



# Suggestions for Training Exercises: *Icebreakers, Module-Related Exercises & Review Activities*

## ICEBREAKERS/OPENERS

### ***"If... and Why"***

**Time:** 10-15 minutes, depending on number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To get students to open up and get to know each other a little better. This icebreaker works well when there are some new students, such as the beginning of a new academic year.

**Materials Needed:** Index cards

**Preparation:** Write one "If...and Why" question on each index card (see sample questions below). Estimate the number of students who will be attending the training session and be sure to have at least one card per student.

**Instructions:**

1. Each student should pick a card, without seeing what the question is. If he/she is uncomfortable with the question (and if you have extra cards), he/she may draw another card.
2. Give the students a minute or two to come up with an answer to their question.
3. Going around the room, have each student share the question and his/her answer. **NOTE:** If some of the students don't know each other, it's helpful to have them give other personal information as well, such as their name, their major, their class year, their hometown, etc.

**Sample Questions:**

**NOTE:** Most of these questions are taken from the book *If...(Questions for the Game of Life)*, by Evelyn McFarlane and James Saywell.

- ◆ If you had to lose one of your five senses, which would you give up and why?
- ◆ If you could keep only one home appliance, which would you keep and why?
- ◆ If you were to perform in the circus, what would you do and why?
- ◆ If you could be a guest on any television talk show, which show would it be and what would you want to be talking about?
- ◆ If you had to eliminate one odor from the earth, which one would you get rid of and why?
- ◆ If you had to rename your hometown, what would you call it and why?
- ◆ If you had to cancel one hour of the day, every day, which hour would you eliminate?

- ◆ If you could spend a year anywhere in the world, all expenses paid, where would you go and why?
- ◆ If your home were to be totally destroyed by fire but you could save just one material possession, what would it be and why?
- ◆ If you could make a sequel to any movie, which one would it be and why?
- ◆ If you could tell the President one thing, what would you say and why?
- ◆ If you could “uninvent” one thing in the world so that it would no longer exist, what would you choose and why?
- ◆ If you could have stopped aging at any point in your life up to the present, how old would you want to remain and why?
- ◆ If you could live in one era other than the one in which you currently live, which era would you choose and why?

Feel free to get creative and make up your own questions!

### ***“Two Truths and a Lie”***

**Time:** 10-15 minutes, depending on number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To get students to open up and get to know each other a little better. This icebreaker works especially well when there are some new students, such as the beginning of a new academic year.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

1. Ask the students in the group to think of three things about themselves...two that are true and one that is not true. To make the exercise more interesting, you may ask that the “lie” be something that they *wish* were true.
2. Give the students a minute or two to think of these three things.
3. Going around the room, ask the students to share the three things with the group. Other students should then guess which of the three things is not true. **NOTE:** If some of the students don’t know each other, it’s helpful to have them give other personal information as well, such as their name, their major, their class year, their hometown, etc.

### ***“On My Person”***

**Time:** 10-15 minutes, depending on number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To get students to open up and get to know each other a little better. This icebreaker works especially well when there are some new students, such as the beginning of a new academic year.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

1. Ask each student in the group to find one thing that they have with them right now, either “on their person” or in their bag, purse, etc. that is personally meaningful to them. Encourage students to be creative—the items don’t necessarily have to be sentimental or serious.
  2. Give the students a minute or two to come up with something.
  3. Going around the room, ask the students to show their item and tell why it holds special meaning to them. **NOTE:** If some of the students don’t know each other, it’s helpful to have them give other personal information as well, such as their name, their major, their class year, their hometown, etc.
- ★ To make this activity more interesting, instead of just going around the room in order, give one student a “Koosh” ball or other small, soft item. Once he/she has talked about his/her item, that student should toss the ball to another student in the group, who will then do the same, etc.

## EXERCISES FOR WORKING WORLD 101 MODULE

**NOTE:** One exercise per module is sufficient. Supervisors may choose from the exercise suggestions below or create their own exercises to reinforce the material in the module.

