

# ENERGIZERS

## **PURPOSE:**

Energizers can help bring groups together, engage the imagination, encourage creative expression, and focus a group for the next activity. Before getting to the energizers there are some simple steps for creating a safe and inclusive environment for your group and some great strategies for effective facilitation. Laying the groundwork for safe space is fundamental when leading energizers with youth. These activities are a collection that CANFIT has designed and also compiled from different resources like SPARK and The Power of Hope.

## **STEPS FOR CREATING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR PLAY**

### 1. Choosing the Type of Game

Introducing non-traditional games, specifically games that do not have existing stereotypes for participation, can provide a greater chance to create opportunities where all children will feel welcome and encouraged to play and be physically active. Identify games to teach initially that have the best chance of engaging all children to play.

#### **Tips:**

- Games that are high energy, with minimal time waiting or watching others perform
- Games where skill level does not impact accessibility or enjoyment
- Games where the focus is placed 'on enjoyment of participation, being active, and developing sense of community through cooperation and teamwork
- Minimize the role of competition and the score

### 2. Adult Participation

Taking an active role in playing games with children, rather than solely facilitating the game, creates opportunities for adults to model healthy behavior. Adult participation also supports engaging children who may be nervous to play alone or try a new game. Adults being active in playing games, particularly games that have common assumptions around "who can play," can help break down stereotypes on playgrounds so that all children to feel included and to participate.

#### **Tips:**

- Play in games that you are not highly skilled at to promote the idea that ultimate goal is to have fun playing in games
- Play a game or sport that is not socially connected to your gender
- Model how to get "out" and how to play team games in healthy manner

### 3. Laying the Foundation for Inclusion and Respect

Taking pro-active steps to create an environment that promotes inclusion and respect is the best means to decrease potential challenging behaviors or conflicts. Adults should develop healthy strategies to prevent and/or work with situations where children are being excluded or disrespected.

#### **Tips:**

- Set the stage for having fun! Review rules and expectations prior to starting game
- Create Team Names: encourage peer and team support and cheering
- When choosing teams or groups use methods that do not single out a student's gender or ability or create situations where students are selected by "captains"

Adapted from CANFIT ENERGIZERS

## 4. Intervening and Interrupting Unhealthy Situations

In creating safe and inclusive environments for play, it is essential for adults to feel confident and capable of intervening and interrupting situations where children are being teased and/or excluded.

Remember that it can take just one unchecked incident in a child's life to influence their perception, willingness to engage in play and physical activity.

### Tips:

- Develop strategies to prevent and work with situations where children are being excluded or disrespected that are both healthy and effective for the child and adult
- When dealing with challenging behavior, focus on the behavior rather than the individual.
- Never label a child as "bad"
- Use calm and respectful tones when you are talking to children /students, even if you are upset.

## 5. Positive and Inclusive Language

Remember to consider the underlying messages you are giving students through the language you use with them. Without intending to do so it is easy to exclude, ostracize or hurt individuals through your choice of words. It is imperative to not use gender-typed language. Equally important is to intervene clearly and decisively in the face of any bias or discrimination you encounter. We need to be aware of how our language and words can impact the accessibility and healthy experiences for children.

### Tips for Inclusive Language:

- Use the word "player" versus the traditional "man" when talking about strategy and positions
- Use the term "sporting behavior" to replace "sportsmanship"
- Be prepared to intervene clearly and decisively in the face of any bias or discrimination you encounter.
- Instead of saying "you guys" say "everyone"

### Tips for Competition:

- Instead of saying "The team that wins gets to keep playing, the team that loses has to leave the court." Alternative: "The team that scores keeps playing, the team that doesn't returns to the line ready for their next turn"
- When picking teams encourage students to line up and count off in twos ...1's over here 2's over there.
- Use the term "sporting behavior" to replace "sportsmanship"
- Be prepared to intervene clearly and decisively in the face of any bias or discrimination you encounter.
- Instead of saying "you guys" say "everyone"

## FACILITATION STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING GAMES

### Signals

Signals are any sound or body movement that initiates an action for a group. Common signals are a whistle, clapping, two fingers raised in the air or a verbal cue. Some signals are used to stop action, some to start action and some to focus attention. Others are used to create breaks and transitions between activities. Having a clear signal or set of signals is imperative when working with groups of children in school and after school settings.

