

Topic: Cultural Adjustment
(IOM Middle East)

Activity: Day 1: A Greeting & Self-Introduction

Introduction

Many of the refugees attending CO training have little or no experience in speaking English, and this can be a cause of some anxiety. Learning even just a few words and phrases in English before departing for a new life in America can greatly ease those anxieties, both by giving the learners a sense of control in their new environment, as well as giving them the confidence that they actually CAN learn a new language, one simple step at a time. To address this in a non-threatening and enjoyable manner, trainers can conduct brief English practice sessions during each day's warm-up activities.

For the first day the English learning activity can be at its most basic: a greeting and a self-introduction. This exercise also helps participants, and the trainer, remember each other's names, and helps to create a friendly learning atmosphere.

Practice

1. The trainer elicits common greetings in English from the participants, in particular: "Good morning", "Good afternoon", and "Good evening", and the proper "American" way to shake hands. Participants can repeat these phrases after the trainer, and then stand and practice in successive pairs (the "Cocktail Party" approach) saying "Good morning" and shaking hands.
2. The trainer then elicits the English for introducing oneself: "My name is _____."
3. The group (and trainer) stands and forms one large circle. The trainer demonstrates the activity by stepping into the circle, and saying, "Good morning, my name is _____." The rest of the group responds by saying, in unison (more or less), "Good morning, _____", repeating the trainer's name. The activity continues around the circle, with each person stepping in and introducing themselves in simple English, until each participant has been greeted by the rest.

This document was developed with funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State, but does not necessarily represent the policy of that agency and the reader should not assume endorsement by the federal government.