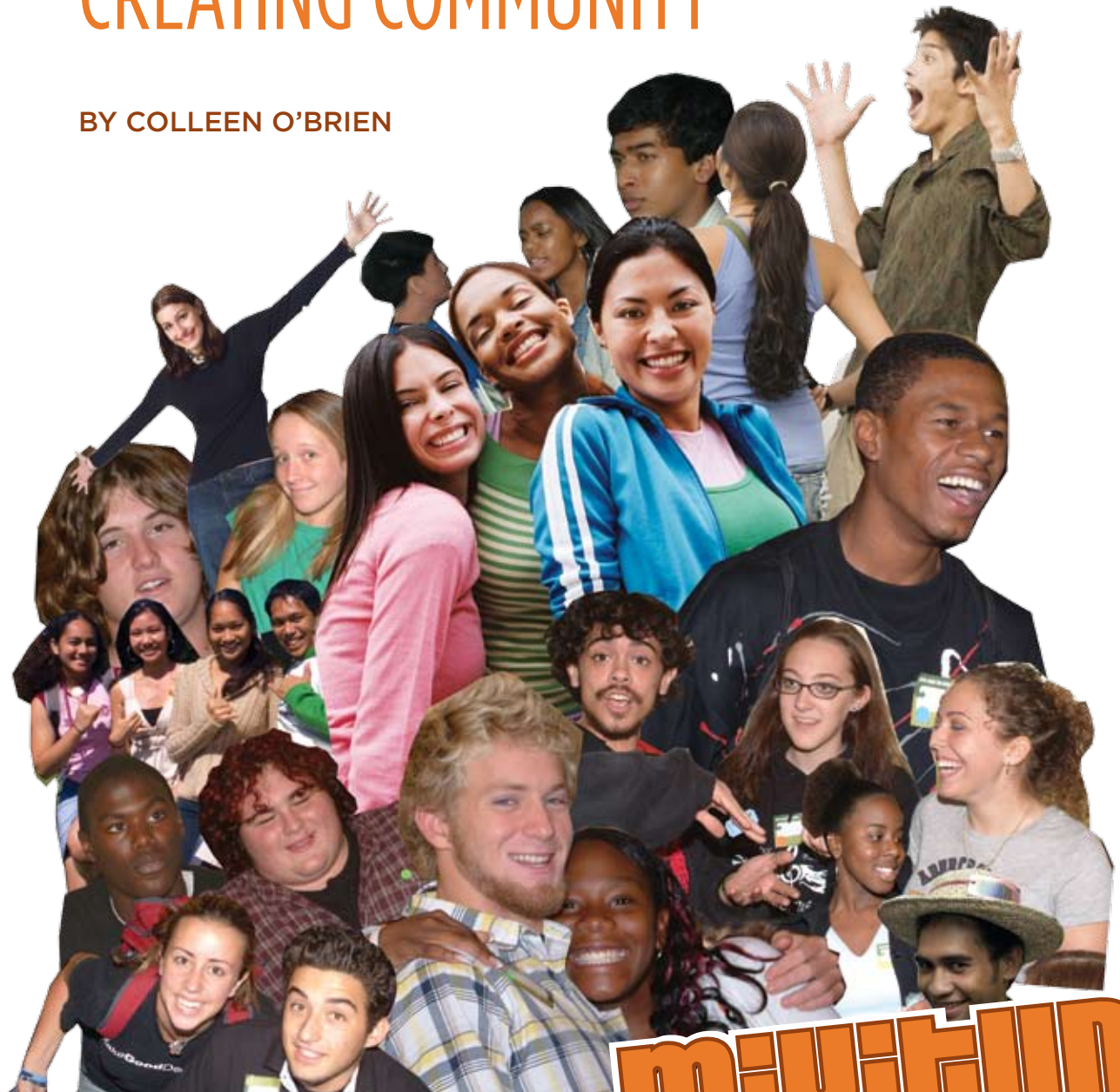


BUILDING EMPATHY CREATING COMMUNITY

BY COLLEEN O'BRIEN



MIXITUP[®]
www.mixitup.org

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About this Handbook

The tendency to exclude other people from social groups is tied to social patterns and norms that build walls between students. Bullies, for example, lack empathy for their victims because they tend to ostracize and dehumanize them. Such ridicule and exclusion often is at the root of divisions within a school community.

Individual rivalries, social hierarchies and a winner-takes-all mentality constitute some of the behavioral patterns that reflect a lack of empathy and undeveloped sense of community responsibility. In order to build community within a class or school, students need to learn how to collaborate, share responsibility, and talk with and listen to each other.

The activities in this handbook are designed to help students explore new ways of interacting through a process of learning about — and learning to honor — one another's individuality. Learning about peers humanizes people and helps them to identify with one another rather than ostracize or alienate. The activities below are designed to help individuals — particularly independent-minded pre-teens and teens — think of their classroom or school as a community and thereby experience solidarity with their peers.

Standards

The content provided in this Mix It Up handbook supports the goals and objectives of your state content standards. Relevant academic standards are provided in each lesson. The standards are drawn from *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education, 4th Edition* (www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks).

Character Education

Character qualities mentioned in this handbook (citizenship, compassion, respect, etc.) are taken from *The Center for Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University*. (<http://www.bu.edu/education/caec/>)

General Instructions

These activities are designed to be used in advisory periods or homerooms and also can easily be adapted for use in school clubs.

