

# Energizers and Icebreakers

Creating engaging and meaningful education  
sessions for and with adolescents

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# Introduction and Icebreaker

- ▶ Think of an adjective that describes something about you and starts with the first letter of your first name – e.g., Amiable Abby, Abby the Aggressive.
  
  - ▶ Introduce yourself to your table by saying **your name and adjective, where you live, and your favorite icebreaker/group activity with adolescents.**
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# Session Objectives

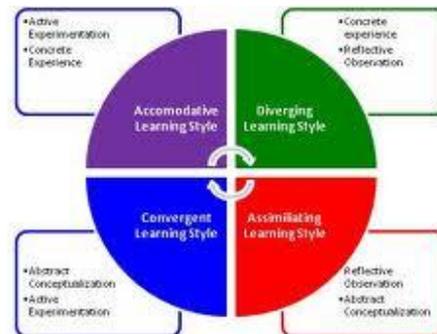
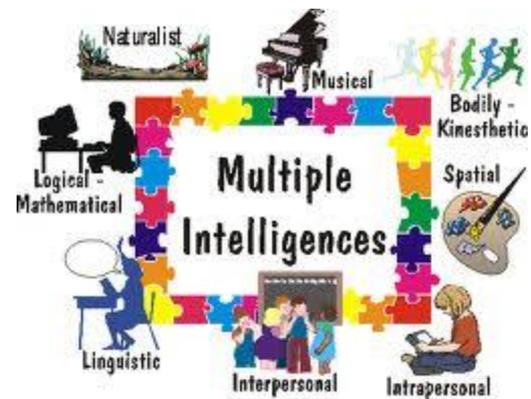
By the end of this workshop participants will be able to:

- ▶ Describe current research and theory supporting the use of experiential education strategies, including energizers and icebreakers, in group sessions with adolescents.
  - ▶ Identify at least three different types of energizers and icebreakers and be able to explain the purpose of these types of tools.
  - ▶ Effectively use energizers and icebreakers in their own sessions with adolescents.
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# Two theories you should know before designing and using an icebreaker or energizer with a group

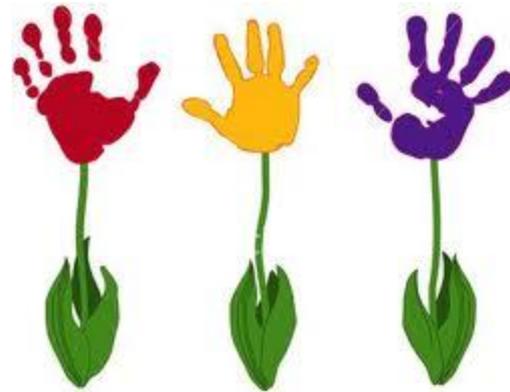
## ▶ Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligence

## ▶ Kolb's Learning Styles



# Multiple Intelligences (MI)

“When students cannot learn the way we teach them, we must teach them the way they learn.” –Howard Gardner



# MI Icebreaker

- ▶ Take 5–10 minutes to complete the brief MI inventory.
  - ▶ Add up your score and find your most predominant learning style.
  - ▶ Share with your table. Any surprises?
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# Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

- ▶ Have students write creatively: monologues, plays, puppet shows, dramatic pieces, persuasive ads, letters to the editor, newspaper articles, lyrics for songs, poetry, puns, riddles, stories to go with pictures
- ▶ Allow students to hear or speak different languages
- ▶ Make up games: Jeopardy, Concentration, crossword puzzles
- ▶ Write in journals, diaries
- ▶ Have debates



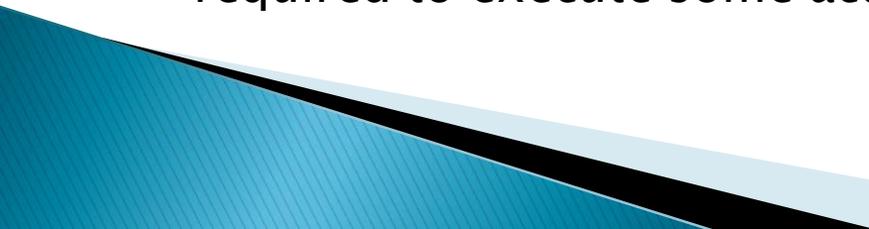
# Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

