

A Colorful Training Tip from Wiser Now:



The following tip is an excerpt and slight expansion of a suggestion from *Wiser Now's 22 Creative Training Tips to Use Instantly* found at <http://www.wisernow.com/store/staff-development.html>:

Introduction

As an instructional technologist, I have attended the creative training workshops of many terrific people over several decades, but have long felt the need to apply the ideas learned to the field of aging well. . . . My mantra – and the philosophy behind the exercises is:

Laughter builds rapport.
Rapport builds trust.
Trust builds relationships.

Dividing into teams/finding partners

First rule

The first principle of dividing people into partners or teams is to have them find others with whom they have something in common. This promotes mingling and conversation. In each example below I have given four sub-category options, but if you have a large group, you can easily come up with other variations. Incorporate humorous choices. Whenever possible, before starting the group activity, give people a minute or two to talk about their commonality. Divide people up according to:

- Their past or present pets: dog-lovers, cat-lovers, birds and other more exotic pets, no-pets-and-content-to-be-petless.
- Their preferred fruit or vegetable: apples, berries, bananas and kumquats or broccoli, carrots, lettuce, and none-of-the-above
- A visible **color** they are wearing even if it's only slightly visible, such as black or red socks, green or purple shoelaces
- The number of siblings they have: zero, 1-2, 3-4, too many
- The season they prefer: spring, summer, fall, winter
- Preferable vacation spot: big city, beach, mountains, their own back yard
- Preferred footwear: sneakers, heels or dress shoes, bedroom slippers, barefoot
- Preferred snack: fruit, potato chips, ice cream, Twinkies



And so on. Obviously, the possibilities are endless. If you can subdivide people multiple times during the course of an event, keep changing the categories so that people meet as many others with whom they have something (or multiple things) in common as possible. Once we have established rapport with one another, it is easier to discuss our differences respectfully.