The “Walk the Room” activity appears as the first and last of the activities in this series; that is because what is at stake changes dramatically from beginning to end. At first, students respond to a lighthearted set of questions that invite them to reveal parts of their personality with low risk of social ostracism. Students who participate in the dialogue and community building activities throughout the semester, however, should be able to re-enact the “Walk the Room” event with a set of questions that address and confront more sensitive and, perhaps, controversial aspects of personal identity.

MIX IT UP CONVERSATION

Ground Rules

We need to agree on rules about how to talk with and listen to each other. Here are some important ground rules. Add to these or change them if you like.

- 1 Listen carefully and treat each other with respect.
- 2 Each person gets a chance to talk.
- 3 One person talks at a time. Don't cut people off.
- 4 Speak for yourself. Don't try to speak for others or for "your group."
- 5 If you feel hurt by what someone says, say so, and say why.
- 6 It's OK to disagree.
- 7 Don't use names if you talk about someone who is not in the group.
- 8 Some of the things we will talk about in this group will be personal. Unless we all say it is OK, we will not talk about each other's stories outside this group.

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SESSION 1**Walk the Room**

This activity asks students to move around the room — great for early morning — and state their opinions by movement rather than verbal expression. In that sense, it provides a relatively safe environment for revealing one’s opinions. Emphasize to the class that this is a silent activity and follow it up with a discussion of ground rules for pursuing more controversial topics in a comparably “safe” atmosphere.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What You Need**

A classroom space with enough room for students to walk back and forth (if you can’t move your desks out of the way, consider using another space like a hallway or gym)
Copies of the Session One Handout

Goals for this session

- Students will follow the rules by crossing the room, remaining silent, and adhering to the ground rules
- Compliance with the pre-set ground rules begins to build the trust necessary for participating in verbal dialogues

Getting Started

“Today you’ll have the opportunity to express some opinions and reveal something about yourself to the group, if you like. You can only participate in the activity if you agree to remain silent and follow the rules. You answer each question by walking to the other side of the room if you agree or remaining in your place if you disagree. Choose whether to move or stay immediately after I make the statement.”

Distribute the Handout.

“Read the rules on the handout and sign the dotted line that states you agree to follow the directions. Hold onto your handout while you line up on one side of the room so you can remember the rules. The rules for this activity are predetermined; for future activities, we will develop ground rules as a group, with input from everyone.”

Begin Activity

Facilitator statements for “Walk the Room, Part 1”

1. Shirts and shoes should not be required in McDonald’s.
2. The school should permit us to chew gum in class.
3. People on school teams should not have to take gym class.
4. Everyone should have to learn a second language.
5. Calculators should not be allowed in math class.
6. Dogs should be allowed in restaurants.
7. Extraterrestrial aliens do exist.
8. I like bubbles.

Closing

Let students know, explicitly, that this simpler round of questions is a precursor to a more substantive set of questions, getting to the heart of social boundaries and exclusionary attitudes within the school.

With that background, ask students to write a few questions they would like to use for a future “Walk the Room” activity.

Have students share and discuss some of the suggested questions, then ask them to offer ideas for a list of conditions they would need in order to give voice to and pursue conversations about more serious topics than those introduced in Walk the Room, Part 1. This will serve as a good lead-in to the second activity.

Standards: Life Skills/Working with Others

Standard 2: Uses conflict-resolution techniques

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Communicates ideas in a manner that does not irritate others

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Communicates ideas clearly

(www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

SESSION 1

Walk the Room

Rules for “Walk the Room”

Listen carefully as the teacher reads each statement. If you agree, walk across the room. If you disagree, stay where you are.

Look straight ahead when the teacher makes a statement. Try to keep your eyes focused on the other side of the room.

Remain silent at all times. If you laugh, speak, or make gestures to communicate (such as pointing and rolling your eyes), you are out. Your only form of communication is walking the room or staying still.

I, _____, agree to abide by these rules

Group Discussion

1. When you heard a statement, did you sneak a peek at your friends to see their reaction? Why or why not?
2. Did some of the statements make you want to respond out loud by laughing, sighing, or saying something? How did you stop yourself?
3. What did you think about people on the opposite side of the room? Did you see your friends there? Did you wonder about the people across from you?

SESSION 2

Creating Ground Rules

Research shows that students retain information better if they participate in creating knowledge, thus ground rules are more effective if students are active participants in crafting them.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What You Need**

A copy, preferably on an overhead transparency, of the “Characteristics of Dialogue/Characteristics of Debate” chart, below

One scenario from the Session 2 Handout for each group of 4-6 students

Newsprint, poster paper or a blank transparency on which to write the class’s official ground rules

Goals for this Session

- Students will consider the difference between dialogue and debate
- Students will solve problems by analyzing fictional scenarios
- Students will devise strategies for building dialogue in the classroom by preventing ostracism, put-downs, hostility and stubbornness by drafting ground rules

Getting Started

“[Yesterday, last week, last month] we expressed some facts about our personal identities through movement. We didn’t need to explain or defend our responses, and we didn’t face any criticism from others. How could we have a verbal discussion of more serious issues without feeling defensive or fearing people’s reaction? More specifically, how can we have a respectful open dialogue about who we are?”

