

Cross the Line

Presenter begins by saying that the next activity will afford people the chance to think about their values and to express them to others. (It is important to begin Cross the Line by establishing common ground for the activity)

Introduction

We live in a diverse world. In this exercise we will explore the diversity among us by thinking about our values, our backgrounds, our teachers, and our experiences. We might even discover that this fairly homogeneous looking group is much more diverse than any of you would assume. This activity will involve labeling and personalizing some of this diversity. This personalization might prove uncomfortable at times. Eventually, however, it might empower us to break down some of the stereotypes and assumptions that we, as a product of our cultures, experiences, and life hold.

Instructions

This exercise is fairly simple. I will ask that all of you gather on one side of the room and face towards its center. I will call out specific categories/labels/descriptions, and ask that all of those to whom this applies, walk to the other side of the room. For example, I might request that anyone with glasses please cross the room. If this describes you and you feel comfortable acknowledging it, you would walk to this side of the room (demonstrate). Once there you would turn and face the crowd you just left. Get in touch with your feelings and think about those people on both sides of the room – then return to the side you started from. After a few seconds, I will continue with a new category. A number of categories will be called out. Remember, cross the room if the category applies.

Remember – there is no pressure to cross the room if you don't feel comfortable doing so. YOU will need to make that decision.

At the conclusion of the activity, we will discuss what we felt and what we learned. There may be times when this activity makes you feel slightly uncomfortable. I would urge you to lean into that discomfort since it may mean that you are about to gain an important learning or insight.

However, if the discomfort becomes intense, you may stop participating at any time. No questions will be asked and we will respect your decision. We would, however, encourage you to remain in the room as an observer.

Ground Rules

There are two very important ground rules to this activity.

1. The first involves listening. Let's have silence throughout the exercise – no talking, snickering, giggling, nonverbal messages.
2. It is imperative that we respect the dignity of each person who is here. All that is shared should remain confidential – nothing that is offered should leave this room. However, if after the workshop you really need to talk to a particular individual, be sure to ask his/her permission.

If there are no more questions then we are ready to begin.

Presenter begins by asking questions from the following list. Presenter may need to reemphasize that the purpose of this activity is to deepen our understanding of the people in the room, and to put participants in touch with “feelings”, so don't allow talking or laughter.

Choose from these questions

Anyone who has visited another country...cross the room
Anyone who is female...
Anyone who prefers day to night...
Anyone who has never flown...
Anyone who owns your own car...
Anyone who since his/her first year of high school has been in love and been hurt...
Anyone who is Atheist or Agnostic...
Anyone who is Jewish...
Anyone who is a person of color...
Anyone who feels that he/she knows very little about his/her cultural heritage...
Anyone who would describe his or her family as blue collar or working class...
Anyone who would describe his or her family as middle class...
Anyone who would describe his or her family as upper class...
Anyone who is the oldest in the family...
Anyone who is the youngest in the family...
Anyone who is an only child...
Anyone who sometimes has low self – confidence...
Anyone who sometimes feels lonely...
Anyone who has ever been in a fight to prove you were tough...
Anyone who has received a 3.5 GPA or higher last semester/quarter...
Anyone who received lower than a 3.0 GPA last semester/quarter...
Anyone who considers him/herself a Democrat...
Anyone who considers him/herself a Republican...
Anyone who considers him/herself a Socialist...
Anyone who is adopted...
Anyone whose natural parents have divorced...
Anyone who has had a parent pass away...

Anyone who believes it is alright for someone to have a date of the same gender at a social event...

Anyone who has a family member that is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered...

Anyone who is choosing to abstain from sex until marriage...

Anyone who has experienced the effects of alcoholism in the family...

Anyone who has experienced the effects of drug addiction in the family...

Anyone who has a friend or relative who attempted to commit suicide...

Anyone who has not yet crossed the line...

Presenter invites participants to form a circle.

Presenter then facilitates a discussion about the activity. Focus on values as much as possible.

Do values matter?

What kind of feeling did you have as you participated?

How did you feel when there were very few of you on one side of the room?

Why would an activity like this be included in ___?

Did you find yourself making judgments of others?

How did the movement of others influence you?

What did you learn through this activity that we can use to make this a better, more welcoming environment for others?

What did you learn through this activity that will make you a better person or leader?

Through this activity, intentionally or not, did you share your values?

Through this activity, intentionally or not, do you think that you learned about the values of others?