

First Impressions of Trans* People

Reflective – 201 – Low Trust – 10 mins – szp.guide/firstimpressionstrans

Materials

- Participant sheet

Setup

- Pass out participant sheets

Facilitator Framing

- This activity helps participants begin to reflect on their experiences and socialization around trans* identity and people.
- The activity can be effective at contextualizing the importance of the workshop or talking openly about these issues (and how often rare that open conversation can be). As well as how change and growth has already happened for your participants around trans* issues and identity.

Goals & Learning Outcomes

- Participants will reflect upon their first impressions with trans* people and identity.
- Participants will reflect on how their understanding of trans* people and identity has changed over their lifetime.
- Participants will have an opportunity to hear how diverse the group's experience with trans* people and identity are.

Process Steps

1. Provide directions for the activity and assure participants that this activity primarily reflective and they won't be asked to share anything they don't want to. For example, "We are going to do a reflective activity called First Impressions. We're going to give you a few minutes to think on and write some answers to the list of questions on this sheet. These questions are for your reflection, we aren't going to collect your sheets or have you pass them to the person on your right, or anything of that nature. If there is any question you're struggling with skip it and we'll come back to it at the end of the activity. We'll give you a few minutes here to answer the questions and then bring it back to the big group."
2. Give participants time to reflect (3-5 minutes).
3. Move into the debrief questions.
4. Wrap-up the activity.

Debrief questions

- What was it like to do that activity?

- Does anyone have an experience that was significantly different that they'd be interested in sharing?
- What about question 3, would anyone share how their understanding of trans* issues and identity have changed over time?

Wrap-up

Highlight for participants that each of them have likely have shifted their understanding of trans* people and identities over the course of their lifetimes and that this workshop may or may not also shift their understanding of trans* people and identities.

Often there is a mention of language and/or public conversation that has shifted over the course of someone's lifetime and you can call back to this mention in order to create a seamless transition into vocabulary.

Make it your own

These questions can be modified to focus more specifically on particular identities if you are doing a targeted training for example, "What was your first impression or initial conversations around trans* identity within a medical environment?"

Unlock the Magic

Be an imperfect role model: this is an activity can be a space where you can share with participants your own development and journey. This can help assure participants that you identify with their stories or change and development and that they aren't alone in having unlearn and reconsider what they know about gender and sexuality.

Notes

While this is a low risk activity, participants sharing about their past (or present) views can expose a lot of prejudice. While some prejudice being named isn't inherently a bad thing, too much is unproductive to the learning outcomes. Try to invite shares from participants from a variety of views and perspectives. Keeping the debrief on the shorter side and moving through the questions quickly does not negatively impact the goals and will help you manage the feelings that may come up for folks.

Also for many groups this activity will create more questions than answers. Depending on your audience the words transgender, genderqueer, and/or cisgender might be completely new and that would really hinder people answering the questions and having time to reflect on those thoughts because they will instead be focused on those new words. You could always remove the words genderqueer and cisgender if you want to introduce those words later in the workshop and think it will hinder your audience's abilities to be reflective.

