

ACTIVITY 3.3

I-identify!

Directions: Present an overview to the class. "It's important to consider all of our characteristics, internal and external, that make us individuals. When we think about identity, most people think about 'visible' characteristics such as race and gender. Yet, one's sex and gender expression or gender identity may not all align in the way that society perceives as the norm. We have to challenge ourselves to examine the 'invisible' characteristics such as ability, social class, language, and sexual orientation."

Goal: This activity provides a way to explore diversity in the classroom, despite a homogeneous surface. Participants will connect with their own identities, recognize and openly address issues of difference, and start to think consciously about building genuine relationships and maintaining an anti-oppressive environment and safe space.

This activity will include moving around while being silent in order to observe what is happening and how we feel followed by a discussion. Participants create a large circle using the perimeter walls of the room and leave equal space between the center of the circle and the walls. Participants should be facing the center of the room. The instructor will state a phrase and remain stationary. Participants will move to the center of the room inside the circle depending on whether or not they "I-identify" with the category and, thus, reveal a component of their individual identity.

Ensure that participants know that this is a safe space and they can choose not to reveal parts of themselves by not moving for certain categories. Discuss confidentiality with the entire group, emphasizing the importance of maintaining confidentiality as a means to maintain a safe environment. Share that not moving does not mean one is choosing to identify or not identify with a statement, but simply making the decision not to choose.

To better understand the activity, here is an example. The instructor says, "If you are a woman, I-identify!" All individuals who identify as a woman would move into the circle, noticing who moved and who did not. The educator instructs participants to return to their original location after each "I-identifying" movement is completed. At the end of the movement activity, regroup and discuss what participants noticed and felt. Discussion points are listed next. Ask participants to write a reflection paper about this experience and what emotions were evoked for them.

Do you I-identify?

1. You are a woman.
2. You are of a faith tradition other than Christianity.
3. You are a member of a club at school.
4. You are an only child.
5. You are African American, Black, or of African descent.
6. You have your own car.
7. You feel that educators and students at school do not understand you.
8. You are Latino/Latina, Chicano/Chicana, or Mestizo/Mestiza or identify another way with a Spanish-speaking or Latin or South American culture.
9. Your parents are divorced.
10. You are a man.
11. You have at least one parent with a college degree.
12. Your family unit does not consist of a mother and a father.
13. You are Caucasian.
14. You have a supportive family.

(continued)

ACTIVITY 3.3 (Continued)

15. You or someone you love (family or friends) is lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or transgender.
16. You or your family has worried at some point how they would pay the bills.
17. You have lived in one house your entire life.
18. You or someone you love has a disability.
19. A language other than English is used in your home.
20. You received a scholarship to attend school.
21. You have experienced bullying.
22. You identify as Native American.
23. You have two working parents.
24. You can use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest.

Discussion Questions

The following questions may be used for the group discussion as well as for the reflection paper:

- Did you ever feel pressure to move with the group? During which questions? Why do you think you felt this way?
 - Did you ever feel vulnerable during this activity?
 - Were you ever afraid to move into the circle? Do you think others felt this way?
 - Was there a time when you felt pride about one or two of the identities in the exercise? If yes, when and why? If no, why not?
 - Were you surprised by which participants moved for different statements? Do you think this is significant? Why?
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