

Simple Icebreaker – The Handshake Game

How do you normally shake hands? Fancy a change?

This exercise uses the usual handshake introduction but with a twist!

The first step in this activity is to teach the participants 6 different handshake techniques.

1. The Grip – A firm tight hold.
2. The Pump – Moved firmly up and down three or four times.
3. The Fingers – not a grip at all – offer just your fingers!
4. The Twist – Turn your partners handshake through 45-60 degrees.
5. The Sandwich – Place your second hand on top of theirs.
6. The Rock'n'Roll – Sway the handshake from side to side.

First find a partner to demonstrate these handshakes. You may want to write these 6 on a white board or flip chart paper so that participants can see them.

Then invite all of the participants to roam the room and shake hands with other people using any one of the 6 handshakes previously demonstrated. Now the introduction has been made, allow the participants to chat for a minute.

Ask the delegates a few questions before moving on:

Did they both choose the same handshake?
How did the handshake feel?
Was it easy to change to a different handshake?
Did they recognise the choice that their partner made?

After 1 minute, allow the participants to move on to find their next pairing, using another random handshake.

Continue until all participants have been introduced, or for 10-15 minutes.