

Metro North Health CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT



Silent line-up challenge

A test of teamwork and non-verbal communication

Time: Approximately 40 minutes.

Materials needed: None.

Participants: Team or department.

Values in Action: High Performance, Teamwork, Respect.

Outcomes: Strengthens collaboration, non-verbal communication, and trust through fun, interactive problem-solving.

Purpose

The Silent Line-Up Challenge is a fun and interactive way to build teamwork and communication skills. It emphasises the importance of listening to non-verbal cues, fostering collaboration, and learning how to solve problems together without relying on words. This activity is an excellent icebreaker for new teams and a valuable team-building exercise for more established groups.

How to run the activity

Step 1: Basic silent line-up (5-10 mins)

Challenge the group to line up silently in order of **height** (shortest to tallest). No speaking allowed.

Encourage creative non-verbal strategies like gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. As facilitator, observe team dynamics:

- Who initiates?
- How do they handle confusion?
- Do they use respectful, inclusive body language?

Tip: Mention that this is a challenge about collaboration – not speed or perfection.

Step 2: Progressive challenges (15–20 mins)

Once the team completes the height challenge, progressively introduce new criteria. Allow a brief reset between each task.

Challenge ideas:

- **Hair Colour:** Lightest to darkest
- **Eye Colour:** Lightest to darkest
- **Birthdate:** Youngest to oldest
- **Birthplace:** Farthest to closest
- **Alphabetical:** By first name (or last name)
- **Years of service in the organisation**

Optional Twist: Add a time limit or rule (e.g., no pointing or hand signals—just eye contact).

Tip: Adapt complexity based on group success. If they finish quickly, make it trickier. If they struggle, simplify and offer encouragement.

Step 3: Reflection and debrief (10 mins)

Gather the group and reflect on their experience.

Suggested questions:

- How did you communicate without words?
- What worked well—and what didn't?
- Which task was the hardest? Why?
- How did you feel trusting others without talking?
- What roles naturally emerged?
- What did this teach you about communication at work?

Optional: Invite the team to share one insight or learning they'll take forward into day-to-day teamwork.

Optional variations

- **Blindfold one team member** and have the team include them in the task.
- **Split into small teams** and see who completes challenges most effectively.
- **Combine with another activity** (e.g., Appreciation Circle or Empathy Circle) for a powerful communication-focused workshop.