### ***Ball Toss Review***

**NOTE:** Idea taken from <http://www.resultsthroughtraining.com/downloads/Closers.HTML>.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes, depending on the number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To encourage active learning and discussion of the concepts in the “Working World 101” module.

**Materials Needed:** “Koosh” ball, beach ball, blown-up balloon, or other soft object

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

After reviewing the information on the “Working World 101” handout, have the students toss a “koosh” ball, beach ball, blown-up balloon, or other soft object around. Upon receiving the ball, each student must tell one thing he/she learned during that training segment.

**NOTE:** This review exercise can be used for this module OR the “BU Basics 101” module.

### ***“Never” Review***

**Time:** 5-10 minutes, depending on the number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To encourage active learning and discussion of the concepts in the “Working World 101” module.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

After reviewing the information on the “Working World 101” handout, have each student complete the phrase, “One should never...” in relation to the guidelines discussed in the module. **Variation:** Use the “ball toss” concept described in the above exercise.

**NOTE:** This review exercise can be used for this module OR the “BU Basics 101” module.

***What do you know? – Working World 101 “Quiz”***

**NOTE:** Idea adapted from <http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/english/5tools/5icebreak/icebreak4.htm>

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Purpose:** To encourage active learning and discussion of the concepts in the “Working World 101” module.

**Materials Needed:** Quiz (see sample quiz on next page)

**Preparation:** If using sample quiz provided (next page), make photocopies of quiz to distribute at training session.

**Instructions:**

1. Give the students a quiz prior to reviewing the information on the “Working World 101” handout (**NOTE:** Wait until after the quiz to distribute the corresponding “Working World 101” handout!). See sample quiz on the next page; feel free to photocopy this quiz and use it during your training. If you prefer, you may also create your own quiz.
2. Observe when most/all students have completed the quiz. Discuss each question, using the quiz as a tool to review the information in the handout. As you review the quiz, solicit questions and feedback from the students, and address any questions or concerns that may arise during the discussion.



# What do you know about the *Working World* of Boston University?

## **Circle the best answer for each question.**

- 1. Which of the following should be your *top* priority while you are at BU?**
    - a. Your student job
    - b. Exploring all that Boston has to offer
    - c. Partying on the weekends
    - d. Academics
  
  - 2. Which of the following situations is *not* acceptable?**
    - a. I was due in at 10, but I couldn't make it in, so I called...at 11:30.
    - b. No call, no show
    - c. I'm only going to be ½ hour late, so it's not necessary to inform my supervisor.
    - d. All of the above
  
  - 3. Which of the following is a benefit of your student job at BU?**
    - a. I'm gaining work experience.
    - b. Working on campus is very convenient.
    - c. I'm earning money.
    - d. All of the above
  
  - 4. Which of the following statements is *true*?**
    - a. I can learn skills from my job that will be applicable regardless of my career goals
    - b. I should have a positive attitude about my job
    - c. I should be open to taking on additional responsibilities if asked
    - d. All of the above
  
  - 5. As a student worker in my department, I am...**
    - a. not expected to interact with other staff
    - b. part of a "team" that relies on me
    - c. just doing work that no one else wants to do
    - d. allowed to do whatever I want
  
  - 6. As with all University staff, student workers are expected to act professionally. This includes...**
    - a. wearing revealing clothes or "sweats" to work
    - b. keeping casual conversation to a minimum
    - c. making sure my cell phone is on at all times
    - d. doing schoolwork instead of work tasks
  
  - 7. At my student job, I should give...**
    - a. 50% effort (basically, I just need to show up)
    - b. 70% effort (I often have to pull "all-nighters")
    - c. 90% effort (after all, I am a full-time student)
    - d. 100% effort (the work I do reflects on the department as a whole)
  
  - 8. Which of the following statements is *false*?**
    - a. I should communicate openly with my supervisor about any issues or concerns I have about the job.
    - b. Once I set my work schedule, I can't change it, even if my academics are suffering.
    - c. It's acceptable to ask for feedback about my work performance (and be open to constructive criticism).
    - d. It's better to ASK how to do something than to do it incorrectly.

