

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR CULTURAL AWARENESS/VALUES MODULE FACILITATOR'S TOOL KIT

Optional Activities

Cultural Awareness Exercise
Personality Differences
Vignette for Cultural Awareness Segment
Values Exercise I
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Walking Continuum
Developing a Family Mission Statement

PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES

Assign a different area of the room to each of four different animals: lions, turtles, puppies & kittens. Ask the group to think about the qualities of each animal and then decide which animal they are most like; remind them that it's important they go with their heart rather than their head on this. Ask them to go the part of the room for their animal.

Once everyone has found their appropriate place, ask the groups to spend a minutes discussing among themselves what is good about being the animal they chose and what they can learn from the other three animals. Some questions to facilitate discussion might be: Are there any preconceived ideas about your animal?

If so, how did those originate?

How can you overcome them?

If your family member is in another group, how does this affect your relationships at home?

What can you learn from this to get along better with the other animals at home? And at school?

CULTURAL AWARENESS EXERCISE

What is meant by “*culture?*”

Specific groups of people that are set apart or distinguished by:

- Customs
- Beliefs
- Language
- Dress
- Habits & Behavior
- Ideology
- Social Norms

If you think of the area in which you live as a culture in itself, there would be a number of mini-cultures that exist within that larger culture. What are some you can think of? One way to think of this is to identify groups, clubs or nationalities. Another way to think of it is in terms of the various roles you fulfill. For instance, most of us could say we’re “Okies.” Teenagers could probably say you’re “students.” I can say I’m a First Offender’s Program facilitator. In the spaces below, write down two or three of these “mini-cultures” to which you belong.

Now, thinking about parents and teenagers belonging to different “mini-cultures,” list several things you think your parent or teenager experience as a result of belonging to that mini-culture. In other words, if you’re a teenager, think about the culture your parents belong to, and if you’re a parent, think about the culture your adolescent is a part of. Discuss & determine if you’ve each made accurate assumptions.

Cultural Awareness Exercise (continued)

Ask participants to think about ALL the different groups to which they belong. Another way to think of this might be to consider all the different labels that could be applied to them, or all the different roles they fulfill in their lives. Advise that we're going to ask everyone to identify one that applies to them as we go around the room once or twice, and we'll list them all on the board. The leader can start by listing a group to which s/he belongs, such as FTOP leader, counselor, 'Okie,' etc.

If the group is very small it will require several contributions from each person.

Once there are at least 20 (30 or so is ideal) labels/groups listed, ask if, just looking at the list, they would think there are more similarities or differences among all the mini-cultures listed. Discuss this in terms of common hopes, dreams, fears & goals until the group realizes that we probably have a lot more in common than that which sets us apart.

Asking how the culture of parents differs from that of teens can initiate a discussion to help teens & parents better understand the world the other lives in and could lead to making the point that most of parents' lectures, nagging, etc., arise out of some sort of fear for their children.

Stereotypes

This is a good time to introduce the idea of stereotypes by asking if there might be any commonly-held beliefs about any of the groups listed on the board. Ask what a 'stereotype' is, how they come to exist and what keeps them alive.

Prejudice

Ask what the word 'prejudice' means to the group and how it's related to stereotypes. A good category to examine in terms of stereotypes and prejudices (because it's usually non-threatening to the group as most, including the leader(s) share it) is "Okie." Ask what ideas people in other parts of the country have about people in Oklahoma. Ask them how they feel about it. Ask how they feel about being judged or labeled in this way.

From here the group leader can ask the juveniles what groups exist in their schools that are subject to stereotyped beliefs and prejudices and a discussion can be facilitated about what fuels those beliefs and how it might feel to be a member of one of those groups.

Discrimination

Help the group determine that discrimination is the acting out of prejudicial beliefs. The leader might ask for examples of discrimination the group has seen practiced against certain groups in their schools and/or social scene.

A dramatic adjunct to this is to mention that in almost all of the horrendous acts of violence that have been perpetrated at some of the schools across the country, the common denominator was that the people committing that violence had been ostracized,

bullied or ridiculed repeatedly over a period of time. The point should be made that *this in no way justifies the acts*, but to remind each of us that we have the power to make a difference in the life of someone every day simply by acknowledging their existence as a human being, worthy of respect and consideration. To put it another way, we can all be instrumental in reducing prejudice by ignoring stereotypes and being willing to get to know other people as individuals, not just as representatives of a certain group. Simply saying “Hi” or “What’s up?” to someone in the hall, asking them what they thought of the algebra test, or if they’re going to the assembly next hour, even if that person appears different from us, can start to form the threads of connection that all of us need and want.

VIGNETTE FOR CULTURAL AWARENESS SEGMENT

One day when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all his books. I thought to myself, “Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd.” I was busy with thoughts of all I had planned for the weekend with my friends, so I shrugged my shoulders & went on.

Suddenly there was a bunch of kids running toward Kyle. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying and I saw them land in the grass about 10 feet from him. He looked up & I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him, so I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I noticed a tear in his eye. I picked up his glasses & as I handed them to him, I said “Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives.” He smiled faintly & said, “Thanks!”

I helped him pick up his books and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before, but we talked all the way home & I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool guy. I invited him to play football with my friends. We hung out all weekend and the more I got to know him, the more I liked him, and my friends liked him too.

Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I said, “Boy, you’re going to build some serious muscle with this pile of books!” He just laughed and handed me half of them to carry.