### Tips for Using Signals

- Stay consistent with the expectation of the signal
- If the adult begins to talk with only half of the group following the signals and getting focused, students will be less likely to follow when signal is given at a future time
- Keep providing the signal until you get the desired response
- When appropriate be comfortable being silly, energized, and animated
- Match the signal to the environment

Adapted from CANFIT ENERGIZERS

- Know when to use louder sounds and animated movement or quieter signals and responses

**Here is a list of suggested Signals:**

1. "Clap once if you can hear my voice. Clap three times if you can hear my voice. Clap ten times if you can hear my voice." While students are clapping you take a grandiose bow and say, "Thank you, thank you very much, thank you," as though they were applauding you.
2. Have students echo a rhythm you initiate with claps or stomps or a mixture of both until everyone is doing it together and you have their attention.
3. Toes on the Line": Count down from five-Say "I want to see everyone with their toes on the white line, ready to play and focused on me before I finish counting down from five. Here we go, 5-4-3-2-1. Great job!"
4. Use your whistle to get attention. Different number of toots or short and long toots can mean different -things. One whistle means freeze ... two whistles mean line up, etc.

---

## ENERGIZERS

### **A. SHAKE DOWN** (purpose-wake up the body and refocus)

Starting with your right hand, make a fist, and shake it in the air 8 times, yelling "1-2-3- ... " and so on. Switch to your left fist. Switch to your right leg, kicking. Switch to your left leg, kicking. Do the same pattern with 4 shakes on each fist/leg, then 2 shakes, then 1 shake, then everybody let out a yell in celebration!

### **B. PASS THE SOUND** (purpose-increase comfort and energy in group during training)

The facilitator or a volunteer will begin by performing a nonsensical sound and action with his/her body to the person to the left of them. The person to the left will repeat the same thing to the person on his/her left. The speed should be rapid - the sound/action should go around the circle like falling dominos. Once it returns to the person who began it, he/she does it one more time, and the person to his/her left starts a new sound/action.

### **C. YES GAME** (purpose-promote group energy using positive reinforcement-great in the middle of a training but can be used anywhere)

This game is a wonderful example of (1) how a group can achieve a goal by saying "yes," and (2) how we can keep trying new things, keep being creative, when what we are currently doing isn't working. You can tell the group: "We all live in the Land of Yes. In the land of Yes, there is only one word - do you know what that is? "Yes!" We are going to ask a volunteer to leave the room and when they are out of sight and earshot, we will come up with an achievable goal that they must do when they return. When they return, as a group, we will chant "Yes" whenever our volunteer is moving towards his/her goal. But, when they are moving away from their goal, what will we do? We will all fall silent. That's how the volunteer knows they need to try something else." Ask for any questions, give a mock demonstration, and go! Goals for the volunteer are best when they are tangible, for instance going somewhere identifiable in the room, picking up or using a prop in the room in a certain manner, or interacting with another person.

### **D. ACTING OUT** (purpose-getting group comfortable and excited about day)

Ask for three volunteers and have three different scenarios for each to act out in front of the group for instance: falling in love, riding a rollercoaster, cutting an onion. Give each volunteer 10 seconds to think of how then will act out their scene,

Adapted from CANFIT ENERGIZERS

during this time you can lead 10 seconds of a quick physical activity like squats, yoga poses or stretching. After the group has identified all three scenarios ask for one more volunteer, the last volunteer will leave the room for 5 seconds while the rest of the group plans how to describe the final scene which everyone will act out. Ask the last person to come back into the room and have them describe what the final scene is.

#### **E. BACK TO BACK** (purpose-promote communication and listening skills among students and staff)

This activity is usually used during our communication/advocacy training. The main goal of this activity is for participants to describe their message to another person. Set chairs back to back, divide the group into two groups A and B. Group A is the describing group gets a picture from a magazine that they will explain to their partner from Group B. The second group, Group B will be provided with a piece of white paper and a pencil. Step1. While sitting back to back Group A will explain the picture to their partner, never showing the picture or saying what is on the page they are describing. Step2. Group B will listen carefully to their partner and draw everything that is being said to the best of their ability. Step3. Compare the pictures drawn with the picture that was given to the partner in Group B. Questions to ask at the end of the activity: did the participant communicate clearly and did their partner listen carefully? Overall outcomes: Displays the importance of communication and listening as vital elements when sending a message.

#### **F. MINGLE, MINGLE** (purpose-for getting students into groups of different sizes)

Remind students about boundaries. Call “mingle, mingle” and a locomotor skill (walk, skip, etc.). Students begin when you say “Go” or when the music starts. When the music stops or you blow a whistle, call a number. Students should form groups of that size. Students without a group raise their hand and move to the center to find others. When in groups have students share something about themselves in their groups, favorite dance move, favorite meal or stretch. Developed by SPARK

#### **G. SUPER STARTS AND STOPS** (purpose-to establish boundaries, develop body control and balance)

Instruct students to move inside boundaries (with specified locomotor skill-leap, slide, walk) when music is on and to “freeze like a statue” when music stops.

