



## WISE and INTOUCH Leadership Institute

### Free Team-Building Exercises



#### 1. Leading Yourself

You can use this exercise to help leaders explore their own leadership. Every day we show up as leaders, either informally and/or formally. So, what does your leadership look like in terms of:

- Values (your core values)
- Attitude (negative or positive)
- Respect for others
- Plans and process (do you work from a daily agenda and goals?)
- How you communicate and connect with people
- How you treat people
- How competent are you in your work, etc.

Describe YOUR leadership.

#### 2. Making Connections and Articulating

You can use this exercise for several different purposes. Fill a bag with two common household or office items (paperclip, battery, key, rubber band, toothbrush, toy car, screw, seashell, or dice) then ask each person to describe:

- How what you have in your bag relates to the work that you do
- How what you have in your bag relates to your leadership style
- How what you have in your bag relates to the culture of your organization

#### 3. Thumbball

You can use this exercise to bring energy to the room by getting to know one another or reinforcing key concepts. Purchase a premade ball or write questions on a beach ball and toss it to each person to answer the question that their right thumb lands on

*\*One source for purchasing premade balls is Trainers Warehouse*

## 4. Pipeline

You can use this exercise to have participants work as a team, problem-solve, and communicate effectively. Purchase a premade item or use PVC pipe from the hardware store to create a challenging activity. Line everyone up and have them get a ball from the start to the finish.

Create challenging rules:

- Pieces can't touch
- No one can talk
- The path from start to finish zig zags

Debrief with several questions:

- What worked? What didn't work?
- I noticed some of you did XYZ, what was your strategy?
- How did XYZ change make a difference?
- How is this similar to the work we do?

## 5. Wordtree

You can use this exercise to introduce a new topic or concept and to gauge the participants understanding. If you have a large group, divide the group into teams of 3-4 people.

Ask participants to generate a list of words related to the topic:

- One topic could be goal setting: Ask participants to give you words related to the topic. Participants may suggest: 'objectives,' 'action plan,' 'targets,' 'planning,' 'achievement,' etc.
- One topic could be emotional intelligence: Ask participants to give you components of emotional intelligence.
- Participants may suggest: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, social skills - ask how they see each showing up in their workplace
- One topic could be growth mindset as opposed to a fixed mindset. Ask participants to research the characteristics of both mindsets - ask to identify the mindsets characteristics of themselves, department, or organization

Write all suggestions on a whiteboard or a large piece of self-stick easel pad paper, clustering by theme where possible. You can use this opportunity to introduce essential terms and new concepts

## ////// Team Building Exercises for Virtual Teams

1. Build in a time for a 5-10 minute check-in. Ask people to share “what you did this weekend,” “how is your half-marathon training going,” something fun that did, a trip they took, family news such as birth, graduation, even a death of a family member or friend. We are human and life brings happy and sad moments. Limit 1-2 minutes per person; designate a timekeeper.
  - a. Other questions: What is one thing that is going really good for you right now?
  - b. What is one thing that could be better?
2. Virtual coffee or tea break – no agenda just a time to connect and get to know each other. Purchase coffee cards or other cards for a time of coffee and/or tea. During this time, each member could share two pictures (family, hobby, last vacation, wedding, cool gadget or tool) and talk about those pictures. Allow people time to ask questions about the pictures.
3. Use a comprehensive calendar so everyone can look at the schedule. You can also put personal events and color-code personal events and work events. Also, if you know that Jim is attending a grandson’s soccer game, you can either ask him about it later or know not to interrupt him during this event.
4. Attend a webinar together and then jump on a conference call to discuss, embark on a mastermind group and read a leadership or business-related book and then discuss once a month.
5. Create communication expectations and guidelines and work boundaries. Consider how the team wants to communicate (email, text, Yammer, etc.), provide feedback, hold each other accountable.
6. Call the team to practice. Rotate the leadership of the meeting allowing other team members to lead the meeting, plan a team-building activity, or prepare an educational session.
7. Close the meeting with an acknowledgment of yourself and one other person. “I am proud of myself for being involved in a local (association, civic, club), renewing my (XYZ) certification. I am also proud of so and so for working on his procrastination by taking a class on time management or participating in a conference to learn about (XYZ).”

*Team Building Exercises for Virtual Teams continued..*

8. Inclusion, camaraderie, and idea-sharing and problem-solving are the goals for virtual teams. If someone from afar has a birthday, send a card to the office with all of the team signing the card. If you aren't running the half-marathon, let someone know you are with them on the wellness by communicating your 50 squats and 25 lunges that you did that day. Provide a challenge for ideas and problem-solving 48-72 hours prior to the virtual meeting.



## Video Conference Meeting Guidelines

### Time

- Start on time – don't wait for latecomers (it only encourages them); however allow a few minutes at the start of the call for small talk, helps building rapport
- Be on time – set up technology prior to meeting start time. Do not start dialing in at 11:00am if meeting is scheduled to begin at 11:00am.
- Schedule the time needed for topic(s) to be covered:
  - Meetings do not have to be in 30 minute increments
  - If meetings are longer than an hour – schedule a short break
  - End on time – take topics offline or reschedule if going over allotted time.
  - Meeting Leader should give a wrap-up warning – 'we only have 10 minutes left'

### Talent

- Clearly assign (ahead of the call) who is running the meeting
- Invite the people who absolutely need to attend
- Devices off and do not check devices/programs during the meeting
- Keep body language positive:
  - Dress in appropriate attire
  - Watch body language – looking bored or disengaged affects others

*Talent continued..*

- Remember when on video:
  - refrain or reduce distracting surroundings
  - limit movement, don't walk around
- Be helpful, not judgmental. Be civil, practice 'care-frontation' / call forward, not call out
- Encourage growth in others (and reduce monotony) by rotating meeting leadership
- Take responsibility for own learning and actions

**//////Technology**

- Decide on the most appropriate video conferencing platform to use: Zoom, Skype for Business, etc.
- Upon arrival to any meeting phone, video, face-to-face, introduce yourself
- If more than a couple of people, leader should conduct roll call to confirm all on the line/call
- Test technology several minutes prior to start of meeting, practice being a meeting leader and become familiar with technology settings including how to share screens, documents, etc.
- Use screen sharing service, within the video conferencing platform, rather than sending presentation slides via email

**//////Topic(s)**

- Define purpose ahead of meeting
  - Keep number of topics or a minimum
  - Meeting leader to send homework one to five days prior to meeting
- Keep to the topic at hand, meeting leader should (nicely) cut off those talking too much, and conversely, engage those speaking too little
- Seek first to understand; listen to learn
- Respect confidentiality of topics and peer shared information

## Resources

- <https://www.trainerswarehouse.com/>
- [https://sixth.ucsd.edu/\\_files/\\_home/student-life/icebreakers-teambuilding-activities-energizers.pdf](https://sixth.ucsd.edu/_files/_home/student-life/icebreakers-teambuilding-activities-energizers.pdf)
- <https://www.slideshare.net/vickthorr/100-energizers>
- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/best-ice-breakers-for-meetings-and-training-classes-1918430>