Over the next four years Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors we began to think about college, and even though we were going to different schools, we knew we’d always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He wanted to be a doctor and I was going to college on a football scholarship to major in business.

Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to give a speech for graduation. I was really glad it wasn’t me having to get up there & speak in front of that crowd! On graduation day, Kyle looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He had filled out & actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than I had and all the girls loved him. Boy, sometimes I was a little jealous! Today I could see that he was a little nervous, so I smacked him on the back, and said, “Hey, big guy, you’ll be great!” He gave me a really grateful look, smiled & said, “Thanks.”

As he started his speech, he said “Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years—your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach....but mostly your friends. I am here to tell you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story.”

VIGNETTE FOR CULTU VIGRAL AWARENESS – Continued

I stared at my friend in disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. Kyle had planned to kill himself that weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying all his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his darkest moment. I saw his mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or worse.

VALUES EXERCISE I

Ask participants how many value their health, and if so, to please stand. Then read the following:

1. Now, if you did not have a healthy breakfast this morning, sit down. (A healthy breakfast is NOT a donut and a soft drink – it consists of protein, whole grains or fruit)
2. If you have not gotten some form of vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes 3 times this week, please sit down.
3. If you smoke, sit down.
4. If you haven't spent at least 10 minutes a day, relaxing, meditating or simply unwinding, please sit down.
5. If you have driven or ridden in a car this week without fastening your seatbelt, sit down.
6. If you've had over two alcohol drinks any day this week, please sit down.
7. If you've had fast/fried food more than once this week, please sit down.
8. If you haven't had at least three servings of fruits and vegetables each day, sit down.
9. If you've talked or texted on your cell phone while driving, please sit down.

Of course, these questions could be changed to better fit a particular group, or some could be omitted.

VALUES EXERCISE II

Instruct teenagers to think of a value they know their parent has. Go around the room and ask them to share with the group and tell the group the value and HOW they know it's a value their parent has. If there is time, parents can also mention a value they have & share how they try to instill it in their child.

This can also be expanded to allow practice of the speaker-listener technique, by having parent-child dyads utilize the technique as they share about values.

WRITING A FAMILY MISSION STATEMENT

Parents and juveniles are each given a 3x5 card and instructed to write 3 to 5 things on it that they think signifies what their family is about, or what their family stands for. Once they've completed this, ask them to spend about 10-15 minutes composing a family mission statement, incorporating the values they've written on their cards. Some ideas to consider in writing the statement might be:

What's important to our family in terms of how we treat each other?

What things do we want to pass on to future generations?

What are our expectations of each other?

What are our goals as a family?

If our family could be described in one word, what would we want that word to be?

(Or two, three or more words)

Suggest that mission statements can be as long or as short as family members want—there's no standard length or format. Remind them that a family mission statement should ideally reflect values of all the family members, so if part of their family is at home, it would be nice to involve them in completing the statement. What they're doing tonight could be considered a preliminary, or rough, draft to be added to & revised with the rest of their family.

WALKING CONTINUUM

Signs saying “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” are placed at opposite ends of the room, and one saying “Not Sure” on the wall in the middle of the room to indicate a continuum of opinion. A list of statements is read and participants are asked to move the area of the room that indicates how much they agree or disagree with the statements.

Rock music is harmful to kids.

Religion & politics should never mix.

Clothes make the person.

Sex outside of marriage is okay.

Money is not important to me.

Honesty is always the best policy.

Keeping traditions is important to me.

The opinions of my peers affect what I do.

Everybody lies.

A good education is vital to survival.

Marijuana should be legalized.

People are basically good at heart.

The city curfew is a good thing.

The drinking age should be lowered to 18.

Parents have the right to search their kid’s room.

Students should be given a zero if they get caught cheating on a test.

You can take as much time as you have to discuss participants’ basis for their opinions.

Would their answers change if one word in the statement was different?

Encourage discussion, respect and acceptance of the views of other group members.

WHAT ARE MY VALUES??

What are Values?

- What we believe is right, good, important or necessary
- Qualities or attributes we think are highly desirable.
- What gives our life meaning

Three types of values:

- *Ideas*: Beliefs, opinions, ways of seeing things (like religion, politics, morals, etc.)
- *Things*: Material objects, people, places, possessions (like money, friends, clothes, cars, etc.)
- *Experiences*: Activities, events, happenings, life-lessons (like playing sports, exercise, travel, seeing beautiful things, being with family)

Values are unique, deeply held, personal, and often hard to change.

Where do your values originate, or come from? Write down 3-5 influences that have helped shape your values.

On the scale below, indicate what portion of your values you think have been influenced by media (television, movies, music, reporting of behavior of public figures, etc.)

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

What values do you believe are most often promoted by the media sources listed above?

VALUES CLARIFICATION EXERCISE

Complete the following sentences with a word that best reflects your feelings or beliefs:

The 3 most important people to me are _____

Write one word to describe these people _____

One thing I could not live without is _____

Two things I'd like to be remembered for are _____

If there were just two rules for everyone to follow, they would be _____

The person I admire most in the world is because _____

Two qualities I would look for in a life partner are _____

If I had to describe myself in one word, it would be _____

The quality that will help me most in life is _____

Create a motto that best sums up your outlook or philosophy of life: _____

*If this is truthfully & thoughtfully completed, it can provide a summary of
your values!*