Begin Activity

Show students the chart below, which contrasts dialogue and debate. As you go over it together, ask students if there are things they would add, delete or change.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DIALOGUE	CHARACTERISTICS OF DEBATE
Look for things in common	Emphasize that others are different or weird
Look for strength in the other’s position	Find weaknesses in the other’s position
Temporarily suspend beliefs and preconceptions	Stick to your guns regardless of the other person’s feelings
Remain open to learning about and understanding the other later on	Settle the differences now and prove that you’re superior
Consider that more than one position or belief can constitute the “right” way	Demand one right answer — yours

Small-Group Work

Break students into small groups, and distribute the handout.

Introduce the handouts with these words: “Consider the following descriptions of ways people could

get offended or have their feelings hurt because of how someone speaks or acts in class. Think about the rules of dialogue and 1) identify the problem behavior 2) compose a ground rule that would prevent that problem behavior.”

Ask each group to read their scenario and answer the questions, then write a ground rule based on the directions. After about 10 minutes, ask each group to read their scenario, answers to questions and ground rule aloud.

Whole-Group Discussion

Based on the goal of creating an open dialogue, ask the whole group to offer suggestions for ground rules that everyone agrees to follow as they continue conversations about critical issues. Here are some examples; you may need to prompt students to generate a comprehensive list. (If you completed a starting list of such ground rules at the end of Walk the Room, Part 1, post it at the front of the classroom as a starting point for students.)

1. Respect others’ right to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own.
2. Challenge or question ideas, not people.
3. Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree. Comments that you make (asking clarifying questions, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to others’ comments.
4. Be courteous; don’t interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
5. Tolerate (rather than judge) someone else’s beliefs and choices even if they differ from yours

Whole-Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think our class can adhere to these ground rules? Why or why not?
2. What should we, as a class, do if someone violates the ground rules?
3. Do these ground rules make you more comfortable speaking out in class? Why or why not?

Closing

Ask the students to make a list of the benefits of building a classroom community where everyone follows the ground rules.

Follow-Up Ideas

Have students write comic strips related to ground rules in which a problem arises and characters use a ground rule to solve it. (See Session 2 Follow-Up Handout.)

Standards: Life Skills/Working with Others

Standard 2: Uses conflict-resolution techniques

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Understands the impact of criticism on psychological state, emotional state, habitual behavior, and beliefs

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Determines the causes and potential sources of conflicts

(www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

Creating Ground Rules

(Cut out scenarios by groups to save paper)

GROUP A

Scenario: Shaquille tells the class that he thinks he should be allowed to pray at the beginning of the school day. Sara turns to him and says, "Have you ever heard of separation of church and state? If you want to pray, don't go to public school." Shaquille feels unwelcome in the class, thinking Sara and her friends don't want him there, and he refuses to participate in discussions any more.

Problem: Was Sara's response to Shaquille unfair? Why or why not? Do you think she realized that she hurt his feelings?

How could Sara have voiced her opinion about rights without offending Shaquille? Write down what she may have said: _____

Now write a rule about respecting opinions: _____

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think our class can adhere to these ground rules? Why or why not?
2. What should we, as a class, do if someone violates the ground rules?
3. Do these ground rules make you more comfortable speaking out in class? Why or why not?



GROUP B

Scenario: As the class brainstorms ideas for a community service project, Tom says, "We could bake cookies and bring them to the homeless shelter." Teresa and her friends laugh, and Teresa replies, "You're so dumb, Tom, we don't even have a kitchen or an oven that we could use."

Problem: Why did Teresa put Tom down? Do you think she realized that she hurt his feelings?

How could Teresa have critiqued Tom's idea without insulting Tom personally? Write down what she may have said: _____

Now write a rule about critiquing ideas, not people: _____

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think our class can adhere to these ground rules? Why or why not?
2. What should we, as a class, do if someone violates the ground rules?
3. Do these ground rules make you more comfortable speaking out in class? Why or why not?

GROUP C

Scenario: After Sa explains that her family practices English together at home by watching PBS, she describes how her family goes to church for a special Vietnamese service because they want to remember their Vietnamese as they learn English. Stephen interrupts her and says, “How are you going to learn English if you only speak Vietnamese at home?”

Problem: What part of Sa’s story did Stephen ignore or not understand? Why did he assume her family does not speak English at home?

How could Stephen have asked Sa a question that would help him understand Sa’s bilingual family rather than assume they didn’t speak English at home? Write down what he may have said:

Now write a rule about listening carefully and asking questions if you don’t understand someone’s story: _____

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think our class can adhere to these ground rules? Why or why not?
2. What should we, as a class, do if someone violates the ground rules?
3. Do these ground rules make you more comfortable speaking out in class? Why or why not?



GROUP D

Scenario: While a new student is telling the class about a math strategy he learned at his old school, Aman and Jade are whispering about a soccer game. When the new student demonstrates a math problem on the board, Jade calls out, “That’s not how you do that, what kind of a backward school did you come from?” and Aman laughs.

Problem: Do you think the new student noticed that his new classmates were having a private conversation? Would the new student want to get to know Jade and Aman after that? How would you describe Jade and Aman’s behavior?

What common courtesies did Jade and Aman fail to follow? _____

Now write a rule about interrupting or speaking when it’s someone else’s turn: _____

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think our class can adhere to these ground rules? Why or why not?
2. What should we, as a class, do if someone violates the ground rules?
3. Do these ground rules make you more comfortable speaking out in class? Why or why not?

