Reciprocity Web*<sup>43</sup>

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: ONE BLANK INDEX CARD PER PARTICIPANT, COLOURED BALL OF YARNSUMMARY:

*This is a good closing exercise that asks participants to write down a commitment to improve their integrated security for which they need support. Through the exercise, they are paired with another participant who will follow up with them to offer encouragement and support.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Have everyone write down one task on an index card related to their integrated security that they will commit to, and that they would like support for. They should put their name on one side of the card and the task on the other. All cards should then be folded with just the name showing and put in the centre of the room.
- Participants are then asked to select randomly one card from the pile and just look at the name on the card without opening it. If anyone has accidentally selected his/her own card, they can exchange it with the person to their left until everyone has someone else's card.
- The group stands in a circle and one person is given a ball of coloured yarn. They should take one end of the ball, call out the name of the person's card they are holding, and throw the ball to them. This should continue until all names have been called.
- As the group stands with a web in front of them, the facilitator should explain that the person who has your card should contact you in the next week just to check in and ask how they can support you with your task.

FACILITATION NOTES:

This exercise helps to 'cement' a sense of commitment to taking the workshop process forward for individuals and to continue to build connections between participants.

*Alternative option:*

If you can't find a ball of yarn for the exercise, try to be creative and use something playful, like stress balls or balloons. This keeps the exercise light, fun and positive.

EXERCISE:

# *Goodbye Cocktail Party*<sup>44</sup>

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: GLASSES OF WATER (ONE PER PARTICIPANT), *OPTIONAL – LOW KEY MUSIC*SUMMARY:

*This is a light and fun closing exercise that give participants an opportunity to express their appreciation for each member of the workshop group.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Give everyone a glass of water and have them circulate among each other and tell each person in the group what they appreciate about them.
- Every participant should have a chance to speak to every other participant.

FACILITATION NOTES:

This is a simple but very warm way of giving each participant an opportunity to thank the others for the gift of their presence and for their support.