

The Diversity Shuffle

Exploring our Differences—and Similarities

Definitions: (on Flip Chart ?)

Diversity the condition of being different

Prejudice literally, to "pre - judge;" to form an unfavorable, generalized opinion or attitude beforehand without information about the particular situation or individual

Objectives: (on Flip Chart ? — nice for recalling at the end)

We will have offered repeated opportunities to:

- ***increase our sensitivity to differences—that is, to our diversity***
- explore our own beliefs and move beyond prejudice—that is, beyond pre-judging
- value and celebrate differences—that is, our diversity
- (• begin to consider the role that diversity plays in conflict and in conflict resolution)

Opening / Setting the Stage:

After you hear these procedures, you will be given the opportunity to not participate. I will ask you to leave the room, however, while others participate.

I will be providing opportunities for you to characterize certain aspects of yourself by physically moving around in the room in response to a series of descriptive statements. For example, the first one is:

If you grew up primarily in a city, move to the left side; if you grew up primarily in suburbs, move the back; and if you grew up primarily in the country, move to the right side.

The key to learning is not to observe where anyone individual is at any time but to observe:

- ***how the characterizations place you with and apart from others;***
- ***how you feel as you become aware of differences—and similarities!***

Opening / Setting the Stage — continued:

Some of the subjects raised may make you feel uncomfortable, but I recommend that you trust the process and the learning that can be gained from it when you allow yourself to participate fully. When you are uncomfortable revealing your response to a particular request, you do not have to move. Remember, however, one of the opportunities provided is to become aware of our prejudices—that is, pre-judging ourselves and others on how we think we will feel.

Procedures:

1. *Remain silent throughout the process; we will debrief afterwards.*
 - no talking or laughing
 - realize that comments and laughter are often a response to feeling vulnerable.*Please respect each other and the entire process by refraining from talking and laughing.*
2. *For each subject, choose the description that best describes you, even if it does not fit exactly. Don't ask for clarification: make your best choices for learning based on what you understand.*
3. *Observe what is happening in the room to the group generally.*
4. *Be aware of the thoughts, emotions, feelings and bodily sensations that come up for you. While sharing these later will be on a protected and voluntary basis, they are nevertheless important teachers for each of us.*
5. *Is there anyone who is unwilling to participate or to adhere to these procedures? If so, would you please leave us for this portion?*
6. *(The rest,) Please move to the center / front.*

Universal format: *If, move to the left side of the room;*
 if, move to the right side of the room
and as needed, if, move to the back, corners, etc.

Pause for visual observation; reflection; and awareness of emotions, feelings, thoughts.

Thank you. Please return "home" (front, center)

Shuffle Questions:

1. If you grew up in a city; suburbs; the country.
2. If you are an only child; have a brother or sister; have more than one.
3. If you were born before 1950; in the 50's; 60's; 70's; 1980 or after [use room corners too].
4. If you hold a bachelor's degree; an advanced degree; no college degree.
5. If you were raised in a lower economic class family; middle; upper / middle or upper.
6. If you spent some of your childhood years in a single-parent household; not true.
7. If you—or anyone in your immediate or extended family—is in military service or a veteran of military service; not true.
8. If you have ever lived—not just visited—outside of the U.S.A.; not true.
9. If you grew up in a family where a language other than English was spoken; not true.
10. If your immediate or extended family has a multicultural dimension; not true.
11. If you or anyone in your immediate or extended family is gay or lesbian; not true.
12. If anyone in your family or close to you has been involved with substance abuse; not true.
13. If anyone in your family or close to you has been convicted of a felony; not true.
14. If you know or have known someone with fatal levels of cancer; not true.
15. If you know or have known someone with AIDS; not true.
16. If you have experienced prejudice based on something you have no control over (for examples, height, accent, hair color); not true.

Trigger / Focus Questions for Dyads / Pairs: (on flip chart?)

1. How did it feel to stand alone, to be isolated?
2. How did it feel to be in a small group often?
3. How did it feel to be a part of a majority group?
4. What were your thoughts about **the other** group(s)?
5. How did it feel to return "home" to the whole group?
6. Were there times when you felt uncomfortable divulging your own group affiliation?

Debrief these trigger / focus questions.

Additional Debrief Questions for the whole:

- Did you notice yourself forming beliefs / perceptions / attitudes / judgments about those in a different group?
- Were there times when you felt uncomfortable about those in a different group?
- How would you have felt if the process had been done for "values" such as abortion, capital punishment, immigration, war?

"Required" safety debriefing for whole group:

7. What did you learn about the richness of this group?
What does that mean when you're in other group situations?
8. Ask yourself if you were less than totally honest in at least one of your choices of a descriptor. If so, ask yourself "why?" and reflect on what that means in the conduct of your life. [no sharing required or recommended for this]
9. What other significant learning did you experience in this activity?

Recall Objectives: (on Flip Chart ?)

We will have offered repeated opportunities to:

- **increase our sensitivity to differences—that is, to our diversity**
- explore our own beliefs and move beyond prejudice—that is, beyond pre-judging
- value and celebrate differences—that is, our diversity
- begin to consider the role that diversity plays in conflict and in conflict resolution)

Closing — Where do we go from here?

- *Actualizing these objectives is a lifetime process: our sensitivity to differences is never complete; the exploration of our beliefs is never finished; and the celebration of our diversity can be unending.*
- *For now, I encourage you to take care of yourselves. This process may have uncovered some hidden away parts of yourself. You may feel vulnerable, open. The world outside, however, hasn't changed while we've opened ourselves. So nurture and protect yourself—especially for the next day or so.*
- *I encourage you to think whenever possible in terms of the **richness of differences** as opposed to the **disadvantages of being different**.*
- *Reflect on what you've learned in this process.
Reflect on what you've learned may mean for you.*

- *I leave you with this quote:*

*Every person is, in many respects,
like all other people,
like some other people,
like no other person.*

from Personality in Nature, Culture and Society
by Kluckhohn and Murray

Re-admit to the room any who chose not to participate.