Ice-breakers/energizers and team-builders are a great way to start off any meeting in order to set the tone for the duration of the gathering. They allow participants to feel integrated within a group, break up already formed groups/cliques, and unify all individuals by participating in an activity that has a shared goal for the entire group.

**Ice breaker ideas**

Since the group will be together for the duration of the semester it is important for the students and mentor to get to know one another. This is not always easy to do so below we have listed some ideas to break the ice and get your peers interacting and more comfortable within the group.

**I never did that! A**
The teens sit in a circle. Give each of them 10 or 15 jellybeans or pennies. In turn, each teen tells something they have never done. Anyone who has done it gives the speaker one of his or her jellybeans or pennies. After going around the circle twice, the person with the most jellybeans or pennies wins. For example: I have never traveled outside the USA. I have never eaten sushi. I have never played a violin.

**I never did that! B**
If no jelly beans/pennies are available there is a simple version where chairs are used instead. The participants start out by sitting in a circle on the floor/ground and one person is elected to sit in the middle. The middle man will start out by saying “I have never…” (Drank, smoked, traveled to Europe, etc.) Anyone who also has never done this thing will get up and sit in an empty chair. From the remaining people on the ground a new middle man is elected and the process starts over. Keep going until everyone has had a chance to be in the middle.

**Famous pairs**
Write the names of famous/celebrity pairs and couples onto pieces of paper and then tape them to the teens’ backs. Make sure participants can’t see each others’ backs. They have to find the teen that completes their pair by asking each other yes and no questions. For example: Teen A has Brittnrey Spears taped to her back she has to find the person with Kevin Federline on his back by asking their peers yes/no questions about the couple.

**Interviews**
Each teen interviews the teen seated next to him or her for five minutes and then introduces the teen to the group. Give out a list of interview questions or let the teens be creative in their interviews.
Name Game
People sit in a circle. First person starts by saying their name. The second person repeats the first person’s name and then says their own name. The third person repeats the names of the first and second person and then says their own, and so on until the final person in the group repeats the names of everyone in the entire group.

Human Lines
Have the participants line up according to some criteria. It could be according to where their names fall in the alphabet, where they’re from, or height. Have each person introduce the person on their left to the whole group. Allow two minutes for the participants to gather information before starting the introductions.

Truth, Truth, Lie
Have everyone say 3 facts about themselves, only 1 of the facts should actually be a lie. Have the group try to figure out which one is the lie.

Frisbee Anyone?
Have a Frisbee at the meeting. Throw it around the room and have people that catch it answer a question or tell about themselves to the others in the group. Once that person is finished, throw the Frisbee to someone else in the group.

People to People
Everyone is directed to pair off (an odd number is needed) until there is one person left standing in the middle of the group. The person who does not have a pair then calls out directions for the partners such as nose to nose, finger to forehead, ankle to shoulder, etc. (body parts to body parts.) The partners will do whatever the person in the middle calls out (similar to Simon Says). The person in the middle gives between one to five directions and then calls out, "People to People!" and everyone grabs a new partner, including the person in the middle, so you are left with a new person in the middle. The game continues. This game needs to be played in a large area or outside.

Name tag Game
Introduce yourself to another person in the group and after conversing two minutes, exchange nametags. Then share the information about your partner with another member in the organization.

Treasure Hunt
Hand out a form to each attendee which has a list of things to find on it. (This form is provided below) The participants are to go around the group “hunting” for the people who have the characteristics on the list. There cannot be more than one person in each box. Discuss the activity when complete.

Beach Ball Questions
Get a large inflatable beach ball and use a permanent fine or medium point marker to write any or all of the questions in the “Conversation Starter” section on it. This will take quite some time, but you can do
it some night in front of the television. The resulting tool is an "icebreaker ball" that you can use for years to come. You can use it in a large group and throw it around. The person who catches it has to answer the question touching their left thumb. They then say their name, answer the question and throw it to someone else. You may also make up your own questions. The ones listed are merely suggestions.

**Catch Me If You Can**
Players should be paired up. All players divide into two lines (facing in) shoulder to shoulder, with partners facing each other. Participants should be given approximately 30 seconds to look at their partners, taking in all details about the individual. The leader then instructs the two lines to turn and face away from the center. One or both lines has 15-20 seconds to change something about their appearance (i.e. change a watch to different wrist, unbutton a button, remove a belt, etc.). The change must be discrete, but visible to the partner. The players again turn in to face each other and have 30 seconds to discover the physical changes that have been made. Players get to interact with each other and have fun!

**Comic Strip Chaos**
Each participant takes a turn at picking a comic frame out of the large container. After the entire group has each chosen one, the participants begin to search for others with the same comic strip sequence. After the participants have found everyone in their group, they must arrange themselves so that the sequence of frames is in chronological order to form the comic strip correctly. Upon completion of sequence, the newly formed group sits down together. Great game to break large group into smaller groups.

**Make A Date**
Give each participant a paper plate. Have them draw the face of a clock on their plate with a line next to each number (no digitals!). Then have participants walk around and find a “date” for each hour, writing their name by the hour. The catch is no one can make a “date” with more than one person per hour. After everyone has made their dates, speed up time and allow 1-3 minutes for each hour. The facilitator then asks a question for discussion on each date. The pairs will have a chance to get to know one another.