GROUP E

Scenario: Larena brings a delicacy from her native Botswana for the class to try — freeze-dried caterpillars that she says taste like peanuts. Her friends laugh when Sadie says, “Do people in your country eat roaches, too? They’re crunchy.” The next day, Phil mentions that his favorite aunt has a same-sex roommate. Sadie says, “So does that mean you’re gay, too? You better not sit next to my brother on the school bus!”

Problem: Why does Sadie ridicule other people’s behavior? Does Larena’s food choice or the fact that Phil has a gay aunt affect Sadie? What assumptions does Sadie make that might not be true?

How could Sadie have reacted to Larena or Phil without judging them and putting down something each one said they liked? Write down what she may have said: _____

Now write a rule about judging people who are not like you: _____

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think our class can adhere to these ground rules? Why or why not?
2. What should we, as a class, do if someone violates the ground rules?
3. Do these ground rules make you more comfortable speaking out in class? Why or why not?

SESSION 2 FOLLOW-UP

Cooperative Comics: A Mix It Up activity

Comic books are visual literature. This cooperative group activity allows students to identify confrontational issues within their own school and then imagine solutions based on the new ground rules the class has developed.

STEP ONE: Brainstorming

As a class, brainstorm and list typical situations where students might find themselves in conflict. These might be bullying, race, socio-economic or gender related. List these on the board.

Divide students into small groups. Have each group select one of the topics, allowing them to choose the one they find most engaging.

STEP TWO: Concept Mapping

Student groups map out the concept they've chosen, listing ideas and incidents tied to the theme. Guide them in thinking about what causes confrontation, how it plays out, how it makes people feel, and what ground rule might be used to find a solution or alternative outcome.

STEP THREE: Story Concept

Explain that a story has parts: a beginning, middle and end. Their comic story will have five parts.

1. Beginning
2. A scene to advance the story
3. Middle
4. A scene to advance the story
5. Ending

STEP FOUR: Drawing

Students split up the five frames of the comic book with each of them doing one scene. Words and drawings must flow from one scene to another, so it is important that they discuss what is going on. Is it plausible? Can you see this really occurring? Is this how people in our school actually speak?

STEP FIVE: Presenting

Students can present their strips orally to the class and also "publish" them by hanging them in the classroom or hallway adjacent to their classroom, with the ground rule that applies posted above each comic strip.

SESSION 3**Homeroom Interview, Part 1**

For this activity, try to pair students with someone they do not know well. Students will pretend to be talk show hosts and guests. This activity builds community because it demands an atmosphere of lighthearted public discussion about each individual. The risk that the students are taking is to step out of their regular personas and be imaginative as they speak before the group; everyone should be supportive by playing along and applauding at appropriate times.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What You Need**

Copies of the interview handout for each participant

Goals for this session

- Students will practice public speaking
- Students will select specific facts from a list of questions and narrate them into a coherent introduction

Getting Started

Today our classroom is turning into the (Oprah Winfrey/Ellen DeGeneres/E! Entertainment News Show) You are going to interview your partner for two minutes then introduce your partner to the class. Try to find out something interesting or unique about your partner because you only have 30 seconds to introduce him or her. A 30-second introduction sounds like this: Welcome to the Mary Quite Contrary Show. My guest today is _____, world-renowned girl scout and member of the Kanye West fan club. One of the most interesting things about _____ is that she spends two more hours a week (playing soccer, watching the NBA, reading novels) than she does on her homework! Please join me in welcoming _____ to today's show!

Distribute the handout.

Begin Activity

Give the first half of the pairs about 5 minutes to interview and 30 seconds to introduce their partners. Have the interviewer and interviewee switch roles. Repeat process.

Group Discussion

1. How did you decide what things about your partner to announce when you played host of the show?
2. What things did you find in common with your partner? With other classmates?
3. Were you surprised by any of your partner's, or classmate's, answers?

Closing

Talk about this question as a group: "What is one new thing you found out about today?"

Follow-Up Ideas

Ask each student to choose one of his or her classmate's favorite activities, something new that she or he learned about in the talk show simulation and didn't know about before. Assign the student to try out that activity sometime in the next week. For example, you could look at a new book or magazine, play a new game, or watch a new TV show. Have classmates write each other notes about whether or not they liked the new activity and why.

Standards: Language Arts

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Uses strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., takes notes; organizes, summarizes, and paraphrases spoken ideas and details)

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Listens in order to understand topic, purpose, and perspective in spoken texts

SESSION 3

Homeroom Interview, Part 1

Ask your partner the following questions and jot down his or her answers. When you finish, choose four or five facts about your partner that you think are interesting and use those to introduce your partner in your talk show simulation.

Interview Questions

Favorite type of music?

Top three musical performers?

Amount of time spent listening to music per day?

Favorite TV Channels?

Top three shows?

Amount of time spent watching TV per day?

Favorite Sport?

Player or Spectator?

Amount of time spent playing/watching sports per week?

Favorite kind of movies?

Favorite actors?

Time spent watching movies/videos per week?

Favorite magazine?

Favorite writer?

Amount of time spent reading per week?

Favorite website?

Favorite game?

Group Discussion

4. How did you decide what things about your partner to announce when you played host of the show?
5. What things did you find in common with your partner? With other classmates? Did you know you had things in common with your classmates?
6. Were you surprised by any of your partner's, or classmate's, answers?

