

AN INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

SIGNS OF IDENTITY

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BUILD DEEPER CONNECTION WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

DESCRIPTION

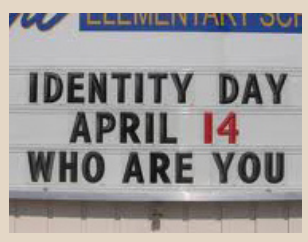
This is an interactive exercise where individuals learn about their values and preferences, and have an opportunity to evaluate themselves within community. The more honest people are, the more each participant will get out of this exercise.

PREPARATION

For an effective exercise invite at least 8 participants. It takes about 1 hour for the whole exercise. Find a large enough room so that participants can move around easily (the room size will vary based on number of participants). Prior to the exercise, make signs with the following categories on 8 x 11 sheets of paper and post around the room leaving enough room for groups to form around each category.

Categories

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Family
- Class
- Work
- Education
- Friendships



Explain Logistics:

To begin this exercise, have the group start by congregating in the middle of the room. Have the group look around the room at the categories. Explain that you will read a statement and ask each participant to choose one category that relates to the statement they heard as they consider what is most true for that person at this moment; what is true today.

Encourage the group to observe with their eyes after each statement. Remind them to look around at each category, stop and pause, and reflect on what each one is feeling and thinking. Awareness of themselves is important. Then go to that category.

Once you have picked a category and grouped yourself with others who have also picked that category, you will ask each person to again silently observe the room paying attention to their thoughts and feelings. At times you will also ask them to interact with a partner. When interacting as partners, one participant will have two minutes to share why they chose that category and then they will switch and the other partner will have a chance to share. If there is an odd number of people within a category, have them form a group of three. If there is only one person that chose a category, have him or her pair up with someone else in another category. (Note: As the facilitator, determine beforehand if there is an odd number of participants and help pair up participants when these situations arise.)

Continue to move the group along by asking them

TIMELINE

Norms & Logistics (5 - 7 minutes)

Exercise (30 minutes)

Debrief (25 minutes)

INSTRUCTIONS

Explain Norms (explain the importance of):

1. Confidentiality
2. Respect
3. Honesty/Openness
4. Active Listening

to go back to the middle of the room so that you can read additional statements. As the exercise continues, the participants need to think on their feet; they need to make a choice and go to that category.

You are almost ready to begin. Ask if anyone has any questions. After that it is time to start; have everyone start in the middle of the room.

EXERCISE

Statements

Note: statements with an * will be interactive

1. This has recently brought satisfaction in my life.
2. I've had to think about this aspect of my life the least.
3. *I've had to think about this aspect of my life the most.
4. This is the first thing people recognize about me.
5. This is the area in which I am most thankful for.
6. I am most comfortable/secure in this area.
7. I am most uncomfortable/insecure in this area.
8. *This has caused me the greatest pain in life.
9. I have learned one of the greatest lessons in life because of this.
10. My family valued this the most.
11. *My family valued this the least.
12. This brings the most enjoyment to my life.
13. *I've seen the biggest amount of growth in this area in my life this year.

During the exercise remind your group to

- Go back to the middle of the room after each statement and movement.
- Encourage them to observe with their eyes; look around; be aware of what they are feeling throughout the exercise; ask them to be silent
- Give 4 minutes per 'X' during sharing time; roughly 2 minutes per person. Remember to remind people to switch who is sharing after about 2 minutes or so.



DEBRIEF

Ask everyone to find a seat and help the group relax and breathe, pause and reflect. Let them know that you are going to debrief their experience.

Suggested Debrief Questions

Pick at least three questions to discuss as a large group. The questions with the * have been found to be effective debrief questions.

- *How was this exercise for you?
- *How did you feel throughout the exercise?
- What are your observations about yourself?
- What are your observations about others?
- What surprised you the most?
- What did you like?
- What didn't you like?
- Would you have done anything different?
- *What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?
- What are you feeling now?

Optional debrief statements

- This is the place I'm doing a lot searching or questioning.
- This is the place I feel most misunderstood.