**Solemn And Silent**
The instructor explains that this exercise will take self control. Members pair back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eyes, and then try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person has not smiled or laughed. (Second round of playing can involve two teams competing to outlast each other.) If you get a pair at the end who are both keeping a straight face, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.
conversation starter ideas

As a mentor, you should be in constant communication with the students with whom you are working. Many times you will have specific reasons to approach them in conversation. Other times, you may need a “starter,” especially if the student is shy and not likely to approach you. The following are some ideas to use to start up conversations with students in your community:

1. Introduce yourself as the peer mentor and let the student know what your role is and how you’ll be available to them throughout the year.

2. What classes outside of the FYP are you taking? What is your major? What are the professors you have in these classes? (Maybe you’ve had some of the same ones.)

3. Are you going to be involved in any groups/sports on campus? (Learn about their interests so you can continue to ask them questions or pass on information related to the subjects they like.)

4. What was the last film you saw at the movie theatre?

5. What is your favorite TV show?

6. What did you have for breakfast?

7. What is your middle name?

8. What is your favorite food?

9. What foods do you dislike?

10. What is your favorite CD/music?

11. What kind of car do you drive?

12. Favorite item of clothing?

13. If you could go anywhere for vacation where would it be and why?

14. Favorite kind of potato chips?

15. Favorite ice cream?

16. What characteristics do you admire?

17. What is your favorite time of day?

18. What was your most memorable birthday?

19. Where were born?

20. Favorite sports?

21. Coke or Pepsi?

22. Do you have any pets?

23. If you won $1 million what would you do with it?
facilitation strategies

Peer mentors are expected to facilitate a variety of interactions – from community building/social events to study groups to classroom activities. Below are some strategies that you can use to facilitate different types of situations.

Go ‘rounds
Ask the group a question or to share some specific information. Go around the room. If someone needs to pass, allow that but then come back to them. This is a great way to get folks talking and involved right away and allows them to know that their active participation is desired and expected.

Ideas Gallery
This is an alternate way of brainstorming. Put newsprint on the wall with categories of information you’d like the group to think about. Ask them to move from one paper to the next, read what’s on the paper, and add their own thoughts. This activity gets them moving (a change of pace from typical brainstorming) and suggests an expectation that everyone contribute. This also allows those who are more introverted to have a comfortable way of contributing.

Sentence Stems
Create a list of open ended questions and number them. Cut the questions and place them in an envelope. Divide students into small groups of 3-5. One student should select a question from the envelope and respond. The goal is to promote dialogue so the group should be encouraged to ask questions or share additional insights where appropriate. Rotate the envelope until each student has had an opportunity to respond or until the questions have been exhausted.

Reflection/Sharing/Turn To Your Partner (TTYP)
Asking people to do some personal reflection gives them a chance to think; again, this is especially helpful for those who process in writing better than out loud. “Turn To Your Partner” gives them a chance to share their thoughts and process a bit further whatever it is they’ve been asked to consider. This approach gives the introverts an opportunity to approach the topic in a way that might best suit them initially (through writing) and the extroverts a chance to approach it out loud, which might be their preference.

Case Study
Using a “story” that has no-to-low stakes for the students allows them to practice making decisions. This might be especially useful for mentors who teach or assist in teaching.

Mind Maps
Mind mapping is a technique for noting information or explaining a process or concept. When using the mind mapping technique, you would display information graphically as opposed to the traditional method of sentences and words arranged on a page. To promote interaction and dialogue it is sometimes helpful to have students develop mind maps as a group and then explain to others in the
class why they chose certain symbols and icons. Graphic representations of concepts can then be displayed around the room. Mind Map Resource: http://www.peterussell.com/mindmaps/mindmap.html

**continuum activities**

These activities ask students to take a stand and place themselves on a continuum between extremes on various issues. Continuums can be used for such topics as values clarification, working together, transition issues, ethical issues, group work, leadership, and getting acquainted. It’s best to establish ground rules before starting and ensure that everyone doesn’t have to explain/defend his/her position on the continuum, although those who wish to share why they’ve placed themselves in a certain spot on the continuum will be invited to do so.

**Inside Outside Circles/ or Double Circle** *(You can use this activity as an icebreaker as well.)*

Have a large group number off by two’s (1, 2, 1, 2 etc.) Have 1’s form a circle, surrounding the 2’s. Have the 2’s form a circle inside the 1’s, facing the 1’s. As the facilitator, you will begin asking one question to the group, to be answered by each “pair.” Give the pairs approximately 1 minute to share their answers to each question with each other. Ask the inside circle to make a move, e.g. “all move 2 people to their left” or all move 1 person to their right.” With the move completed, each person should be facing a new individual. Remember to introduce yourselves to the new person. Proceed to ask a new question and allow approximately 1 minute for sharing.

Sample Questions

- What is your favorite holiday and why?
- What is your favorite hobby and how often do you engage in enjoying it?
- If you could have a pet what would you choose?
- Who is a role model in your life right now?
- What is the greatest problem facing the world today and what steps should we take to address it?
- You can also link the activity to course content by generating a list of questions that draw upon the day’s lecture or items for an upcoming test.
### Scavenger Hunt Worksheet.

**Find Someone Who...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has the same name as yours</th>
<th>Has a birthday the same month as yours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the same age as you</td>
<td>Knows a foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is wearing a red shirt</td>
<td>Does NOT like chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes Chinese food</td>
<td>Has traveled to Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has 2 brothers or sisters</td>
<td>Has blue eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not have a middle name</td>
<td>Works part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drives a Pontiac</td>
<td>Has a palm pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in the same town as you do</td>
<td>Does NOT know how to use a computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows all 7 dwarfs</td>
<td>Like the color purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has never seen the Star Wars movies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>