## EXERCISES FOR BU BASICS 101 MODULE

**NOTE:** One exercise per module is sufficient. Supervisors may choose from the exercise suggestions below or create their own exercises to reinforce the material in the module.

### ***Ball Toss Review***

**NOTE:** Idea taken from <http://www.resultsthroughtraining.com/downloads/Closers.HTML>.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes, depending on the number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To encourage active learning and discussion of the concepts in the “BU Basics 101” module.

**Materials Needed:** “Koosh” ball, beach ball, blown-up balloon, or other soft object

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

After reviewing the information on the “BU Basics 101” handout, have the students toss a “koosh” ball, beach ball, blown-up balloon, or other soft object around. Upon receiving the ball, each student must tell one thing he/she learned during that training segment.

**NOTE:** This review exercise can be used for this module OR the “Working World 101” module.

### ***“Never” Review***

**Time:** 5-10 minutes, depending on the number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To encourage active learning and discussion of the concepts in the “BU Basics 101” module.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

After reviewing the information on the “BU Basics 101” handout, have each student complete the phrase, “One should never...” in relation to the guidelines discussed in the module. **Variation:** Use the “ball toss” concept described in the above exercise.

**NOTE:** This review exercise can be used for this module OR the “Working World 101” module.

## ***BU Basics “Policy Violation” Worksheet***

**NOTE:** Idea adapted from [http://www.johnsleigh.com.au/Please\\_explain.htm](http://www.johnsleigh.com.au/Please_explain.htm).

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Purpose:** To facilitate understanding of two important policies that apply to student workers (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA] and the Boston University Policy on Computing Ethics).

**Materials Needed:** Policy violation worksheet (see worksheet on next page)

**Preparation:** Make photocopies of worksheet to distribute at training session.

**Instructions:**

1. See next page (“BU Basics 101 Worksheet”). Feel free to photocopy this worksheet and use it during your training.
2. The information on the worksheet covers most of the information on the corresponding handout (“BU Basics 101”). You may use the worksheet to review the information on the handout, instead of simply reading the handout point-by-point (though it would still be useful to provide the handout as a supplement to the worksheet).  
**NOTE:** The worksheet does not include information about consequences of violating these policies, nor does it address accurate reporting of hours. You may want to address these points during or after your review of the worksheet.
3. The worksheet can be used in one of several ways. You may:
  - » review the worksheet together as a group (facilitator and students), or
  - » have students work on it individually or in small groups, then re-convene and discuss the students’ answers, answering any questions they may have about the policies.



## BU Basics 101 Worksheet

Listed below are guidelines excerpted from several policies that apply to virtually all BU student workers. For each point, identify one example of a **violation** of that point.

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**FERPA**, or the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act”, is a federal law enacted in 1974 that guarantees the confidentiality of student records and general information about students.

1. You must not, under any circumstances, release to any person(s) information about a student, unless your job specifically requires you to do so.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. You must avoid acquiring student information that you do not need in order to do your job.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. You must not divulge (e.g. to other students) student information that you learned while performing your job.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

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Boston University has a **policy on computing ethics**, which applies to all students and staff at BU. The complete policy is available online at [www.bu.edu/policies/computing/ethics.html](http://www.bu.edu/policies/computing/ethics.html).

1. You must use only those computer resources which you have been authorized to use by the University.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. You may not authorize anyone to use your computer accounts for any reason. You are responsible for all use of your accounts.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. You must use the University’s computer resources only for the University-related purposes for which they were authorized.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. You must not access, alter, copy, move or remove information, proprietary software or other files (including programs, members of subroutine libraries, data, and electronic mail) without prior authorization from the appropriate University data trustee, security officer, or other responsible party.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

5. You must not use any computing facility irresponsibly or in a way that might needlessly interfere with the work of others.

