

A HOW-TO GUIDE

Bringing Joy & Fun Into the Workplace



Invest EAP/Centers for Wellbeing



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INTRODUCTION

Imagine feeling less stressed and laughing more at work

The research is clear: happier brains do better work. Joy is an emotional response and outlook that's vital to our well-being, cognitive functioning, and our performance at work.

When we take the time to learn about colleagues and find ways to laugh with them, our stress is lowered, we feel connected with our teammates, productivity increases, and our learning capability expands.



This toolkit will provide ideas and recommendations on how to engage your team in order to increase camaraderie, joy, and fun in your workplaces.

In-Person Activities & Games



Orange Bowl

Use empty water bottles and oranges to create your own mini bowling lanes. Bowling shoes optional! See Appendix A for a way to keep score.



Game of Possibilities

Give a random object to one person in each group. One at a time, someone goes up in front of the group and demonstrates a use for that object. The rest of the team must guess what the player is demonstrating. The demonstrator can't speak, and demonstrations must be original and possibly wacky ideas.



The Barter Puzzle

Have everyone break off into small, equal-sized groups. Give each group a different jigsaw puzzle with the same difficulty level. The goal is to see which group can complete their jigsaw puzzle the fastest. However, some pieces will be mixed around in the other group's jigsaw puzzles! It's up to the team to come up with a way to get those pieces back – either through negotiating, trading, exchanging team members, etc. Whatever they decide to do, they must decide as a group.



Truths & Lies

Sit everyone in a circle facing one another. Have each person come up with three facts about themselves and one lie. The lie should be realistic instead of extravagant. Go around the circle and have each person share their facts and lie. After someone shares, the others must guess which is the lie.

Hybrid Activities & Games



Common Ground

Prepare a list of statements in advance. During your meeting, ask staff to either raise their hand or turn on their video if the statement applies to them. During the activity it is important for everyone to remain observant. Create time at the end to discuss. A list of statements can be found in Appendix B and [here](#).



Would You Rather?

Provide two options for team members to choose from. Everyone holds up one finger or two depending on which option they prefer. A list of questions can be found in Appendix C and [here](#).



What's Near You?

Take turns sharing funny, strange, or weird objects employees have laying around in their workspaces. What useful purpose do they serve? Are memories attached to them or are they merely for amusement?



Tell Someone Else's Story

Randomly pair team members up and have them spend five minutes each interviewing their partner. Ask them about their hobbies, what excites or challenges them, or what skill they are currently learning. Then, as a group ask each person to relay their findings about their partner.



Brain Teasers - Word Game

Display images with words, letters, and numbers representing common expressions. See how much fun everyone has figuring out the answers! Word game images and answer key are provided in Appendix D.

Hybrid Activities & Games Continued



Team-Building Bingo

Send out randomized cards full of fun prompts and questions. Split participants into groups. Players must mark each square with the name of another player that fits the description on their card. The first player to get five squares in a row shouts "BINGO!" and wins the round. See Appendix E for Bingo templates.



ABC Scavenger Hunt

The facilitator will name three letters of the alphabet and then the rest of the team scramble to find objects beginning with each letter. The person who finds three objects and returns to the meeting first wins. You can repeat this several times using different letters.



MAD LIBS

One player will act as the reader and asks other players to fill in the blanks with adjectives, nouns, verbs, etc. by typing answers in a chat, taking turns, or raising their hands. These words get inserted into the blanks and then the story is read aloud. There are no winners or losers, only laughter! You can purchase MAD LIBS books or see Appendix F for a few templates.



Pass the Word

Pass a "ball" – say the first word that comes to mind while "holding the ball" and then say someone's name and "throw" it to them. For example, you say "apple, Max" and Max "catches" the ball and says, "bananas, Ari" and "tosses" it to Ari. Make sure everyone gets a chance to "catch the ball".

Asynchronous Activities & Games



Pecha Kucha

Each employee creates a personal slide show containing ten pictures. Each slide must contain pictures from their life outside of the office that they are comfortable sharing. Instructions and templates can be found [here](#).



Guess Who?

Ask everyone to submit an image that symbolizes and communicates a unique story about their life. Each week, post one team member's image on a messaging platform or up on a wall. Have team members guess who is associated with the image. Once someone guesses correctly, the team member will share their story.



