

Group Activities for DEI Work

Group Membership

(5-10 minutes)

Have the learners form a large circle. As you call out different group names, the members are to go inside of each successive circle as they identify with the group. Begin with "low-risk" groups (e.g. brown hair, large family, group of professions you are working with, such as a manager or production associate and then work up to groups that are typically discriminated against or under-represented (e.g. African American, Asian, female, gay, person with disabilities). Applause as each group forms in the middle. As each group of learners move towards the center of the circle, ask them what they think is the most positive thing about being a member of this group.

Discussion: How did it feel to be in the center of the circle? Were you comfortable being stared at? How did it feel to be on the outside of the circle? How did you feel about those with you in the center of the circle or about those in the outer circle? Did anyone not make any trip into the circle? How did that feel?

I want You to Know

(20-30 minutes)

Decide the ethnic categories to be used based on the demographics of the learners by asking the group which ethnic groups they feel comfortable using. If there is only one member of a certain group, ask if she or he feels comfortable or if she or he wishes to join another group. Divide the group by ethnic categories and give each a sheet of flip chart paper. Give them about ten minutes to write down their answers for the following questions:

1. What we want you to know about our group.
2. What we never want to see, hear or experience again as a member of this group.
3. What we want our allies to do.

When all groups have completed their lists, reassemble them into one group and have them discuss their answers. When each group has explained their list, ask questions to clarify, not to challenge as the list represents realities for the group.

The Herman Grid

To discover that first impressions of people are not always true.

Pass out copies of the Herman Grid (Google it) to each learner. Ask them to share their impressions and if they see gray dots at the white intersections. Are the Gray spots really there? This is an example of how we sometimes see things that are not really there.

Discussion

- o Have you ever had a wrong first impression of someone who had a different background or came from another culture?
- o Has someone from a different back-ground or another culture ever had the wrong first impression of you?

Ask participants to share and discuss their examples in the large group or in small groups.

Who I Am

12x24 paper for each learner, a variety of magazines (ones with lots of photos), glue, markers, colored pencils and/or water colors, scissors

Have the participants fold a 12" x 24" paper in half (make a table tent).

Write name in the center of the "table tent."

Using drawings, magazine cut-outs, symbols, etc. tell us about yourself.

Include one or two things that most people do not know about you.

After the learners have finished their table tents, have each one explain hers or his to the group.

Another Version - Do NOT have them write their names on the paper. When they are finished, hang them on the wall. Have the learners read each table tent and then try to identify the person it belongs to.

Zoom & Re-Zoom

Based on the intriguing, wordless, picture books "Zoom" and "Re-Zoom" by Istvan Banyai which consist of 30 sequential "pictures within pictures." To create the game from the book, separate the picture pages of the book into one page sheets and laminate or place in clear plastic sleeves to protect them. Hand out one picture per person (make sure a continuous sequence is used). Explain that participants may only look at their own pictures and must keep their pictures hidden from others. Encourage participants to study their picture, since it contains important information to help solve a problem. The challenge is for the group to sequence the pictures in the correct order without looking at one another's pictures. Participants will generally mill around talking to others to see whether their pictures have anything in common. Sometimes leadership efforts will emerge to try to understand the overall story. When the group believes they have all the pictures in order (usually after ~15 minutes), the pictures can be turned over for everyone to see.

Classification Game

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

The classification game can be a quick icebreaker or a more complex activity. For the purposes of this example, we will treat this activity as a quick icebreaker. Before splitting the room into teams of four, explain the concept of "pigeon-holing someone," which means classifying someone as something or stereotyping someone. It should be made clear that this type of classification is subjective and unhelpfully judgmental. Instruct the participants to introduce themselves to those in their team and quickly discuss some of their likes, dislikes, etc. After the introductions, reveal to the teams that it will be their job to discover how they should classify themselves- as a team- into two or three subgroups by using criteria that contains no negative, prejudicial, or discriminatory judgments. Examples of these subgroups can include night owls and morning people, pineapple pizza lovers and sushi lovers, etc.

