

40 virtual activities

FROM APPLIED IMPROVISATION



how **improv** can help you strengthen relationships,
build rapport, and stay connected while working from home.





INSIDE YOU WILL FIND A LIST OF **40 INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES** THAT CAN ALL BE DONE REMOTELY, FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN ZOOM!

THESE ACTIVITIES ARE VARIATIONS OF IN-PERSON APPLIED IMPROV EXERCISES THAT WE'VE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS,
OR WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR VIRTUAL PROGRAMS,
VISIT **TEAMS.HUMORTHATWORKS.COM**



Fill out the form to get started.

Fields marked with an * are required

Your First Name*

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I need help improving: *

- Myself
- My team
- Company culture
- Other

What would you like to accomplish

How did you hear about us?

Saw Andrew speak at an event



large group activities

(VIRTUAL)

1. anybody who (thumbs up)

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator makes a statement starting with, “Anybody who...” and fills in with something they have done, e.g. “Anybody who has ever gone skydiving.” Players who have also done that thing give a thumbs up on their screen (physical or using the button in the meeting software). Players who have not, give a thumbs down. The last person to react with a thumbs up or thumbs down gives the next statement.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting
connecting with group

→ I Like My Neighbor (similar)

2. chat and response

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator does a call and response using the interactive chat. Ask questions of the audience like “What is your favorite food?” “On a scale of 1 to 5, how are you feeling about virtual programs?” Great for warmups and introductions to create engagement.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

engagement
connecting with group

3. crazy 8s

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Everyone stands up in front of their computers. In unison, everyone lifts the right hand, shakes it quickly, and counts to 8. They repeat this with the left hand, then the right foot (kicking it in the air while balancing on the left) and finally with the left foot. Everyone immediately repeats the pattern, except this time the players only count up to 7. In each round, the players count to one less number, until everyone is quickly waving their entire body shouting "1! 1! 1! 1!" Then everybody cheers.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

connecting with body
shaking off mood

4. dolphin training (ding)

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player is sent out of the room and the group secretly decides what action they want her to do when she comes back. When she returns, the player starts trying anything and everything she can think of and the group leads her to the correct action using positive reinforcement in the form of a "ding!" If she steps in the right direction, she gets a ding. If she steps in the wrong direction the group just watches politely and quietly.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

spontaneity
confidence

5. i liked-i wish-what if

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Give players 1 of 3 prompts for reflection and to fill in feedback, either out loud or in the chat. Each player starts their sentence with 'I Liked', 'I Wish' or 'What if'. Players might say 'I liked how this workshop was interactive' or 'What if we applied the Yes And Mentality everyday at work'. Great way to close a workshop, get players to reflect on experience and articulate what they learned.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

reflection
feedback
takeaway

6. remain visible if

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator asks a question that can have increasing levels of answers, such as “Remain visible if you’ve worked at your company for at least one year.” Players stay visible (aka keep their video on) if the statement is true for them. If it is not, they turn off their video. The facilitator continues increasing the amount, (“Remain visible if you’ve worked at your company for at least 3 years”) until less and less players have their video on.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting
connecting with group

→ Remain Standing If (similar)

7. sit-stand

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator says “sit” or “stand” and participants follow multiple times. Then, the facilitator switches those two commands, so “sit” means stand and “stand” means sit. Then, can add other commands like “name” for participants to say their name aloud and “clap” for participants to clap their hands. Then, the facilitator switches those two commands, so “name” means clap and “clap” means name.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting
connecting with mind and body

→ Walk / Stop (similar)

8. space walk

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Have players move about their room, paying attention to the space around them. Facilitator establishes clearly defined boundaries for the players to stay inside and side coaches by saying things to participants like:

- Walk around as if you're highly stressed
- Think about what it feels like and how your body would move
- Now, imagine you are completely stress free and relaxed
- Think about what it feels like, and how your movement has changed

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

spatial awareness
connecting mind with body
body language

9. thumbs

→ INSTRUCTIONS

All players point forward on their left hand and do a thumbs up on their right hand. Then, switch the two. And keep switching.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