The Baby Game

Ask all team members to share their baby photos. Show these images in a staff meeting or in a shared document and let all team members take a look. Have staff individually guess who the babies in the pictures are. The team member with the highest score wins.



Picture of the Week

Staff can submit images of an agreed upon subject (i.e., pets) weekly. Post the images where all staff can view them and contribute humorous captions to go along with the images.

100 Engaging Icebreakers

Source: Nasserian, S. (2023, March 6). *100 engaging virtual ice breakers for your team*. Cozymeal. <https://www.cozymeal.com/virtual-team-building-activities/virtual-ice-breakers>

Funny Icebreakers

- What is your funniest memory with your best friend?
- What is the craziest dare you have ever taken?
- What were your teenage anthems?
- If you could be eating any food in the world right now, what would it be?
- If you were a store at the mall, which would you be?
- What is your worst date story?
- Which of your past Halloween costumes is your favorite?
- Do you have any guilty pleasure shows that you watch?
- Tell the team a knock-knock joke.
- What is the strangest item near you?
- What commercial jingles or theme songs get stuck in your head?
- If you could choose your own nickname, what would it be and why?
- If you had a ridiculous amount of money, what unnecessary thing or experience would you indulge in?
- If you could eliminate one food from the world, what would it be?
- Share a good or bad impression!
- If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would the song be and why?



100 Engaging Icebreakers

Funny Icebreakers (continued)

- If you were sponsored by a brand, which one would you want it to be?
- What topic do you know a lot of random trivia about?
- If your life became an action movie, which fictional character would you want to be?
- What is a common thing that you have never done? Fly, change a tire, etc.
- If you could live in any sitcom universe, which would it be?
- What is the scariest thing you have done for fun?
- If you had to wear a shirt with one word on it for an entire year, which word would you choose?
- If you were in the wrestling ring, who would be your opponent?
- How did your parents embarrass you as a kid?



Virtual Meeting Icebreakers

- What is the most unique thing on your bucket list?
- You have two minutes to give a speech on anything! What would your topic be?
- What is your favorite website or blog to visit in your free time?
- Pick up something nearby and tell a story about its significance or how you got it.
- If you could live the life of any historical figure, who would you choose?

100 Engaging Icebreakers

Virtual Meeting Icebreakers (continued)

- What is something that you feel proud of this week?
 - What do you feel is something that everyone is missing out on because they simply do not know about it?
 - When someone finds out what you do for a living or where you are from, what questions do they always ask?
 - What is your go-to self-improvement activity that you think would help others?
 - Who is the most interesting person you have met and had a conversation with?
 - What does your favorite breakfast look like?
 - What is your morning routine like?
 - How do you take your coffee, tea, juice, etc.?
 - How would you make your week the most productive it can be?
 - How do you like to relax and de-stress?
 - Who in your life inspires you the most?
 - What is something you want to focus on this week?
 - Give a toast to someone for doing a good job whether it be for something mundane, work related, exciting or personal!
 - How do you like to brainstorm? What methods are most effective?
 - What motivates you?
- 
- If you were an article of clothing, which would you be?
 - If you could learn any one skill right now, what would it be?
 - What is your favorite movie and how many times have you seen it?
 - What mundane superpower do you have? Can you curate the perfect playlist for any occasion? Do you always select the perfect produce while shopping?
 - If you were an article of clothing, which would you be?
 - If you could learn any one skill right now, what would it be?
 - What is your favorite movie and how many times have you seen it?
 - What mundane superpower do you have? Can you curate the perfect playlist for any occasion? Do you always select the perfect produce while shopping?
 - What was your favorite thing about your last job?

100 Engaging Icebreakers

Short Icebreakers

- What weird thing do you feel nostalgic for?
- If you were a vegetable, which one would you be and why?
- What is the scariest movie you have ever seen?
- If you were featured on the news, what would the reason most likely be?
- What is your favorite international food?
- What is your favorite physical activity?
- What animal are you amazed by?
- What smell do you hate that others seem to like?
- What would you want to do if you retired?
- What is a trait that you have picked up from your parents?
- What food do you love that others typically do not?
- What are some of your favorite games to play?
- Share a funny meme with the group via Zoom or Slack.
- What is something that takes a lot of time, but is definitely worth it?
- What do you wish someone taught you a long time ago?
- How was your experience taking your driver's test?
- What popular song drives you crazy?



