



Exploring Leadership

SOCIAL AWARENESS: ACCEPTING DIFFERENCES AND APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

Diversity comes in many forms: gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, abilities, culture, socioeconomic background, and more. Each of these factors shapes an individual's unique view of the world. In this lesson, participants will explore the diversity in their own lives and learn to celebrate the differences that make us all special.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

What makes you unique? Have you ever felt different from others, and has that impacted you?

Embracing diversity and accepting differences helps you become a global citizen and also boosts your productivity, perspective, and life experience. So, how do we put this into practice? The exploration activity will show you how acceptance works within different groups, allowing everyone to feel a sense of belonging.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the importance of belonging and inclusion.
- Identify ways to help others feel they belong.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Index cards
- Assorted stickers: Use stickers like cartoon characters, inspirational quotes, and colored dots that can be grouped by similarities without a single "correct" way to do it.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

In this activity, you'll work together to form teams based on the cards on your foreheads. This game highlights the value of inclusion and helps you appreciate the diversity within your group.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Prior to the activity, attach stickers to the 3x5 index cards. Use multiple stickers on each card. The goal is to create different grouping options based on the type of sticker, the number of stickers, their colors, shapes, and more.
- Include one or two unique cards with stickers that don't belong to any group or category.
- Gather everyone in a circle. Instruct everyone not to look at their cards or talk during the activity. Feel free to remind participants of this as needed.
- Pass out one card to each person (face down) for them to hold without looking at it. Give the unique cards to those who are comfortable being different.
- Instruct everyone to hold their card to their forehead so they can't see it, but everyone else can.
- In silence, try to form groups or teams based on the cards you see on others' foreheads.
- Observe how teams form.
- After groups are formed, ask participants to check their own cards to see how they fit.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did your group form? Was it based on the number, color, or type of stickers, or perhaps something entirely different?
- Did you ever feel uneasy about your group placement or switch groups based on what others were doing?
- If you had a 'unique' card that didn't easily fit into a group, how did you decide where to go? What was it like to feel 'different'?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- How does the exploration activity relate to real life? Are we always allowed to choose our groups?
- How does it feel to be in a group you didn't choose, especially if you'd rather be in a different one?
- What are some advantages of embracing differences and celebrating diversity within a group?
- Does the way we are grouped truly reflect who we are? Why or why not?



CONCLUSION:

There are many ways to be "different," often rooted in our unique values and priorities. Conflicts can arise when we hold our beliefs so tightly that we overlook the value in others' perspectives. How diverse are your school, neighborhood, workplace, or friend groups? Is promoting diversity something you aim for in all areas of your life? There are many reasons to embrace diversity, and hopefully, this activity sparked some ideas on encouraging and appreciating the diversity around you.

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REFERENCES

- 5 Reasons Why Diversity is Important in the 21st Century: <https://ampglobalyouth.org/2020/06/20/5-reasons-diversity-important-21st-century/>
- Texas 4-H: <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu>