

Introduction and Ice Breaker

- **Pre-assignment:** One of the tools of community engagement is the processes you use to get to know people. Before the course begins, go online and research “Ice Breaker Questions” – what are they and how are they used?

To see how we have used them in the Master Water Stewards program, watch a few minutes of this Master Water Stewards Community Engagement workshop video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyWdxwvVwU> between 14:50-40:20.

The Hennepin County Green Partners environmental education program has been a partner in the Master Water Stewards program for several years. They provide funding for the capstone projects, and support Stewards in their community engagement, education and outreach efforts.



One of the issues you will face in working with neighbors on the issue of water is that water is a HUGE issue. The challenge is to connect it to peoples’ lives, because you do need people

behind you and without their support it’s impossible to protect our water. Make water local by giving people experiences and engaging them in hands-on or experiential activities helps. Networking goes a long way to finding supporters for your project. But support doesn’t come easy. You have to learn to effectively ask for help, support and volunteers. And you need A Plan.



In this course, you will work through a series of activities, presentations and discussions to learn more about the art and science of engaging communities. You will learn about your personal style of engaging your community’s interest, set goals for your project and learn from each other about what works.

We’ll begin with icebreakers

Purpose of an ice breaker: It’s a fun way to get to know people in the room and identify common areas of interest, start building relationships and help people feel like they are part of a team.

Icebreakers are mostly used in meetings, workshops, presentations and at informal gatherings.

Build in enough time; build in more time that you think until you gain some experience. Keep answers short - it depends on your question but shoot for 30 seconds and no more than 1 minute per person. Expect each person to double your estimate and prepare to move things along. Model the length of answer you are expecting from others by giving the first response to the question.

Use a fun or relevant question - favorite movie, favorite super hero power or favorite thing about water. Be creative.

Learning Activity

- In the Forum for this topic and this activity, post your name, your home town, and a short description of a community project you were involved in at school, work, or in your community.
- Reflect on what you learned about ice breakers. What did you notice when watching the video?
- State two reasons to use an ice breaker question.
- List three Ice Breaker questions you might use if you held a meeting or workshop.