#### **H. BODY PARTS** (for getting students into groups)

Instruct students to move using a specified locomotor skill when the music starts or when you say, “Go!” Students stop when the music stops or when you blow the whistle. Call out a number to indicate how many students should be in a group and a body part (elbow, knee, hand) for them to place together. Students without a group of the proper size raise hands and come to the center to find other group members or to get help. Developed by SPARK

#### **I. BIGGEST FAN** (purpose-learn everyone’s name, improve verbal and non-verbal communication)

Ask group if they know how to play Paper, Rock, Scissors, if they do not explain the rules of the game. Have group get into pairs, introduce themselves and play a 3 rounds of Paper, Rock, Scissors. The student who does not win becomes the winner's cheerleader, following them and shouting 'Go \_\_\_'. The winner moves on to play another winning student. Each round, the winner advances to play again and the non-winners and any previous cheerleaders are now all cheering for that winner. The game continues this way until it is down to two players and the whole group is cheering for one or the other.

#### **J. THREE’S COMPANY** (purpose-to promote teamwork and communication)

Adapted from CANFIT ENERGIZERS

Ask for three volunteers. To prepare draw out things or actions that could be performed in groups of three. For example: Driving over a speed bump, one person could be the speed bump; the second person could be the driver and the last person the car. Make as many as you want the group to perform. Give each group of three 1 minute to decide how they will perform the action or thing for the group without talking. The group then performs the action and while the entire group calls out what they think the action or item is.

#### **K. MOVE-MUEVETE** (purpose-get to know the participants and introduce movements and healthy messages)

This activity is usually used when working with the Latino adult population and can be modified for any training by using a different kind of music. Ask participants to get into a large circle. Depending on the number of participants have 5 to 10 different kinds of fruit or vegetables that people usually do not eat-distribute randomly to people in circle. Bring a CD of music like merengue or salsa. Turn music on and have the participants with the fruit go into the middle introduce themselves and the fruit or vegetable and share a different way to cook or eat the item and their favorite dance move. At the same time the rest of the participants are in a circle moving in their own space dancing. Have people with fruit hand the fruit to a new participant until everyone has gone into the middle and shared their name, fruit and dance move.

## *A Couple of Longer Energizers:*

#### **L. CAPTAIN'S CALL** (purpose-to increase listening skills, endurance and awareness)

Have students line up on a clearly marked line in the middle of the playing area. The leader explains s/he is the captain of the boat and is going to give commands to the crew to perform a specific movement or sound. If the crew members do not follow the commands correctly or is last to perform the command then they sit in the break-room. The goal is to be the last crew member standing. The commands are:

- **Roll call:** the crew must line up at the mid-line of the playing area, feet together, toes on the line, salute and say "aye-aye captain!" The crew may not lower their salute until the captain salutes and says "at ease."
- **Crow's nest:** students act as if they're climbing up a ladder to the crow's nest, the top of the main mast, an area at the highest point of the ship to lookout.
- **Swab the deck:** students act like they're mopping the deck.
- **Shark attack:** the captain becomes a shark and tries to tag the crew. Those tagged go to the "brig".
- **Break time:** active crew members can run to the "brig" and tag as many people as possible. Those that are tagged can come back in and play again. Make sure everyone gets let out of the -brig" during break time.
- **Sailor overboard:** crew pairs up and decides which one gets on their hands and knees and which one stands a places a foot gently on the other's back while acting like their using a spyglass to find the sailor in the water.
- **Drop anchor:** crew lies on their backs with legs up and acts like an anchor.
- **Row to Shore:** crew gets in lines of 4; students act as if they are rowing to safety, while singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat".

#### **J. EVOLUTION** (purpose-To increase social comfort and to improve non-verbal communication)

Have the whole group gather in a contained area. Explain the evolution of all life in our group goes in this order: First the egg, then the chicken, the dinosaur, rock star, superhero. Each stage of evolution has a corresponding action - egg is low to the ground with hands over their head, chicken walks like a chicken and clucks, dinosaur has arms outstretched like big jaws, etc. Demonstrate clearly the different steps and order of evolution, including what to do if you win or do not win Ro-Sham-Bo. Make sure that everyone knows how to play Ro-Sham-Bo. Remind players that they can only do Ro-Sham-Bo with someone who is at the same stage of evolution; this encourages students to interact with many different people, not just their friends. Everyone begins as an egg. Players mix up, pair up and play Ro-Sham-Bo. The person who wins evolves to the next step, the person who did not win goes down a stage. If the player is already an egg s/he remains an egg. Players pair up again, only with someone who is in the same stage of evolution. When a player evolves all the way to a superhero, s/he is finished and can fly around the area. Game ends when all the players are also superheroes or when the time limit is

Adapted from CANFIT ENERGIZERS

up. Variation: Allow players who lose Ro-Sham-Bo to remain at their current stage of evolution - this makes the game go a little faster.