

One Equals One

We all are different, sometimes we feel proud of the difference and like to show it. At other times we prefer to hide it either because we fear rejection or because we want to be like everyone else. We are also all equal in that as human beings we share many qualities.

Issues addressed

- Personal identity.
- The qualities of being human.
- We are all different, but all equal.

Aims

- To get to know and accept each other in the group.
- To show that we are all different.
- To show that we are equal to each other.
- To reflect on the ways in which we form our own identity.

Time

- Part A 30 minutes
- Part B 30 minutes
- Part C 20 minutes
- Discussion 20 minutes

Group size: Any size

Preparation

Chalk for and a list of personal characteristics for part A.

Papers and coloured pens and pins or sticky (scotch) tape for part B.

Instructions

This activity consists of three mini-activities, which have been linked together to enable participants to explore the differences between them, to think about what makes each one of us unique and to share some of the things we have in common.

Part A: Differences:

1. Make sure you have plenty of space and that the room is as empty as possible.
2. Explain to the group that they have to imagine a line down the middle of the room dividing it into two halves. Stand on the line.
3. Ask everyone to stand at one end of the room, and then say: "Cross the line those who... are wearing trousers".
4. After those who were wearing trousers have crossed the line say another characteristic: e.g. "Cross the line those who...like cooking".



5. Once the group is warmed up, you could include more challenging characteristics related to the topic e.g. "Cross the line those who... have good friends who are openly homosexual or lesbians".

Part B: Uniqueness:

6. Ask the group to think about the T-shirts they wear, especially those that have logos or slogans relating to campaign issues on them. Do they wear them because they like the design or because they want to show that they support a particular cause?
7. Explain that each person is now going to design a very personal logo for their T-shirt, a logo which proclaims them and says who they are.
8. Share out paper and pens to the members of the group and give them 15 minutes to draw their personal design.
9. When they have finished, ask them to pin or tape the designs onto their shirts and walk round the room so that they can see what each other have done.

Part C: Seeking things we have in common:

10. Ask the players to find a partner and identify three things which they have in common; one should be something that they always do, feel or think; the second, something which they sometimes do, feel or think; and the third, something which they never do, feel, or think.
11. Now ask the pairs to try to find another pair who shares those characteristics. If they can't find another pair, then they have to make a four and negotiate three new characteristics which they each claim and all share.
12. Then ask the fours to join to form eights and repeat the negotiations. The activity is over once all the participants form one single group and have identified three things which they all hold in common.
13. If the group is very large check that they all share the same characteristics by asking the players to sit in a circle and, once a characteristic is mentioned, those who identify themselves with it must stand up. If somebody does not "fit" try again with another characteristic.

Debriefing and evaluation

- Ask the players if they enjoyed the activity and talk about what they learned:
- What did it feel like to have to cross the line by yourself?
- How did you feel showing yourself as a unique person different from everybody else?
- How did it feel when you saw how many characteristics you share with the rest of the group?
- In our daily lives, when do we like to feel unique and different, and when do we need to feel the same as or equal to everybody else?

Ask people to share some of their own experiences:

- Have you ever had to hide your identity in order to be accepted?
- Have you ever felt discriminated against because you were different or because you were associated with someone else?
- When have you been forced to give up a part of your identity in order to be accepted in a group?

Tips for the facilitator

In part A try at first to think of personal qualities that are not shared by the rest of the group but which are not too intimate. They can be personal “curiosities” e.g. the way you brush your teeth or sing in the shower. When the group is warmed up move on to personal experiences, ask for people who have felt discriminated against, who have an immigrant, Roma (Gypsy or traveller) or gay friend, who have lived in another country, who have relatives who emigrated or who have been in a wheelchair. Then move on to explore personal likings, wishes, feelings, etc.

Since the characteristics in the first part should be special, you should prepare a list before starting the activity. Choose characteristics appropriate to the group and according to what you know about the participants. Alternatively, you ask the members of the group to suggest characteristics, but beware that the group knows each other well and no one will be tempted to try to embarrass anyone else.

During the second and third parts, it is up to each person to identify the characteristics.

We suggest you join in with this activity so you can follow the group process better.

Suggestions for follow up

Organise a session when people can paint or print their own T-shirts. They could use their personal designs or create a design for the campaign or any other issue.

Other activities in the pack which you might like to move on to are ‘My childhood’ (page 127) to look at the different experiences we have each had as children which make us who we are today or ‘Personal heroes’ (page 147) to look what it is in our heroes that we admire.