- What do you find yourself recommending to people you first meet?
- Tell the group about something funny you witnessed this week?
- Do you have any exciting plans coming up?
- What book had the most significance on you?
- What is your favorite obscure belonging?
- What is in your junk drawer?
- Describe your setup for the perfect nap.
- What is your favorite food combination?

Recommended Reading

- *The Fun Habit: How The Disciplined Pursuit of Joy and Wonder Can Change Your Life* by Mike Rucker
- *The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again* by Catherine Price
- Here's why you should make a habit of having more fun
- How to have real fun – even when life's got you down
- Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke
- Mission: Joy



Appendix A - Bowling Scorecard

How to Keep Score

- Enter x or X for a strike.
- Enter / for a spare.
- Enter 0-9 for each shot if it is not a strike or spare.

Scoring Rules

Strike

If you knock down all 10 pins in the first shot of a frame, you get a strike.

How to score: A strike earns 10 points plus the sum of your next two shots.

Spare

If you knock down all 10 pins using both shots of a frame, you get a spare.

How to score: A spare earns 10 points plus the sum of your next one shot.

Open Frame

If you do not knock down all 10 pins using both shots of your frame (9 or fewer pins knocked down), you have an open frame.

How to score: An open frame only earns the number of pins knocked down.

The 10th Frame

The 10th frame is a bit different:

If you roll a strike in the first shot of the 10th frame, you get 2 more shots. If you roll a spare in the first two shots of the 10th frame, you get 1 more shot. If you leave the 10th frame open after two shots, the game is over and you do not get an additional shot.

How to Score: The score for the 10th frame is the total number of pins knocked down in the 10th frame.

Scoring Shortcuts

- A strike followed by a spare earns 20 points in a frame.
- A spare followed by a strike earns 20 points in a frame.
- The maximum score in one frame is 30 which is achieved by rolling 3 consecutive strikes.

Appendix B - Common Ground

Example Statements

To the extent that you feel comfortable sharing, please raise your hand if:

- You were born outside of North America
- You speak more than one language
- You play Wordle every day
- You have more than three siblings
- You like pineapple on your pizza
- You were the first one in your family to attend college
- You've ever worked the night shift at a job
- You lived (or live) in a multi-generational home
- You currently have more than three pets
- You were named after someone...Explain who you were named after
- You like to sing
- You have participated in a race (like a 5K or marathon)
- You prefer mountains more than beach
- You play an instrument...tell someone what instrument you play
- You like to play sports or have played on any teams
- You have traveled out of the country in the last 6 months...if you raised your hand tell someone where
- You are the oldest sibling
- You've watched reality TV this week
- You're an optimist
- You like Pepsi more than Coke
- You have an iPhone
- You love country music
- You hit the alarm snooze button this morning
- You ever played organized sports as a child
- You know more than 4 digits of Pi
- You have tried yoga, even once
- You have a tattoo
- You've ever snuck food into the cinema
- You've eaten chocolate today
- You can correctly spell the word "Lieutenant"
- You ever wished Harry Potter was real
- You sing in the shower
- You went to bed before 11 PM last night
- You floss every single day
- You worked out more than 3 times in the last 7 days
- You've ever tried to move something with your mind
- You're a Trekkie
- Tried to write a book (successfully or otherwise...)
- Spent the night in the hospital
- Been in a helicopter
- Gone surfing
- Cut your own hair

More can be found [here!](#)

Appendix C - Would You Rather?