Respect

Ask participants to find someone in the room they don't know and make an introduction. Talk for five to 10 minutes about respect. What does it mean to you to "show respect?" How do you show respect to others? After the allotted time, ask all participants to sit and open the discussion. How did people define respect? What were some of the core concepts discussed? Common responses will likely include: The "Golden Rule;" Looking people in the eyes; Honesty; Accepting/appreciating someone's ideas, even when you don't agree with them. All responses are worthy of reflection in terms of their cultural and hegemonic influences. Ask participants where their ideas of respect come from and whom they are meant to protect. If the group raises any of the common responses above, challenge them to answer the following questions:
Does everyone really want to be treated the same way you want to be treated?

- Is eye contact during conversation respectful in every culture?
- If someone's ideas are oppressive, should we still respect them?

The point of the discussion is to reflect critically on assumptions and socializations regarding respect. The point is not to agree and to learn from each other's differences. This activity helps to establish a basis of respect within the group, helping the participants take the first steps toward creating and maintaining a constructive discussion of social justice and equity. At the very least, participants meet someone new and exchange ideas with that person. The group also gets its first look at the similarities and differences between participants, potentially in ways that reflect privilege and power.

"My Fullest Name"

Distribute markers and 8-by-10-inch sheets of paper folded horizontally.

Instructions: Write out your fullest name and tell your story. On the back of the piece of paper write the top three identities you feel closest to. Encourage participants to go around the circle to share any meanings, significance, culture, significant ancestors and the top three identities they hold dearest. Everyone will have a chance to share and be heard by the group.

Suggested questions if participants need help getting started:

- Who gave you your name? Why that name? Do you know the ethnic origin of your name? Do you have any nicknames? If so, how did you get them?
- What is your preferred name?
- Encourage students to be creative. Make it clear that it is acceptable to write poetry, list adjectives that describe them, include humor, etc.

If your group is large, break into diverse small groups of five or six to make sure everyone has an opportunity to share her or his story.

"Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"

The objective of this activity is to confront entrenched systems of power and privilege, and identify common situations when privilege is not acknowledged, to the detriment of the disadvantaged and oppressed.

Google and distribute to participants: "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" by Peggy McIntosh

Check off all of the statements that apply to you. Consider whether or not this would apply should your race be different.

Discussion: What is privilege? We all have privileges. What are yours? Were you surprised by any of the privileges you found in your invisible knapsack?

"Creating Gender-Free Nouns"

Generating gender-free nouns and pronouns will help participants incorporate more inclusive language in their daily speech and writing.

Break participants into small groups and give them a printout of the words below. Instruct participants to convert the suffixes of the nouns into gender-free, inclusive terms by changing the noun root word or substituting a non-gender-specific root word from another language. Tell participants that since male endings are so pervasive, it is OK to invent new words by replacing the endings of existing words with something non-gendered.

Airmen (i.e., fliers, pilots), Statesman (i.e., orator, speaker), Sportsman, Mailman, Policemen, Layman, Lineman, Foreman, Workmen, Salesman, Repairman, Crewmen, Lumbermen, Chairman, Spokesman, Busboy, which others?

Group Flower

Provide each group a large sheet of flip chart paper and markers. Have them to draw a large flower with a center and an equal number of petals to the number of participants in their group. Through discussion within their group, have them find their similarities. They should fill in the center of the flower with something they all have in common. Each member should then fill in his or her petal with something about them that is unique - unlike any other member in their group.

Participants should be instructed that they cannot use physical attributes such as hair color, weight etc. This encourages them to have more meaningful discussions with their group members).

Ask the small groups to share their flower with everyone.

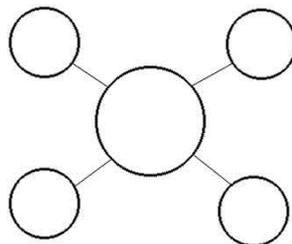
Find the End

In this exercise, a story in an unfamiliar language is written on the blackboard, and the trainees are asked to write an end to the story. They are not allowed to interact with each other or take each other's help. There are three responses that are recorded—either they refuse to do the exercise because they do not understand the language, or they write the ending in English (a language that they are familiar with), or they attempt to construct a response in the unfamiliar language.

This exercise aims to sensitize and help understand the difficulties and frustrations that people from other cultures may face.

Circles of My Multicultural Self

Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles -- an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything (e.g., Asian, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist)



1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are.