

Activity: Move Into the Circle. Provided by Ryan Baldassario & Huong Nguyen

Purpose: To have group members explore different aspects of their own identity, and to allow those who are comfortable to share elements of their identity and encourage others to share their stories as well.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes: (1) Connect with personal identities, (2) Increase awareness of identities of other participants, (3) Acknowledging and understanding other people's identities when forming relationships with others

Facilitation of Core Activity:

Establishing Ground Rules:

- “Vegas Rule” applies. What is said here stays here. Feel free to tell your story, but please refrain from telling others! BUT, we also want to acknowledge that “what is learned here, leaves here,” such as the learning outcomes of the activity.
- This activity is NON VERBAL. There is no need for participants to speak while they are moving in or out of the circle.
- “Challenge by choice.” The amount of participation is up to you! If for any reason you are triggered, please feel free to leave the room.
- Encourage “Full Presence” of participants.
- Foster “Brave Space”: Move beyond typical “safe space,” for participants are taking a risk in sharing particular aspects of their identity and uncomfortable situations, while challenging, can encourage individual and group growth.
- For those who have completed this activity previously, remind them that they have not completed the activity in this particular context or with this exact group
- Be aware of who is stepping into the circle/who is not.
- Be respectful to one another's beliefs, values and experiences.
- Do not “call out” other participants. Each individual group member has their own level of comfort with participation.
- Be aware of physical limitations: if any participants cannot physically participate, shift “move into the circle” to a hand-raising-based model.

Activity:

1. Ask participants to make a large circle in the middle of the room
2. Explain that the facilitator will read a prompt one at a time, and participants move into the circle a few feet if the identity applies to them. Again, this is challenge by choice, so it is optional to move into the circle.
3. Notice who is in the circle and who is not in the circle.
4. Begin each prompt below with,
 - “Please move into the circle if you identify as...”
 - “Please move into the circle if you are...”
 - “Please move into the circle if you have...”

Prompts:

- If you are an only child (subsequent question: have siblings)

- If you were born outside the U.S.
- If you have bought clothes from a thrift shop before
- If your age demographic is proportionately represented in TV shows and movies
- If your gender is an option on a form
- If you can assume that you will not have to work or go to school on your religious holidays
- If public access to buildings, parks, restaurants, etc. is easy for you
- If growing up, college was an expectation of you
- If you can expect to find your clothing size sold locally
- If you come from a military family

Additional prompts:

- If you're not assumed to be unhealthy just because of your size
- If you are able to walk alone at night without the fear of being raped or otherwise harmed
- If you can use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest
- If you have ever been asked to represent your race in the classroom
- If you ever felt like you didn't belong
- If you come from a single parent or guardian household
- If you ever felt like you didn't have a voice
- If you are a child of an alcoholic
- If whenever you've moved out of your home it has been voluntary and you had another home to move into
- If you had to translate language for your parents at one point in your life
- If you have been told that your English is good
- If you identify as a Feminist
- If you have ever questioned your sexuality
- If you were the first in your immediate family to graduate from high school
- If you can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of your race widely represented.
- If people have asked you what your "real name" is
- If you have funded yourself through college without your parents' or guardians' financial support
- If you overcame any life-threatening experience
- If you feel proud of who you are. . .

5. Now, ask the participants if there are any identities or prompts they would like to put out into the group that were not read. They are **ONLY** allowed to say an identity to which they belong. Continue as long as there is time.

- Be sure to wait a full 10 seconds for anyone to share an identity
- Feel free to share an identity to get participants thinking (ex: vegetarian, democratic)

Debriefing:

- How are you feeling right now?
- What did you notice about how you/others participated in this activity? (ie: size of steps, confusion, could step in for multiple identities within a category, etc.)
- What feelings/thoughts did you have when you moved into the circle for a particular identity?
- What did it feel like to move into the circle by yourself or watch other people move in by themselves?
- Were there any identities that you could have moved in for, but didn't? Why?
- How does this activity relate to us living in a community?
- How do we connect with students and create community when they are "the only one"?
- What things can we do so that everyone can step in for the last statement - "feeling proud of who you are?"