4 stages of competence
connecting mind with body

10. whiteboard clusters

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator shares a virtual whiteboard screen that participants can draw on. The facilitator designates different parts of the screen for different prompts, e.g. “Draw on the left side if you’re an introvert, the right side if you’re an extrovert.” Participants draw on the spot of the whiteboard that best represents them.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

creativity
connecting with group

small group activities

(VIRTUAL)

Having a smaller group (we'll say less than 24 because that's one full screen of shining, virtual faces in Zoom), makes interaction easier. The fact that everyone can see each other helps simplify things and the fewer the people, the more people can directly indirect with one another.



11. answers to questions

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player says a statement or answer, like “Put on a coat.” Then, all other players come up with ideas for what the original question could be to prompt that answer, such as “What do you do before going outside?” or “How do you paint?” The first player picks their favorite original question, and the player who suggested that goes next.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

creativity
lateral thinking

12. group counting

→ INSTRUCTIONS

The goal is for the group to count to twenty, one player saying one number at a time. Anybody can start the count. Then a different player says the next number – but if two or more players happen to speak at the same time, counting must start again from the beginning.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

co-operation
connecting with group

13. group mirroring / dance party

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player moves (arms, legs, eyebrows) slowly, and the other players will mirror them. This is a game of give and take - no-one should be (continuously) leading. Keep movements slow. Eventually the first player passes the focus to someone else.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

focus
physical movement

14. hot spot

→ INSTRUCTIONS

All players are on video. One player steps forward and starts singing a known song. As soon as this player shows any signs of stopping (because she doesn't know the lines any more, gets tired or embarrassed) another player needs to step in and take over (singing a different song).

Note: Can also be done with improvised monologues instead of songs.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

confidence, support, connecting with group

15. i am a tree

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player stands up on video, strikes a pose, and says who or what they represent. For example, he lifts his arms over his head and says "I am a tree." A second player stands up, adds to the picture, and also says who or what he is, e.g. "I am a bird" or "I am the grass." A third player enters the scene and adds a third pose, e.g. "I am the sun" or "I am an old man sitting on a park bench."

Now that the scene is finished, player A leaves the stage taking one of the other players with them. The other player stays on the stage and repeats their sentence (without changing their pose). As a result he offers a suggestion for a new scene. This exercise can be done with any number of players.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting, building

16. liars club

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Three players are selected and sent into a breakout room. In the breakout room, they choose a story of something that is true that has happened to one of the players, getting only the basic details, such as “The time I got lost in the woods.” The facilitator brings each player back, one at a time, and the players share a short story based on the one line. Two of the players make up a story on the spot, the other player tells the true story of what happened.

After all three players have told a story, the audience votes for which person was telling the truth. For added difficulty to the players, the audience can ask questions before selecting the truth teller.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

performance, confidence, body language

→ Liars Auction (similar)

17. pattern circle

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Goal is for all participants to manage multiple pattern circles. First, one player starts by saying another player’s name. Once your name is called, you say someone else’s name. Continue until all names are said and there’s a pattern. Facilitator then adds other categories like colors so participants are managing multiple pattern circles at once. Players have to remember which player says their name, which player says their color and who they ‘pass’ the pattern to next.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting, focus, concentration

18. portrait gallery

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player strikes a pose on video. Others in the group admire the portrait as if it's a painting or a piece of Art in a museum. Other players add to the portrait's meaning by describing who the artist is, the meaning of the portrait, and what it represents.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

storytelling
yes and

19. stop me if you've heard this

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player begins by saying, "Stop me if you've heard this, but..." and then proceeds to the plot of a movie. Other players stop the storytelling once they have a guess or know what movie plot they are describing.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting
confidence

→ Sorry I'm Late (similar)

20. story spine

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players take turns improvising a story, one line at a time, following a structured format. The format provides a model for a well-constructed story with a beginning that establishes a routine, an event that breaks the routine, a middle that shows the consequences of having broken the routine, a climax that sets the resolution to the story in motion, and the resolution. The classic prompts are:

- Once upon a time...
- Every day...
- But, one day...
- Because of that... (can be repeated multiple times)
- Until, finally...
- And, ever since then...

