Here are a small selection of our favourite icebreakers, suitable for online meetings..

**Sketch-It**

*Suitable for: teams who are coming to terms with remote working.*

*Timing: allow a maximum of 5 mins per person*

As part of your meeting preparation, ask everyone to prepare in advance a quick sketch of their life as it is now coping with the restrictions imposed on us as a result of the Coronavirus. Make it clear that this is a bit of fun and not a test in drawing ability. At the start of your virtual meeting, ask each person to hold their sketch up to the webcam so everyone can see it clearly, and to briefly explain what it means. This icebreaker can be adapted accordingly to other themes.

Tips:

* If you are facilitating the meeting, don’t forget to do your own drawing too.
* Go through your meeting rules before you start this icebreaker and ensure ‘respecting others’ is included to avoid derogatory comments.
* If your team are nervous about speaking online, talk them through your sketch first.

**Objectify**

*Suitable for: smaller teams that have a good connection and know each other well.*

*Timing: allow a maximum of 5 mins per person*

As part of your meeting preparation, ask each person to bring to the meeting an object that represents their new ‘socially distanced’ life. Ask them to show the object to the rest of the team via their webcam, but not to disclose anything. The rest of the team must then guess what the object represents. This icebreaker can be adapted accordingly to other themes.

Tips:

* If you are facilitating the meeting, don’t forget to bring your own object too.
* Go through your meeting rules before you start this icebreaker and ensure ‘respecting others’ is included to avoid derogatory comments.
* If your team are nervous about speaking online, talk them through your object first.

**Emoji**

*Suitable for smaller teams that have high levels of trust, and who need to discuss a difficult topic*

*Timing: allow plenty of discussion time for this icebreaker, and I suggest at least 10 mins per person*

As part of your meeting preparation, ask each person to think before the meeting how they feel about the topic you are going to be discussing. For example, you may have asked your team to re-prioritise their workload and need to discuss what that now looks like. Ask them to draw the emoji that best represents how they feel about this topic. At the start of the meeting, ask each member of the team to show their ‘emoji’ to the others via their webcam, and talk through how they are feeling about this topic. The purpose of this icebreaker is to give people permission to talk openly about their feelings. The emojis are a great way of expressing emotion without having to articulate it in detail. Remember though to be empathetic and never criticise or judge.

* If you are facilitating the meeting, don’t forget to bring your own emoji too.
* Go through your meeting rules before you start this icebreaker and ensure ‘respecting others’ is included to avoid derogatory comments.
* If your team are nervous about speaking online, talk them through your object first.

**The Grand Tour**

*Suitable for smaller teams that are new to each other or new to remote working, and need to build their working relationship.*

*Timing: 1-2 minutes per participant*

Ask each participant to give the team a ‘Grand Tour’ of their new home ‘office’. Ask them to describe the room they are in and describe one object in it that provides a small insight into their life. For example, a photo of a loved one or pet, a photo of a special holiday or other object on display that tells a story. This activity is good for building mutual understanding and trust in a team as well as helping teams get used to their new virtual meeting world.

Tips

* As the team leader, this can work well if you go first. Lift your laptop up and get in the spirit of your tour! Remember though to maintain some boundaries of disclosure and only reveal aspects of your home and your life that you it is appropriate to share.
* Some people will be working out of their dining rooms whilst others may have the luxury of a dedicated office space. The point of this activity though is to give the team an insight into each other’s personal lives.
* You can pre-warn people that you are going to be asking them to do this and make sure they have a suitable photo/picture on display. Some may want to tidy up first, too!

***Nothing suitable here? Feel free to contact me and I’ll see if  
 I can help with an alternative suggestion.*Karen Fleming**