SESSION 4**Homeroom Interview, Part 2**

This activity invites students to make decisions about issues that affect the school and community. They also learn to respect one another's opinions and make informed choices.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What You Need**

A copy of the handout for each student

Goals for this session

- Students will make decisions and statements about public issues
- Students will use evidence to back up a claim
- Students will write a brief (one paragraph) position paper

Getting Started

“For today’s interview assignment, you are a magazine journalist rather than a talk show host. You are going to interview your guest about public policy, which includes decisions we make about community and school rules, government and taxes. You must then learn more about your partner’s point of view and write about an issue from your partner’s point of view.”

Distribute the handout.

Begin Activity

Have students pair up and ask one another the questions about public policy. Each student should fill in his or her partner’s responses on the handout, then continue to follow the directions on the page.

Closing

Ask students to list the “agree” and “disagree” reasons for one of the issues on the handout. Then, they should begin exploring the “middle ground” and make a recommendation for compromise or mutual respect between people who agree and disagree.

Questions for the closing activity

1. Had you thought about the issues in the interview before you had to answer today’s questions? Which issues are important to you?
2. Think about the issue with which you disagreed. Is that something you have discussed, or heard people discussing, in the past? If so, did you know the issue had more than one side?
3. Was it difficult or easy to disagree? Why?

Follow-Up Ideas

In the United States, voters are supposed to influence public issues like those on the handout. Ask students to find a newspaper articles about their issue and summarize the point of the article.

Standards: Language Arts

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Gathers data for research topics from interviews (e.g., prepares and asks relevant questions, makes notes of responses, compiles responses)

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics (e.g., magazines, newspapers) (www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

SESSION 4

Homeroom Interview, Part 2

Policy Questions

1. _____ should be illegal.
2. If I could make one law, I would want everyone in the world to _____
_____.
3. _____ is the biggest problem that the United States has to face.
4. _____ is the best thing about the United States.
5. I like/love this school because _____.
6. The government should spend a lot more/less (circle one) money on _____.
7. Taxpayers should not have to pay for _____.

- When you and your partner have answered questions in turn, circle your partner’s response with which you most disagree. If you don’t disagree with any, circle a response that you don’t know much about.
- Ask your partner for three reasons to back up his or her belief on the response that you circled.
- Record your partner’s responses, then write a short paragraph from his or her point of view. This requires that you support a statement about which you know little or do not agree; you should write the paragraph as though you are trying to convince another person of this point of view.

Reasons:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Point of View Paragraph:

SESSION 5

Four Brains

This exercise asks students to work collaboratively, so they can understand the perspective of a fictional character whom they might ostracize in real life. The capacity to take on the perspective of another person, to “step into their shoes,” helps students to develop greater empathy for those who they view as “different.” This cooperative activity asks students to “put their heads together” so they can temporarily identify with the feelings, thoughts, and beliefs of another person. This activity is based on the work of Peter Elbow and Educators for Social Responsibility and draws from the principles of *the Believing Game* (<http://www.esrnational.org/believinggame.htm>), a more comprehensive and policy oriented tool for widening perspective.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What you need**

Copies of the Session 5 Handout

Goals for this session

- Students will recognize how “putting their heads together” is like having four brains; it’s easier to accomplish a goal collaboratively than individually
- Students will articulate the perspective and motivations of a fictional character by analyzing a “perspective narrative”

Getting Started

Distribute the Handout. “This game asks you to use four brains, rather than just one, to brainstorm ideas about a fictional character who feels like he or she is different from the other people in her or his school. You will work together to find reasons why the speaker of the first-person narrative on your handout acts and believes as he or she does. Answer the questions about your Perspective Narrative together and follow the directions on the handout.”

Distribute the handout, then offer these instructions, multiple times during the exercise, if necessary:

“Consider the following narrative and try to identify why the speaker feels alienated and frustrated with his or her classmates. Try to: 1) imagine how you would feel if you were in the speaker’s shoes; 2) imagine a way you could speak up and become the person’s ally when others are saying unfair things; 3) have everyone in your group contribute a descriptive word or feeling about the speaker’s perspective. Record your group answers.”

Begin Activity

Students should be in groups of 4-6, with each group responsible for working on one perspective.

The facilitator should visit each group to make sure students are on track in their interpretation of each perspective. Let the students know that the facilitator can answer questions, too.

Perspective Narratives

Each group has a fictional first-person account of someone who feels ostracized or alienated because of a difference in culture, class, sexuality, ability, or religion.

#1—The voice of a Muslim student in a predominantly Christian school

#2—The voice of a boy questioning his sexuality

#3—The voice of a new student who is learning English but feels uncomfortable speaking

#4—The voice of a student who uses a wheelchair

#5—The voice of a student whose parents have lost their jobs

Ask each group to report on their narrator's perspective.

Closing

Ask each student to write a first-person perspective about a time she or he felt ostracized or left out.

Follow Up

Have each student write a paragraph from their assigned narrator's perspective in which the narrator has an ally intervene and make him or her feel less alone.