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

storytelling, creativity

21. string of pearls

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players tell a story out of order, one sentence at a time. One player stands up on video and makes up the first line of the story. A second player stands up and makes up the last line of the story (that has absolutely nothing to do with the first).

The rest of the players each fill in a line of the story wherever they can, trying to bring things together and end up with a story that makes complete sense. Every time a new line is added, the players go down the string, repeat their lines first to last. The facilitator can keep track of the order in the chat. This game works best with 7 or 8 players.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

storytelling, performance

22. superhero names

→ INSTRUCTIONS

One player introduces themselves by giving their, “Superhero Name,” which consists of an adjective to describe themselves and their first name, ideally in alliteration, such as Dashing Drew or Vivacious Vandad. While giving their name, they also strike a pose to match the name. One by one, each player shares their superhero name and pose until everyone has gone. Then players pass focus from one to another by saying their own name while striking their pose and then someone else’s name while striking their pose, e.g. “Dashing Drew to Vivacious Vandad,” “Vivacious Vandad to Tall Tess,”

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

names, listening, get to know you

23. things in

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator picks a player and states a category. The selected player names five things in that category. In between each thing, the audience can count out what number they are on, e.g.

Facilitator: “Drew, name 5 things you don’t like to eat.”

Drew: “Beets.” | Audience: “One!” | Drew: “Fish.” | Audience: “Two!”

Drew: “Mint Chocolate.”...

Repeat until all players have been selected for a category.

Note: The categories can be used to get to know people (e.g. name your favorite hobbies) or to be creative (e.g. name five apps that don’t exist but totally should).

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

warm up, get to know you, thinking on the spot

24. word at a time story

→ INSTRUCTIONS

All players start with their video on. The facilitator can determine the order in which the players will speak. After getting a suggestion for a title from the audience, the group improvises a story, with each player saying one... word... at... a... time. A player can indicate the end of a sentence by saying, "period."

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

storytelling
group narrative

25. yes let's

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Pick a group activity, like throwing a party. One player begins by saying "Let's ..." filling in what they want to do, miming the activity. For example, "Let's buy snacks!" and begin miming shopping. All of the players agree and say, "Yes! Let's!" and join the player in their pantomime. Then another player speaks up and says something to advance the activity. All of the players say "Yes, Let's" and start doing whatever suggested. This continues until everyone has suggested something.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

accepting
building ideas together

partner activities

(VIRTUAL)

By leveraging breakout rooms, you can turn any group into small "partner" groups of 2-4 people. You share the instructions with the entire group, send them to their breakout rooms, and then debrief once everyone comes back together again.



26. 3-word coaching

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A shares a challenge they have, something they want help solving. Player B provides coaching, however their coaching can only be in 3-word responses. Continue the dialogue until player A feels the problem is solved or they feel heard.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

asking right questions
listening to understand

27. color-advance

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A tells a story, solo. Player B directs that story by raising their hand and either saying “color” if they want to hear more details or elaboration or “advance” if no more details are needed and they want to continue on with the story.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

storytelling
expanding and improvising ideas in the moment

→ Narrative, Color, Emotion (similar)

28. explain like i'm a...

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A explains a certain topic to the Player B, as if Player B is a... Caveperson, Alien, or 10-year-old child. Player B embodies the character throughout. Example pairings: “Explain a microwave oven to a caveperson,” “Explain a dog walking to an Alien,” or “Explain your job to a 10 year old.”

