



WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT ALIKE

High School Lesson

OVERVIEW: This lesson is designed with four objectives in mind:

- To heighten awareness of the dangers of making assumptions
- To identify assumptions we make in the development of groups
- To highlight the simplistic perception that we sometimes use to view others
- To allow reflection on times when participants may have felt singled-out

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: index cards, pens

Procedure:

Part 1 – Establish a Safe Space

Start the conversation with students by letting them know that they will be discussing some sensitive topics in class today. Ask them to brain storm a list of guidelines for the class discussion. Some examples may include confidentiality, respect, and one person speaking at a time. Write the student's responses on the board and reference them throughout the conversation.

Part 2-

Form-A-Group (10 minutes)

Directions for Form A Group:

This activity is about forming groups of people based on common interests. Start by clearing a space large enough to move around. The idea is to form different groups of people as quickly as possible when the teacher calls out a common interest. For example, if the teacher says "find people with the same color shirt as you" students would group themselves by shirt color. Ask inclusive questions quickly in order to keep everyone involved and moving.

- What is your favorite color?
- What is your favorite candy?
- How many pets do you have?
- What do you usually do right after school?
- What color shoes are you wearing today?
- How many people are there in your family?
- What is your favorite school subject?



- What is your favorite school subject?

Part 3 – Assumptions (15 minutes)

Handout 3x5 cards and ask the students to write answers to the following questions. Make sure that they do not share their responses with others until later.

1. What wouldn't we know by just looking at you?
2. What is your favorite book?
3. What goal are you working towards?
4. What is your most positive personality trait?
5. What personal experiences do you have, if any, with discrimination?

Collect the cards, Shuffle the cards and pass them out randomly, ensuring that no one has their own card. Ask the students to find the owner of the card based on the answers.

Discussion Questions

- How accurate were the assumptions you made about people you don't know very well?
- Did you learn anything about your classmates that surprised you?
- What are the dangers of making assumptions?
- What is a stereotype?
- How can assumptions about groups lead to stereotypes?
- What can we do to prevent stereotyping?
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Part 4 – Small Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Divide the students up into different groups by counting off 1 through 5.

Once everyone is seated with a new group, pose the following questions and ask students to engage in a small-group discussion in which each student has the chance to share an experience with the group:

- Have you seen examples of biased based incidents based on someone's:
 - o *Race?*
 - o *Religion?*
 - o *Language?*
 - o *Sexual Orientation?*
 - o *Gender expression?*
 - o *Family status?*
- *Why do you think this happens?*
- Can you remember a time when you were called a name or put down for being different from others around you?
 - o How did it feel?
 - o What did you do?

Part 5 – Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Draw the class back together and ask students to share any connections they see between the various stories their classmates told. Record the similarities that come up on the board.

No Name-Calling week

Challenge students to use the experiences they just shared about their individual experiences with being called names for being different, and the similarities they found among their stories to generate a group discussion. Let students know they will be discussing their experiences and as a group, developing simple ways to stay SAFE when name-calling or bullying occurs. Ask students to be honest when expressing their feelings and experiences with name-calling and bullying, and to show respect to other students.

Ask the students to share their experiences with the larger group. Lead the students in a discussion using the following questions:

- How did it feel to be called a name or put down for being different?
- Did you know how to end the situation?
- What was it like working in groups today with people that were both similar to and different from you?
- How do our differences help us do good work?
- What can you do when you are being called names or bullied? *Let students come up with their own ideas before presenting them with the SAFE guidelines.*

Provide the students with the No Name-Calling Week Pledge and the Staying SAFE Guidelines. Ask the students to sign the pledge, agreeing to end name-calling and bullying. Review the Staying SAFE guidelines with the students.

If you are being called names or bullied, remember the four ways to stay **SAFE**:

- **S**ay What you Feel: Tell the person who is bullying you or calling you names the way their actions make you feel.
- **A**sk for Help: Sometimes you can't handle the situation yourself, and it's ok to ask for help. Find a teacher or other school staff member to talk to.
- **F**ind a Friend: Hanging out with people who make you feel good about yourself is important, and the person calling you names might think twice before picking on you when you're with your friends.
- **E**xit the Area: While it may feel like you aren't doing anything at all, sometimes walking away from someone who is picking on you is the best way to end things.