

Communication and Diversity

(Maryland Leadership Workshops – MLW)

50 minutes

Materials:

- 2 posters for back to back drawings
- bafa-bafa card for each student, each culture has different colored card, each card has a number for toothpick group on back
- toothpicks
- marshmallows

- I. Back to back drawings (15 minutes)
 - a. Divide students into pairs
 - b. Students sit back to back facing opposite walls in the room
 - c. One partner gets a pen and piece of paper- they are the “drawer”, the other partner is the “eyes”
 - d. Round 1- 2 minutes
 - i. The eyes are shown a drawing and they must describe it to their partner to draw as accurately as possible
 - ii. The drawer **my NOT** speak
 - e. Round 2- 2 minutes
 - i. The students switch roles
 - ii. The eyes are shown a different drawing and they must describe it to their partner to draw as accurately as possible
 - iii. The drawer **MAY** speak this time
 - f. Processing- 5 minutes
 - i. Did everyone have the same information in this activity?
What were the differences in information that people had?
 1. How did it feel to not be able to see the drawing?
 2. Did you feel any pressure in this activity as a result of lack of information?
 3. If you could see the picture, were you able to convey the information to your partner? Did you feel like you were doing an effective job at the time? Did that feeling change after you saw your partner’s drawing?
 - ii. Styles of communication
 1. What did you do to communicate the information?
 2. What barriers did the rules put on your communication?
 3. What would you do next time to make the communication more effective?
 - iii. Can you think of an example in real life where the communication was similar to that in this activity?
- II. Bafa-Bafa (30 minutes)

- a. Divide students into 3 groups by handing out multicolored culture cards (one color for each culture)
 - i. Culture 1: in your culture...
 1. “dude” is a derogatory term
 2. smiling is a sign of respect
 3. you are most comfortable talking to others when you are sitting down
 - ii. Culture 2: in your culture...
 1. “dude” is a common word to start a sentence
 2. smiling is a way to acknowledge that you want to work with someone
 3. you consider it an insult if others do not make eye contact with you when you are speaking to them
 - iii. Culture 3
 1. smiling is a sign of extreme unintelligence
 2. you avoid making eye contact at all costs because you believe it is rude
 3. you are most comfortable talking to others when you are standing up
- b. In culture groups students should introduce themselves with their name, school, and a favorite “thing” (this could be a favorite movie, book, ice cream flavor, school subject, basketball team...) while practicing their culture- 5 minutes
- c. Now, students go to their number group (a number written on their card)
- d. Staying in their culture, the students make the tallest possible toothpick tower in their number groups- 5 minutes
- e. Quickly, each group displays their tower for the large group
- f. Processing- 15 minutes
 - i. How did you work as a group?
 - ii. What barriers to communication did you face while building the tower?
 - iii. How do cultural differences affect communication?
 - iv. Tell us about the different cultures’ practices and beliefs.
 - v. How does this activity relate to real life? Have you ever experienced anything like this before?

III. Conclusion, Handouts