Standards: Civics

Standard 25: Understands issues regarding personal rights

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Understands the importance of issues regarding personal rights including freedom of religion, conscience, association and privacy

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Knows what constitutes personal rights (e.g., freedom of conscience, freedom to marry whom one chooses, to have children, to associate with whomever one pleases, to live where one chooses, to travel freely, to emigrate)

(www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

SESSION 5

Four Brains

Your goal here is to brainstorm ideas about the perspective of the person who speaks in your assigned Perspective Narrative. Read the passage and work together to answer the questions.

GROUP A**Perspective Narrative #1**

Kahlil speaks: When I was in kindergarten and 1st grade, I never had to worry about how I was different from my friends at school. Now that people are scared about terrorism, though, I get called names like “suicide bomber” and “Osama, Jr.” I don’t understand why people blame my religion, or people who practice the faith in peace, for the actions of a very small group of fanatics.

Questions:

What event, or events, do you think made other people see Kahlil differently?

What do you know about the Muslim religion? What good things about Islam are portrayed in the media? What do you think are the negative stereotypes about the religion?

How would you feel if your family was blamed for a disaster that they had nothing to do with?

-----CUT ALONG HERE----- 

GROUP B**Perspective Narrative #2**

Horace speaks: I have friends who are girls and when I was in third grade Sara asked me to be her boyfriend. Now that I’m in Middle School, though, I’m really scared because of how I feel when I’m around Tim. Sometimes I catch myself staring at him. He seems so confident and always has the right thing to say to our teammates on the basketball court. Lately, I’ve felt my palms get sweaty and a lump in my throat when he comes near me. I don’t think anyone will understand my feelings for him and I’m afraid that, if anyone finds out, I’ll have to quit the team.

Questions:

What do you think is causing Horace’s reaction to Tim?

What do you think other boys might do if they notice how Horace looks at Tim?

Do you know people who would stop being someone’s friend because of how they felt about another person?

Have you ever had a crush on someone? How did that make you feel or react?

HANDOUT

Name _____

GROUP C

Perspective Narrative #3

Monica speaks: I was excited to come to this country, but on my first day of school it was very scary. As students passed me in the hall, some of them looked at me then said things to each other. I wondered if they were talking about me. When the secretary in the office asked me my name, I didn't understand her until the third time. I hate asking people to repeat things they say to me because sometimes they laugh, roll their eyes, or walk away. It's hard to make friends because even those who speak my language are embarrassed by me.

Questions:

Have you ever been in an entirely foreign situation?

Have you ever thought people speaking another language were talking about you?

Have you ever felt that you were embarrassing your friends?

----- CUT ALONG HERE ----- 

HANDOUT

Name _____

GROUP D

Perspective Narrative #4

Elizabeth speaks: As I go down the hallway, almost no one makes eye contact with me. Sometimes people stare at my legs or watch my arms push me along, but no one smiles and says hi. When the bell rings, very few people push their chairs in so I can get through the aisle. I wait forever for the elevator while people mingle on the stairs and chat between classes.

Questions:

What does it feel like to be stared at?

Do you feel comfortable starting conversations or asking questions when someone won't look you in the eye?

Can you think of a time when someone has been inconsiderate in a way that slowed you down or got in your way?

----- CUT ALONG HERE ----- 

HANDOUT

Name _____

GROUP E

Perspective Narrative #5

Trevor speaks: When the mill closed, my father lost his job. Then the restaurant closed and my mother lost hers, too. We couldn't go on a family vacation that summer and when school started it was worse. I had no new school clothes. People made fun of my too-short pants and beat-up shoes. I felt bad when I had to get free lunch so I didn't sit with my old friends who brought good food from home.

Questions:

Have you ever forgotten your gym uniform or your lunch money? What does it feel like to be without something that everyone expects you to have?

Has anyone ever made fun of your clothes or shoes?

Can you remember a time when your family couldn't get you something you really needed?

SESSION 6

Understanding Bullying

Bullying is not just violent behavior that results in a big kid pounding on a little kid; bullying also encompasses rumor spreading, verbal teasing and taunting, and social ostracism. Recognizing the nature and effects of bullying behavior, broadly defined, will engender conversation about social dynamics in the school and community. These conversations, paired with the empathy-building activities featured in the interview series, can lead to a stronger school community and less formidable social boundaries.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

What You Need

Your copy of the key to the Anti-Bullying quiz (below)

A copy of the handout for each student

Goals for this session

- Students will learn the facts about causes and consequences of bullying
- Students will identify a range of bullying behaviors
- Students will discuss ways to break down the boundaries that make it easier to bully

Getting Started

“Today we’re going to discuss the issue of bullying. We’ll take a bullying quiz and find out what we know about bullying, then we’ll discuss what it’s all about.” Distribute the Handout.

Begin Activity

Bullying Quiz Adapted from <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/bullying.asp>

(Answer True or False)

1. One-third of American teens are involved in bullying.
2. Less than 10% of American teens admit to bullying others.
3. Students who are bullied in school are usually attentive students with good attendance.
4. Most students who bully are insecure.
5. Contrary to stereotypes, male bullies are not usually bigger and physically stronger than their peers.
6. Students who witness bullying often refuse to remain friends with the victim and feel guilty for not reporting the incident.
7. Bullies have trouble making friends.
8. Bullies do poorly in school compared to others who do not bully.
9. Most bullies discontinue violent or aggressive behavior in adulthood.
10. If you are being bullied it’s best to handle it alone.