Example Statements

- Would you rather be a famous celebrity or live like a hermit?
- Would you rather be the best in the world at a super obscure sport or just pretty good at a very popular sport?
- Would you rather have to listen to one song (chosen by you) play over and over for a week or have multiple songs (chosen by someone else) play over and over for a week?
- Would you rather always be slightly too warm or slightly too cold (no matter what temperature the world around you is)?
- Would you rather be able to read minds or be able to see the future?
- Would you rather lose all your technology devices or lose every picture that's ever been taken of you?
- Would you rather have to wear clown shoes every day or have to wear bunny ears every day?
- Would you rather not have heating or not have air conditioning?
- Would you rather be an amazing chef or be an amazing driver?
- Would you rather pick up painting or sewing?
- Would you rather hear every word spoken to you as if it's to the tune of your least favorite song or have to sing everything you speak but to any tune you want?
- Would you rather live in a tiny house or in a house that's too big for the number of people living in it?
- Would you rather be a public speaker or be a shark diver?
- Would you rather be able to fly or be able to teleport?
- Would you rather live for 1,000 years or live for only 30 years?
- Would you rather have no elbows or have no knees?
- Would you rather eat only sour foods or only salty foods?
- Would you rather swim the Atlantic Ocean or bike across the United States?
- Would you rather have a super fancy car or a super fancy house?
- Would you rather have an unlimited supply of cell phone data or an unlimited supply of gas in your car?
- Would you rather have 10 dogs or no dogs at all?
- Would you rather never have to eat again or never have to go to the bathroom again?
- Would you rather visit the seven wonders of the world or get to plan your own trip to seven interesting places?
- Would you rather be a singer who makes one amazing album or three pretty good albums?
- Would you rather always be itchy or always be cold?
- Would you rather have hair down to your ankles or be bald?
- Would you rather have a big family or a small family?
- Would you rather live somewhere tropical or somewhere cold?
- Would you rather spend the majority of your time by yourself or a majority of your time with other people?
- Would you rather always be running late or always be running early?
- Would you rather be able to read faster than anyone on the planet or be able to run faster than anyone on the planet?
- Would you rather write a New York Times bestseller or win an Olympic gold medal?
- Would you rather have a name everyone misspells or a name everyone forgets?
- Would you rather live in the mountains or at the beach?
- Would you rather have 20 kids or have no kids?
- Would you rather always be traveling or never be able to travel again?
- Would you rather be able to play any instrument or speak any language?
- Would you rather go camping or go on a cruise?
- Would you rather eat a bug or get stung by a bee?

More can be found [here](#)!

Appendix D - Brain Teasers - Word Game

Instructions

- The next pages will be images that represent a word or an expression.
- The first one to guess the answer (either unmute yourself or type in the chat) wins!

Example



Answer: Greenhouse

SOUP

M1Y L1I1F1E

WHAT

MUST

TRAVEL

CCCCC



STAND --- TRY 2

584SAFETY9482

**TALIR
RIALT
AIRTL
IRLAT**

**COVER
COVER
COVER**

SITTING

THE WORLD

**STR
EET**

GIVE
GIVE
GIVE
GIVE

GET
GET
GET
GET

Brain Teasers - Word Game Answer Key

1. Split pea soup
2. For once in my life
3. What goes up must come down
4. Overseas travel
5. Split level
6. Try to understand
7. Safety in numbers
8. Trail mix
9. Head for cover
10. Sitting on top of the world
11. Street corner
12. Forgive and forget

Appendix E - BINGO Template

- Have participants mingle around the room or ask questions in a group. If virtual, send players into breakout rooms to allow for small group conversations.
- Players must mark each square with the name of another player that has done one of these activities in the last 30 days
- Try to fill your card with as many different colleagues as possible
- The first player to get five squares in a row shouts, "BINGO!" and wins the round

Played a board or card game	Sat quietly and read a book or magazine	Tried a new recipe	Gone for a walk in the crisp air	Nicely said "no" to something in order to say "yes" to themselves
Called a friend or family member to feel connected	Created a workout playlist	Drank 8 glasses of water a day	Created something: art, knit, poem, wood-working	Has gone skiing or snowboarding
Meditated for at least 5 minutes	Did at least 10 minutes of strength training (any kind)	FREE SPACE	Decluttered their space	Journalled or created a gratitude list
Got 8 hours of restful sleep	Spent time in nature	Purposefully performed a random act of kindness	Did yoga or dedicated stretching time	Rested or relaxed without guilt 😊
Made a healthy meal plan or cooked in bulk	Took a dedicated screen break at home	Ate 3 cups of vegetables in one day	Did laundry and put it away the same day (!)	Completed a task you've been putting off - phew

Appendix E - BINGO Template

- Have participants mingle around the room or ask questions in a group. If virtual, send players into breakout rooms to allow for small group conversations.
- Players must mark each square with the name of another player that matches the description in the square.
- Try to fill your card with as many different colleagues as possible
- The first player to get five squares in a row shouts, "BINGO!" and wins the round