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

communication
relating ideas to new concepts

29. first letter, last letter

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in groups of two or three. Player A makes a statement. Player's B response has to begin with the last letter of the last word that was said. After the second player speaks, every statement afterwards also begins with the last letter of the last word that was said by the other player.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

communication
focus
listening to understand

30. give a gift

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A pulls a gift out of thin air and gives it to their partner through their screen ("Hey, I got you this calculator"), miming the weight and size of the gift. Player B is excited to receive the gift and adds more information about it ("Thanks! I can finally do my taxes" or "Great! It's a solar calculator"). Players take turns offering and accepting new gifts. This can be done in pairs or in a small virtual meeting.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening and reacting
accepting

31. hype person

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms into groups of three. Player A acts as a celebrity” and will be the subject of a “red carpet interview” from Player B. Player C is the celebrity’s hype person and builds on all of Player A’s answers like they are the best thing on the planet. Player A keeps answering Player B’s questions honestly while Player C hypes them up. After a few minutes, each player rotates positions until all three have gone.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

accepting
building ideas together

→ Hype People Up (similar)

32. interesting questions

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in small groups. The groups are provided with a list of interesting questions for players to get to know each other better. For questions, refer to “50 questions to get to know someone” blog post.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

connection
teambuilding

33. paired drawing

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A starts sharing a whiteboard with Player B and draws a line using the pen. Player B chooses another pen color, and adds something to Player A's drawing. The two go back and forth, alternating drawing lines until, together, they have come up a complete drawing. Player A takes a screenshot of the drawing that can be saved or shared with the larger group.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

creativity
yes and

→ Paired Portraits (Alternative)

34. problems and solutions

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A shares a real or fake problem they have, (e.g. "My plants are dying.") Player B gives them an object as a prompt to think of ideas ("Here's an axe.") Then, player A accepts and justifies the object, and thinks of how they can use the object to find a solution ("Great, I can cut a hole in the wall to get access to the water pipe to spray the plants."). Switch roles and repeat.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

creativity
yes and

35. photo album / vacation math

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in groups of three. Player A has an imaginary photo album from a recent vacation and shares the story of their vacation through pictures. Player B engages in conversation and asks questions about the vacation and imaginary pictures. Player C periodically gives player A math problems to solve (basic arithmetic and single equations like addition, subtraction, multiplication). Player A has to give the solution to the math problems instantly and then goes back to telling the story of their vacation. After a few minutes, rotate roles so all players get to play all roles.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

challenges of multitasking
focus

36. now, introducing...

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Player A interviews Player B on their life, story and why are they at the current event. Then, switch roles. Once the group is brought back together, player A introduces player B to the group (and vice versa) based on what they learned about each other. Players should introduce each other with excitement, as if they are a celebrity.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

listening, support, teambuilding

37. story of your name

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in pairs. Each player has one minute to tell the “story of their name,” e.g. are they named after anyone, what does the name mean, what nicknames have they had. While the player is telling their story the other player remains silent. The goal is to listen without interrupting, or redirecting. During the debrief, have both players tell the other player’s story to the group.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

storytelling
listening
focus

38. what’s not wrong with your life

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in small groups. Players take turns asking each other the simple question: “What’s not wrong with your life?” Players respond to the answer honestly with things that are not wrong. They don’t have to be big things like “I won the lottery,” but can be simple, such as “I had a nice lunch today” or “the sun is shining.”

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

gratitude
perspective

39. word definition

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in small groups. Player A makes up a word that does not exist in any language. Player B repeats the word and then makes up a definition. After the first turn, the two players switch roles, and the two players keep alternating making up a word and defining it. For groups larger than two, players rotate through each position.

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

creativity
confidence
trusting your instincts

→ Fake Word Definition (Similar)

40. yes but, yes and

→ INSTRUCTIONS

Players are sent into breakout rooms in small groups. Player A makes a statement. Player B has to respond to that statement starting with the words “Yes, But...” Every statement after that also begins with the words “Yes, But.” After one to two minutes, you do Round 2 of the exercise. This time, every response has to begin with the words “Yes, And.”

→ APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS LEARNED

accepting
building ideas together



there's a better way to work.

We'll teach you how to strategically leverage the skill of humor to improve productivity, reduce stress and connect with others. A third of your awake adult life is spent at work, you might as well enjoy it.



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