

Game: "Circle of Welcome"

This fun, interactive game is designed to help participants explore their hesitations about inviting new people into the group, build confidence in extending invitations, and identify what makes the group special. Through laughter and creativity, participants will reflect on how to create a welcoming environment.

Objective

To encourage participants to recognize and overcome hesitations about inviting others, identify the unique strengths of the group, and practice extending invitations confidently.

Setup

1. Materials Needed:

- Index cards or small slips of paper.
- Markers or pens.
- A small basket or bowl to collect the cards.
- A large sheet of paper or whiteboard for brainstorming (optional).

2. Players:

25 participants divided into smaller groups of 5–6 people for parts of the game.

How to Play

1. Icebreaker: "Why Wouldn't I?" (10 minutes)

- Each participant writes one reason they might hesitate to invite someone new to the group on an index card (e.g., "What if they say no?" or "I don't think they'd be interested").
 - Cards are collected in a basket and shuffled.
 - The facilitator reads them aloud anonymously, while the group listens and laughs (without judgment).
 - Afterward, participants reflect on common themes. The facilitator might say:
"It's normal to feel hesitant, but let's explore why we don't have to let these fears hold us back!"
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2. Group Brainstorm: "What Makes Us Special?" (10 minutes)

- In small groups of 5–6 people, participants discuss and list reasons why the group is valuable and why they enjoy being part of it. Prompts could include:
 - "What makes our group unique?"
 - "What do you enjoy most about being here?"
 - "What do we have to offer to new people?"
 - Each group shares one or two ideas with everyone.
 - The facilitator writes these ideas on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard as a visual reminder.
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3. Role-Playing: "The Perfect Invitation" (15 minutes)

- In the same small groups, participants take turns role-playing scenarios where they invite someone new to the group.
 - Prompts for role-playing scenarios could include:
 - Inviting a neighbor or friend.
 - Talking to someone you don't know very well.
 - Overcoming a rejection and trying again with someone else.
 - Encourage participants to get creative and make their invitations funny, light-hearted, or even exaggerated. The goal is to practice and laugh together.
 - After each role-play, the group gives positive feedback, such as, "That was friendly and warm!" or "I loved how confident you sounded!"
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4. Group Challenge: "Circle of Welcome" (10 minutes)

- The whole group comes back together to form a large circle.
 - Each person shares one practical step they could take to invite someone new into the group (e.g., "I'll text my neighbor this week" or "I'll bring someone to the next meeting").
 - After each share, the group responds with a quick, fun affirmation (e.g., snapping fingers, clapping, or shouting "You've got this!").
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Debrief and Reflection (5 minutes)

- The facilitator asks:

- “What did you learn about why it’s worth inviting new people?”
 - “How can we make our group feel even more welcoming to newcomers?”
 - Encourage participants to take small, practical steps toward inviting someone new in the coming weeks.
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Why This Works

- **Addresses Hesitations:** The icebreaker lets participants reflect on fears in a safe, light-hearted way.
- **Builds Confidence:** Role-playing allows them to practice and normalize inviting others.
- **Celebrates Strengths:** Brainstorming highlights why the group is worth joining and builds pride in being part of it.
- **Fosters Commitment:** The challenge inspires action and accountability.