

People Bingo

Bingo is one of the most popular ice breakers because it's so easy to customize for your particular group and situation, and everyone knows how to play it.

Ideal Size - Up to 30. Divide larger groups.

Use For - Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting.

Time Needed – 15 - 20 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed - Bingo cards (customize your own as outlined below), pens/pencils

Instructions - If you know your participants, make a list of 25 interesting traits that describe different aspects of them, things like, "plays the bongos," "once lived in Sweden," "has a karate trophy," "has twins," "collects children's art," "has a tattoo."

If you don't know your participants, make a list of more general traits like "drinks tea instead of coffee", "loves the color orange," "has two cats," "drives a hybrid," "went on a cruise in the last year." You can make these easy or difficult depending on how much time you want the game to take. If you're making your own, bingo cards have five boxes across and five boxes down. B-I-N-G-O! A simple table in Word does the trick. Fill in the boxes on a master and make copies. Leave room for signatures.

When you're ready to play, give each participant a bingo card and a pen. Explain that the group has 10 - 15 minutes to mingle, introducing themselves, and finding people who match the traits on the card. They must put the person's name in the corresponding box or have the person sign the appropriate square.

The first person to fill five boxes across or down yells BINGO! and the game is over. Ask participants to introduce themselves and share one of the interesting traits they learned about someone else.

Debriefing

Debrief by asking for volunteers to share how they feel differently about the others in the group now that they know a few things about them. When we take the time to get to know each other, barriers dissolve, people open up, and learning can take place.

When used with interprofessional health care teams, this has led to discussion related to team building, team relationships and respect. Often, team members display greater trust for each other, demonstrate improved communication, are more willing to approach each other and are much better at dealing with conflict once they think about colleagues as people rather than an unknown discipline.

People Bingo

(sample card)

Has blue Eyes	Likes Spicy Food	Has gone on a cruise	Owens a dog	Drives a red car
Has a Tattoo	Got underwear for Christmas	Is a cat lover	Is left handed	Favorite color is blue
Speaks a second language	Has 2 children		Drinks Tea	Plays on a Sports team
Seeks computer advice from kids	Does not have a cell phone	Likes to clean	Is a morning person	Loves cottage country
Believes in Santa	Has been hospitalized in the last year	Has never used a rotary dial phone	Remembers "Father Knows Best"	Is a reality TV junkie