- ▶ Have students engage in problem solving exercises: looking for patterns, making analogies, making tables, graphs and flow charts, making timelines
  - ▶ Create brain teasers
  - ▶ Give students games involving logic, inductive and deductive reasoning skills
  - ▶ Give sequencing tasks or ask students to outline
  - ▶ Have students identify causes/effects of events
  - ▶ Have students compare and contrast, predict outcomes
  - ▶ Create debates
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# Visual/Spatial Intelligence

- ▶ Create mind maps
  - ▶ Draw graphs, designs, charts, diagrams, from data
  - ▶ Use computer programs, films/videos, video games, mazes, models
  - ▶ Draw, paint, sculpt, use clay, create dioramas, create cartoons
  - ▶ Design sets and computer programs
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# Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

- ▶ Create songs and dances to illustrate a point or concept
  - ▶ “Walk through” processes or systems
  - ▶ Act out events: dance, use dramatic skills, move, choreograph, move athletically
  - ▶ Create patterns with rhythm, rapping
  - ▶ Create movement games, e.g., Simon Says
  - ▶ Have students actively imagine and feel the body in motion
  - ▶ Have students consciously observe and attend to every movement required to execute some action
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# Musical/Rhythmical Intelligence

- ▶ Have students drum pattern
- ▶ Create poetry/rap set to music
- ▶ Listen for a beat, recite to a beat, improvise, use music to motivate
- ▶ Create poetry, chants, musical plays multimedia events
- ▶ Work with music in the background
- ▶ Create rhymes to learn concepts
- ▶ Tie music to any topic
- ▶ Have students perform



# Interpersonal Intelligence

- ▶ Play cooperative games
  - ▶ Role play
  - ▶ Interview each other
  - ▶ Engage in group process activities: film making, curriculum development, advisory programs, community service
  - ▶ Hear each other's viewpoint and analysis of a problem
  - ▶ Deal with moral dilemmas
  - ▶ Meet, write plays, choreograph, create simulations
  - ▶ Deal with conflict situations which need to be acted out
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# Intrapersonal Intelligence

- ▶ Deal with self esteem issues
  - ▶ Provide opportunities to do oral reports and interviews
  - ▶ Engage in mind map exercises
  - ▶ Visualize and engage in stream of consciousness exercises
  - ▶ Create lifelines, stories and poems, projects, bios, reflection logs
  - ▶ Learn about one's personal learning style and intelligence
  - ▶ Write autobiographies and create self portraits
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# Naturalist Intelligence

- ▶ Have students collect objects from natural world
- ▶ Draw or photograph natural objects
- ▶ Compare natural observations with others
- ▶ Get involved in wildlife protection projects

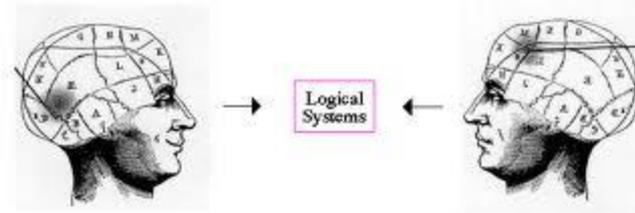


# Kolb's Learning Styles

- ▶ Diverging (feeling and watching)– “Why?”



- ▶ Assimilating (watching and thinking)– “What’s to know?” “How?”



- ▶ **Converging (doing and thinking)– “How?”**





- ▶ Accommodating (doing and feeling)– “Let’s do it!”

