

## Background Exploration Exercise (Storytelling)

**Purpose:** To allow time for introductions where team members share personal experiences and backgrounds with the team.

**Benefit:** Lower barriers to building team trust and reduce the likelihood of team members coming to false conclusions about other team member's behaviors and ideas.

**Overview:** Each team member describes his/her background and experiences to the rest of the team. A number of different queries can be used to elicit the information. The exercise can take the form of a tabletop discussion or it can be expanded to include pictures, graphics, or whiteboard sketches while describing one's personal "story." Use of visual imagery is a way to simultaneously foster creative thought and get team members into a visual thinking mode.

### Facilitation Instructions:

1. Select three questions from the list provided or come up with your own (note questions shouldn't be too personal or frivolous the key is to provide an opportunity for team members to learn about one another and be open and honest).
2. Go around the table and ask each team member to answer all three questions and share with the group.
3. Ask team members what they learned about one another that they didn't know previously.

### Alternative Approach:

1. Select three from the list provided or come up with your own (note: questions shouldn't be too personal or frivolous the key is to provide an opportunity for team members to learn about one another and be open and honest).
2. Ask team members to partner up and use the questions to "interview" each other.
3. Return to the group and allow the team members to introduce the team member they interviewed and vice versa allowing time for individuals to fill in any gaps of what may have been forgotten.
4. {Optional} Encourage the group to explore and discuss what they learned about one another that they didn't previously know.

### Questions:

- Where did you grow up; where have you lived?
- Where have you been deployed?
- How many siblings do you have and where do you fall in the lineup?
- What challenge have they overcome professionally?
- What challenge have they overcome personally?
- What is something others don't know about you?
- What has been one of your greatest accomplishments?