Has 3+ pets	Prefers winter over summer	Still loves Backstreet Boys	Has a YouTube channel	Watched a movie last night
Same birth month as you	Been on a boat in the last 30 days	Traveled to Asia	Uses social media	Doesn't have houseplants
Same middle name as you	Has climbed a mountain	FREE SPACE	Likes pickles	Has made sushi at home
Goes to bed before 10pm	Can speak another language	Finished a book this week	Has a side hustle	Has a garden
Prefers to cook at home	Can sing "I Will Survive"	Is the youngest sibling	Traveled to Africa	Has children

Appendix F - MAD LIB Templates



MAD LIBS®

A LETTER FROM GEORGE

Hello, my fellow _____ in 2020, it's me, George Washington,
PLURAL NOUN

the first _____. I am writing from (the) _____, where
OCCUPATION A PLACE

I have been secretly living for the past _____ years. I am
NUMBER

concerned by the _____ state of affairs in America these days.
ADJECTIVE

It seems that your politicians are more concerned with
 _____ one another than with listening to the
VERB ENDING IN "ING"

_____ of the people. When we declared our independence
PLURAL NOUN

from (the) _____, we set forth on a/an _____ path
A PLACE ADJECTIVE

guided by the voices of the everyday _____. If we're going to
PLURAL NOUN

keep _____, then we need to learn how to respect all
VERB ENDING IN "ING"

_____. Don't get me wrong; we had _____ problems
PLURAL NOUN ADJECTIVE

in my day, too. Benjamin Franklin once called me a/an _____
NOUN

and kicked me in the _____. But at the end of the day, we
PART OF THE BODY

were able to _____ in harmony. Let us find that _____
VERB ADJECTIVE

spirit once again, or else I'm taking my _____ off the quarter!
PART OF THE BODY

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Appendix F - MAD LIB Templates



MAD LIBS® TOTALLY TIE-DYED

In the 1960s, tie-dyed _____ became a popular fashion fad
PLURAL NOUN
 after _____ wore a psychedelic _____ at a
CELEBRITY ARTICLE OF CLOTHING
 concert. Soon after, hippies donned this _____ apparel while
ADJECTIVE
 promoting peace and _____. Today, anyone can create
NOUN
 colorful _____ in their own backyard. First, take a damp
PLURAL NOUN
 _____, _____ and roll the fabric, then tie
ARTICLE OF CLOTHING VERB
 it tight with some rubber _____. Next, dip sections into
PLURAL NOUN
 vats of colored _____. The longer it soaks, the more
TYPE OF LIQUID
 _____ the colors become! Finally, soak your creation in a
ADJECTIVE
 mixture of _____ and vinegar. This tangy solvent helps
NOUN
 _____ the dye, keeping colors looking _____ for
VERB ADJECTIVE
 years. And if tie-dye isn't your cup of _____, it might
TYPE OF LIQUID
 make a radical gift for that special _____ in your life!
NOUN

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Appendix F - MAD LIB Templates

MAD LIBS: Pizza

Pizza was invented by a _____
 (adjective) (nationality)

Chef named _____. To make a pizza, you need
 (person)

To take a lump of _____, and make a thin, round
 (noun)

_____. Then you cover it with
 (adjective) (noun)

_____ sauce, _____ cheese, and fresh
 (adjective) (adjective)

chopped _____. Next you have to bake it in a very
 (plural noun)

hot _____. When it is done, cut it into _____
 (noun) (number)

_____. Some people like _____ pizza the
 (shapes) (food)

Best, but my favorite is the _____ pizza. If I could, I
 (food)

would eat pizza _____ times a day!
 (number)

Appendix F - MAD LIB Templates

MAD LIBS: Enchanted Forest

Dear _____,
(proper noun/person's name)

I am writing to you from a _____ castle in an enchanted forest. I found myself here one
(adjective)

day after going for a ride on a _____ in _____. There are
(color) (animal) (place)

_____ and _____ here! In the
(adjective) (magical creature, plural) (adjective) (magical creature, plural)

_____ there is a pool full of _____. I fall asleep each night on a
(room in a house) (noun)

_____ of _____ and dream of _____. It feels
(noun) (noun) (adjective) (noun, plural)

as though I have lived here for _____. I hope one day you can visit,
(number) (measure of time)

although the only way to get here now is _____ on a _____
(verb) (adjective ending in "ing")

_____ !!
(noun)