# Now what?

When designing icebreakers and energizers for your group, keep these key factors in mind:

- ▶ Different learning styles / intelligences
  - ▶ Goal of the activity
  - ▶ Characteristics of group participants
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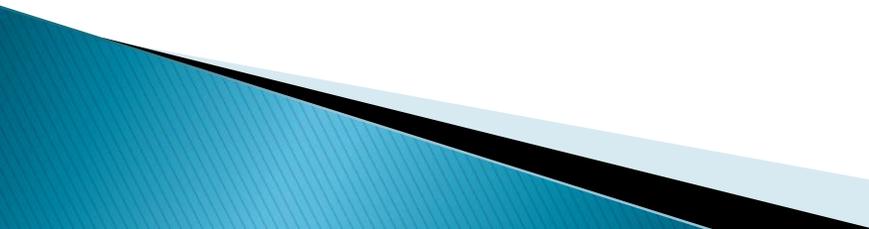
# Why use an icebreaker?

- ▶ Introductory
  - ▶ Team Building
  - ▶ Topical
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# Some types of icebreakers

- ▶ Simple games
  - ▶ Solving a puzzle or conundrum
  - ▶ Responding to questions, whether silly, fun, serious, reflective, or experiential
  - ▶ Sharing experiences
  - ▶ Creating visuals and posting
  - ▶ Posting blogs
  - ▶ Personal introductions (getting to know you)
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# When to use an icebreaker

- ▶ Participants come from different backgrounds.
  - ▶ People need to bond quickly so as to work towards a common goal.
  - ▶ Your team is newly formed.
  - ▶ The topics you are discussing are new or unfamiliar to many people involved.
  - ▶ As a facilitator you need to get to know participants and have them know you better.
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# Identify the “ice” that needs to be broken

- ▶ If you are bringing together people to work on a sensitive and/or new topic, the “ice” may be discomfort and anxiety.
  - ▶ If you are bringing together people of different backgrounds, ages, cultures and outlooks, then the “ice” may come from people's perceptions of each other.
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# Decide on a simple objective for your icebreaker

“ To create a comfortable environment where group members feel like they can contribute and we are working towards a common goal”



# When using an icebreaker, DO...

- ▶ Use icebreakers to create a more relaxed environment.
  - ▶ Use icebreakers as topic lead-ins during class and meetings.
  - ▶ Choose the right game for the right group.
  - ▶ Make sure that you have the right amount of people for the game that you choose.
  - ▶ Make the instructions for the icebreaker as simple as possible.
  - ▶ Keep your eye on the participants. Make sure that they are having fun.
  - ▶ Be ready to improvise if necessary.
  - ▶ Have a back-up plan. If the icebreaker isn't working, you will need it.
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# DON'T...

- ▶ Introduce an icebreaker game that will make others uncomfortable—physically or mentally.
  - ▶ Underestimate the time it will take to complete the icebreaker game or activity.
  - ▶ Forget to bring all of the materials that you need.
  - ▶ Limit icebreakers to the beginning of a meeting/class. Use them to revitalize the group at any time.
  - ▶ Force people to participate.
  - ▶ Forget to keep track of which ice breakers work and which ones don't.
  - ▶ Choose complicated icebreakers. Keep it simple.
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# Energizers...

- ▶ Are usually shorter activities (5–10 minutes) that get people up and moving and/or re-engaged
  - ▶ Can be used after a serious discussion to shift the group mood and get people laughing
  - ▶ Can be used to check knowledge before or after an activity
  - ▶ Require various levels of movement and energy
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# Energize!

- ▶ Signals!



# When using an energizer...

- ▶ Be careful to assess the energy, comfort level and ability of participants before implementing.
  - ▶ Be purposeful in your use of the energizer.
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# Don't forget...

- ▶ When planning for a session with adolescents, BE CREATIVE and have a toolkit of all different kinds of icebreakers and energizers. Be ready to adapt at any time!
  - ▶ Don't forget about using media!
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# Some ideas for using media as an icebreaker

Scenarios USA – [www.scenariosusa.org](http://www.scenariosusa.org)

- ▶ <http://scenariosusa.org/watchfilms/index.html>

Explore YouTube!



# Closing Activity

- ▶ On the piece of paper in front of you, take 2–3 minutes to draw a doodle of something that you will take from this workshop.

Questions or Comments?