Key

1. **True:** In a recent survey, 13% admit to bullying, 11% admit to being bullied, and 6% have been bullied and also bully others.
2. **False:** See above
3. **False:** Students targeted by bullies sometimes avoid school or have trouble concentrating. They can also develop personality disorders like depression and anxiety.
4. **False:** Studies show that most bullies have confidence and high self-esteem.
5. **False:** Male bullies are usually bigger and stronger than their victims.
6. True
7. **False:** Bullies seem to make friends easily, particularly with other students who are aggressive and may join them in bullying.

8. **True:** the problem behaviors associated with bullying include impulsiveness, disliking school, and getting in trouble often.
9. **False:** 60% of bullies have at least one criminal conviction because the behavior carries over into adulthood.
10. **False:** Putting an end to bullying requires a commitment from everyone in a school, including teachers, custodians, students, administrators, cafeteria workers, and crossing guards. You should seek adult intervention and try to stay among friends if you are being bullied.

Group Discussion

Anti-Bullying Reflection Questions

1. Do you think bullying is a serious problem in your school or community? Why or why not?
2. How do you think bullies feel when they demean someone else?
3. Do you think it's possible to make a bully understand other people's feelings? Why or why not?
4. What kind of interventions can young people use to prevent or stop bullying?
5. Do you think you've ever bullied someone? If so, what made you stop? What made you want to bully someone again?
6. Did any of the facts in the quiz remind you of personal experiences? Which ones?

Closing

After taking the quiz, are there behaviors or experiences you have had that you want to change? Describe your feelings in a poem or paragraph. What might you want to change, and how could you go about making that change?

Follow-Up Ideas

Administer the link <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?&ar=638> "Anti-bullying survey" in a classroom of younger children. Tabulate the results and devise a strategy to mentor the younger students about how to interact more congenially.

Standards: Life Skills/Working with Others

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Demonstrates respect for others' rights, feelings and points of view in a group

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Exhibits positive character traits towards others, including honesty, fairness, dependability and integrity

(www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

SESSION 6

Understanding Bullying

Bullying Quiz

(Answer True or False)

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Anti-Bullying Reflection Questions

1. Do you think bullying is a serious problem in your school or community? Why or why not?

2. How do you think bullies feel when they demean someone else?

3. Do you think it's possible to make a bully understand other people's feelings? Why or why not?

4. What kind of interventions can young people use to prevent or stop bullying?

5. Do you think you've ever bullied someone? If so, what made you stop? What made you want to bully someone again? _____

6. Did any of the facts in the quiz concern you personally? Which ones?

7. After taking the quiz, are there behaviors or experiences you have had that you want to change? Describe your feelings, what you might want to change, and how you could go about making that change.

SESSION 7

Homeroom Interview, Part 3

This activity extends the objectives of the first two interviews, which dealt with individual interests and opinions on policy, by asking students to appreciate and affirm the values and personal goals of their classmates. Understanding that all individuals have hopes and dreams helps build empathy and points of identification between students when they might otherwise dismiss people unlike them in categories and ignore other people's feelings.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What You Need**

A copy of the handout for each student

Goals for this session

- Students will practice interview skills
- Students will write supportive statements for their peers

Getting Started

“For today’s interview assignment, you are going to find out personal information about your partner that you will respect and appreciate. You will then write some affirmations, or positive thoughts, to share with your partner and respond to what you have learned about him or her.”

Distribute the handout.

Begin Activity

Pair students with someone they do not know well and explain that they are going to interview their partner for two minutes then write some affirmations for that person. Have the interviewer and interviewee switch roles. With the remaining time, invite students to read affirming statements about their partners to the class then give the list of affirmations to their partners.

Group Discussion

1. How did you decide which details about your partner to write affirmations about?
2. What kinds of things did you learn about that made you want to affirm your partner?
3. Was it difficult or easy to write the affirmations? Why?

Closing

Ask students to write personal affirmations for themselves.

Follow-Up Ideas

Use journals to record acts of kindness, humor, and other positive behavior that students see in one another. Have a monthly day of recognition when students can share their records of when they saw someone being generous or breaking down social barriers through kindness.

Standards: Life Skills/Working With Others

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Demonstrates appropriate behaviors for relating well with others (e.g., empathy, caring, respect, helping, friendliness, politeness)

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Demonstrates respect for others' rights, feelings, and points of view in a group

Benchmark (grade 6-8): Exhibits positive character traits towards others, including honesty, fairness, dependability, and integrity

(www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

SESSION 7

Homeroom Interview, Part 3

Personal Background Questions

1. _____ is the most important thing to me.
2. Three adjectives/labels that best describe me are _____, _____, and _____.
3. Every day I _____.
4. Since I was little I always loved to _____.
5. My first good memory is _____.
6. I am the oldest youngest middle only child.
7. When I was in elementary school my three main priorities were _____, _____, and _____ (in that order).
8. In life my three main priorities are _____, _____, and _____.
9. In ten years I see myself _____.

Writing Affirmations

Now that you have learned about your partner's values and goals, you can share your respect and admiration for your partner by writing affirmations. Write at least three specific statements about your partner's strengths and virtues. Here are some examples:

"I really like Nancy's sense of humor, particularly when she said her priorities in Elementary school were to learn to tie her shoes and remember to zip her pants."

"I'm impressed that Sean's priorities are to have good friends and make a lot of money because he wants to share his fortune with his friends."