*Violation example:* \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISES FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE 101 MODULE

**NOTE:** One exercise per module is sufficient. Supervisors may choose from the exercise suggestions below or create their own exercises to reinforce the material in the module.

### ***Opening Questions***

**NOTE:** Writing some of the responses on a flip chart may help to reinforce the ideas discussed.

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Purpose:** To get students into the “customer service mode”.

**Materials Needed:** Flip chart (optional)

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

1. Before reviewing the “Customer Service 101” handout, ask students questions that will encourage them to think about customer service and how it may apply to their student job. See sample questions below; also, feel free to come up with your own questions.
2. After discussing the questions, review the material in the “Customer Service 101” handout. Refer back to introductory discussion if/when applicable.

**Sample Questions:**

- ◆ Ask students to volunteer to share a memorable customer service experience (good or bad), and follow up by asking what made that experience good or bad.
- ◆ What is customer service?
- ◆ Who are our customers?
- ◆ What are some of the ways in which our department provides customer service? In other words, what are some of our “service” functions? (For example, in the Student Employment Office, one of our service functions is to assist students in finding jobs.)
- ◆ Why is good customer service so important? What is the potential outcome of poor customer service?

### ***Role Play***

**(can be done before and/or after reviewing information on “Customer Service 101” handout)**

**NOTE:** This exercise requires two facilitators/trainers; if only one person is conducting the training, one possibility is to recruit a “senior” (i.e. more experienced) student prior to the training to help with the role play exercise.

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Purpose:** To encourage active learning and discussion of the concepts in the “Customer Service 101” module.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** Prior to the training, develop a role play scenario that demonstrates what **NOT** to do when interacting with customers. The more exaggerated the “bad behavior” is, the more amusing, engaging, and instructional the role play will be. Ideally, the role play should relate to the services your department offers.

**Instructions:**

1. At the training session, perform the role play for the students. When introducing the role play, don’t reveal that it is intended to demonstrate *poor* customer service.  
**NOTE:** The role play may be done before or after reviewing the “Customer Service 101” handout.
2. After the role play, ask for the students’ feedback. Some suggestions for follow-up questions are as follows:
  - » Do you feel that this was a productive customer service interaction?
  - » What went right in this scenario? What went wrong?
  - » How would you have responded when the customer said “[refer to specific part of the role play]”?
  - » What effect could a customer service interaction such as this one have on our department’s image?
  - » See questions in the “Opening Questions” section above. Some of these questions may be used as follow-up questions for this exercise.
3. If you performed the role play *before* reviewing the information on the handout, you may want to perform the role play again *after* reviewing the handout; however, this time, the role play participants should demonstrate a **successful** version of the same customer service interaction.

**Variation:** Ask for two student volunteers to perform this follow-up role play.

**Case Studies**

**Time:** 15-20 minutes, depending on number of students and case studies

**Purpose:**

To reinforce customer service expectations and the techniques used to meet the expectations, and to allow students to apply the points and concepts discussed. This exercise is particularly useful when the scenarios are applicable to the work that the students are doing in your department.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** Develop one or several brief “case studies” (1-2 paragraphs) that reflect scenarios that commonly arise in your department. To make this exercise more interesting, give the characters in your case studies funny names, such as “Sally ‘You People Never Do Anything Right’ Worthington” for a “Difficult Caller” case study. Print out one case study per page.

**Instructions:**

1. After reviewing the information on the “Customer Service 101” handout, divide the students into pairs. Distribute one case study to each pair, and ask the students to discuss the case study and determine how they would handle the situation described in the case. (**Variation:** Ask students to role play the different characters in the scenario, i.e. one student portrays the

“customer” and one student portrays the “employee” who is trying to assist the customer.) If you have enough students in the training session, it may be helpful to give the same case study to two or more different groups. Then, when debriefing, you can compare and evaluate the different approaches to a given situation.

