

Exploring Leadership

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: RESPECT

Respect isn't just the absence of disrespect. Eliminating rude words or behaviors doesn't create respect. Respect is an action. The perception of respect is influenced by culture and family, peers, and social relationships. Status, power, and role all create the context in which respect is interpreted.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Were you taught to say "please" and "thank you"? Did you learn to say "excuse me", show up on time, and let others know when you'll be late? These are simple ways to show respect. What are some other indicators of respect?

People from all walks of life will be more likely to communicate with, work hard for, and help you if you show respect for them. Respectful behavior is an important life skill that we often assume everyone understands, but due to different cultures and upbringings, not everyone is always on the same page. This activity will help you identify the behaviors that show respect.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Identify behaviors considered respectful in American culture.
- Practice showing respect in a group gathering.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A deck of cards (remove the aces)
- Tape (or some other means of sticking cards on foreheads)
- Four signs labeled: KQJ, 10-9-8, 7-6-5, and 4-3-2

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Playing Card Hierarchy - Place the signs in separate corners of the room. Remove cards from the deck equal to the number of participants with roughly the same number of cards for each of the four groups. Pass out the cards face down.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Don't look at your card (even if the activity is over) until instructed to do so.
- On 'Go!' stick your card on your forehead so others can see it, and mingle about the room as though at a company party meeting people you may not know well. Make small talk and/or ask people if they want to do something with you this weekend. Respond verbally and non-verbally based on the person's card only. The higher your card is, the more respected and powerful you are. BUT YOU CAN'T LOOK AT YOUR CARD, and you can't tell anyone else what their card is!
- Everyone must treat and react to others based on their cards. For example, if someone is a King, treat them with the utmost respect. (Formal introduction, shake hands, etc.), whereas if someone is a 2, treat that person as you would a friend or family member you are comfortable with.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- When passing out the cards, be sure not to give a low card (2,3,4) to anyone who is perceived by others or themselves as being a "low card" in real life.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How difficult was it to tell which group you were in? How many interactions did it take?
- What verbal responses did you get? What non-verbal responses did you get?
- How did it feel to be in your group? (Share responses from each group.)
- How does this activity relate to respect?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Can you think of a person in real life who would belong in each group? Do you treat them differently?
- How is this activity similar to what happens in a school or community?
- Is the formation of such “respect-level” groups (cliques) a good thing? Why or why not?
- Is there a respectful way to get across to someone that you don’t want their company?



CONCLUSION:

Respect is shown in many ways. The perception of respect is influenced by culture and family, peers, and social relationships. Status, power, and role all create the context in which respect is interpreted. Take the time to understand how respect is given and received, even in cultures and groups other than the ones that are “normal” to you. If you show respect, you will be much more likely to succeed in whatever you do.

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