"I think it's great that Tyrone loves to roller skate. I do, too. We could have fun together."

"Yung speaks English and Korean every day; I think she's very smart to know two languages

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SESSION 8**Walk the Room, Part 2**

Before you decide which questions to use with this activity, you should consider your own disposition as a teacher. How comfortable are you with addressing controversial issues in the classroom? If you choose to broach topics like immigration, sexuality, class and race can you do so in a manner that is fair to students, even if their beliefs or behaviors are different from yours? Can you ask a child to walk the room, revealing something like, “I or someone in my family speaks another language than English” if you believe that immigrants should assimilate and speak on English? How willing are you to support students whose views on sexuality conflict with yours? Do you associate poverty with ignorance or laziness? Think ahead about being fair to all of your students.

When using statements about sensitive issues, phrase them in terms of affiliation rather than personal identity. A statement like: “I, a close friend, or a family member is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered” can alert the class to the number of students whose lives this issue impacts without requiring that students “come out” as gay themselves. Remind students that *they* choose how honest and candid their decisions to walk the room are.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**What You Need**

The ability to be fair regardless of personal opinions

Sample statements (below)

Chalkboard or poster paper on which to write student suggestions for statements

(You can solicit statements from the class in advance or ask students whether they want to use pre-written statements)

Goals for this Session

- Students will draft or choose statements to use for the activity that they feel comfortable responding to and discussing
- Class will raise awareness of invisible sources of diversity
- Class will acknowledge and respect the many aspects of individual identities

Getting Started

Today, we’re going to repeat the “Walk the Room” activity. This time, however, we’re going to decide on the statements to use together. For example, “ I was born outside of the U.S. or speak more than one language.” We can also vote on each statement that I have on my handout.

Begin Activity

Move desks out of the way and ask students to line up on one side of the classroom and to cross the room if a statement you read applies to them.

Sample Questions

1. I, a close friend or a family member has a disability.
2. I know someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered.
3. I have friends or family members in interracial relationships.
4. Church is a major part of my life.
5. We speak more than one language in my home.
6. My parents were not born in the USA.
7. I was not born in the USA.
8. I have lived in the same house my entire life.
9. I want to go to college.

Closing

Ask students to think about a topic that came up in “walk the room” about which they had stereotypes or predisposed ideas. Have them write down those stereotypes, then let everyone take turns walking to the trash can to dispose of their stereotypes.

Follow-Up Ideas

Ask students to choose one statement that they want to know more about, then go sit next to someone who “walked the room” on that statement. They should then write down three new things they learned from the person who “walked the room.”

Standards: Life Skills/Working with Others

Standard 3: Works well with diverse individuals in diverse situations

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Works well with those of different gender or ability

Benchmark (grades 6-8): Works well with those from different ethnic groups, of different religious orientations, and of cultures different from their own

(www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

So what do you do AFTER Mix It Up at Lunch Day?

STAY IN THE MIX THIS SEMESTER

SPEAK OUT Identify, Question and Cross
the social boundaries in our school!

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____



APPENDIX A

Handbook Evaluation

Your completion of this form will help us improve future editions of *Mix It Up Advisories: Building Empathy; Creating Community*. Thank you for taking the time to complete it.

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____ School _____

Address _____

1. Overall, how would you rate this handbook?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Below Average
- Poor

2. Which activities did you use in your classroom?

- Walk the Room, Part 1
- Ground Rules and Dialogue
- Homeroom Interview, Part 1
- Homeroom Interview, Part 2
- Four Brains
- Understanding Bullying
- Homeroom Interview, Part 3
- Walk the Room, Part 2
- Did not use the activities

3. Which lesson had the strongest impact on your students?

- Walk the Room, Part 1
- Ground Rules and Dialogue
- Homeroom Interview, Part 1
- Homeroom Interview, Part 2
- Four Brains
- Understanding Bullying
- Homeroom Interview, Part 3
- Walk the Room, Part 2
- Did not use the activities

Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

4. The activities in this handbook were easy to use.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. The activities helped students appreciate their differences and similarities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. The activities helped students learn how to get along better.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. Did these activities impact your students in any other way?

- Yes _____
- No _____

8. Additional Comments _____

Please return the form to us by fax at (334) 956 8488 or by mail: Mix It Up Evaluation, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104. Questions? Email us: mixitup@tolerance.org

APPENDIX B

About Mix It Up

The Mix It Up program works to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations in schools by supporting students' efforts to identify, question and cross social boundaries.

In 2005, more than 6 million students in 15,000 schools participated in the 4th annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day, sitting with someone new in their school cafeterias. This Handbook is designed to keep students mixing and mingling throughout the school year.

The Southern Poverty Law Center and the Study Circles Resource Center joined forces to create Mix It Up.

The Southern Poverty Law Center combats hatred and intolerance in the U.S. through education, investigation and litigation. Its Teaching Tolerance program provides educators with free materials, like this Handbook, that promote tolerance in the classroom and beyond.

TEACHING
TOLERANCE 

www.tolerance.org

The Study Circles Resource Center is dedicated to finding ways for all kinds of people to engage in problem solving on critical social and political issues. It provides tools to help people organize productive dialogue, recruit participants from all walks of life, find solutions and work for action and change.

 **STUDY CIRCLES**
RESOURCE CENTER

www.studycircles.org

For more information about Mix It Up, log onto www.mixitup.org

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