2. Give the students 5-10 minutes (depending on the complexity of the scenario) to discuss the case.
  3. After the pairs discuss the cases, ask for volunteers to share with the group the details of their case and how they handled it. If no one volunteers, pick a pair of students to share their case with the others. Depending on the amount of time you have, you may want to hear from several different pairs of students.
- ★ Be sure to ask for feedback from the group about how the pairs handled their case (i.e. “Do you think she gave the caller an appropriate answer?” or “Would anyone have handled that differently? If so, how?”, etc.).

## WRAP-UP/REVIEW EXERCISES & ACTIVITIES

### Jeopardy

**Time:** 20-25 minutes

**Purpose:** To reinforce the expectations, information, and skills you discussed during the training session.

#### Materials Needed:

1. “Jeopardy” board – may use dry-erase board, flip chart, poster board, or other large surface (should ideally be approximately 3 – 4 feet square or rectangular)
2. Another large sheet of paper to use as a “scoreboard”

#### Preparation:

1. Create a “jeopardy board” using a dry erase board, flip chart, or other large writing surface.
2. Come up with four or five different categories based on the topics of the training session; name the categories as creatively as possible. To mix things up a bit, you may also want to have a category unrelated to the training, such as “BU Trivia”. Make up five to ten “answers” for each category. Also, make up a difficult “bonus answer” for the final round. Create a Word document with all of the answers and corresponding questions to refer to while conducting the exercise.

#### EXAMPLE:

Working World	BU Basics	Customer Service	Department-Specific Information	BU Trivia
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500
600	600	600	600	600

**Instructions:**

1. At the end of the training session, divide the attendees into two or three teams, with an equal number of students on each team. If you wish, you can have each team come up with a team name.
2. Play the game, awarding the appropriate number of "points" to each team as they get the questions correct. Remind them that their "answers" must be in the form of a "question". If available, give each team a "service bell" to indicate when they know the answer. If a bell of some sort is not available, a team member can just raise their hands or make a designated noise when they have the answer.
3. Keep score throughout the game, either erasing or crossing out the fields as you go along. Once all of the questions have been answered, proceed to the "final round", which should, of course, be the most difficult question in the game.

**NOTES/VARIATIONS:**

- ★ Offering prizes for the winners (or for all students in attendance) is a good idea. Some ideas for prizes: silly items from a dollar store, candy, or small-denomination gift certificates to an inexpensive local eatery/coffee shop.
- ★ You can also create a wrap-up exercise based on other popular game shows, such as "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" or "The Weakest Link".

**Tic Tac Toe**

**NOTE:** Idea adapted from <http://www3.sympatico.ca/thetrainingoasis/aprspice.htm#TTT>.

**Time:** 10-20 minutes, depending on number of questions

**Purpose:** To reinforce the expectations, information, and skills you discussed during the training session.

**Materials Needed:** Flip chart

**Preparation:** Come up with approximately 20-25 questions about the material you covered in your training session.

**Instructions:**

Divide the students into two teams, the "X's" and the "O's". Draw a tic tac toe grid on the flip chart. One by one, read the questions you prepared. When one of the two teams calls out the correct answer for a question, they can put an X or an O on the grid. Play several rounds of this game until you run out of questions.

**NOTE:** Offering prizes for the winners (or for all students in attendance) is a good idea. Some ideas for prizes: silly items from a dollar store, candy, or small-denomination gift certificates to an inexpensive local eatery/coffee shop.

### **Next Step**

**NOTE:** Idea taken from <http://www.resultsthroughtraining.com/downloads/Closers.HTML>.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes, depending on number of students at the session

**Purpose:** To reinforce the expectations, information, and skills you discussed during the training session.

**Materials Needed:** None

**Preparation:** None

**Instructions:**

Have each student share one thing they will do in the next week to apply the training.