

CROSSING THE LINE

From The National Conference for Community and Justice & Updated for UCSB

Instructions:

Note: This was last updated in 2010. You will want to update this every few years.

This activity is done best with the entire class (not just a section). We usually rent out a gym or large meeting room to fit everyone in (200 students). If you need to, you can break the class into smaller groups by merging a few sections.

Have 2 people facilitate, taking turns reading the statements. It is VERY important that you practice first, reading everything aloud so that you don't make mistakes later. Think about if certain sections should be read by one person over another. You will also want to participate – perhaps by raising your hand when the statement applies to you.

Also have the teaching team participate, crossing the line for their identities. This also helps maintain the serious tone that this exercise needs. Teaching team members should feel free to tap folks if they are whispering.

Plan to debrief after the class is over, as you will all have various emotional reactions to the exercise and how the students respond to it.

We process this as a large group first, having all the students sit in a circle on the floor. Then we go back to section and do further processing in small groups who have bonds with each other. Obviously, you need to adjust this to meet your needs. Just read through both the large group and small group processing sections (at the end) so you can make informed choices.



To be read:

This activity is designed to show how our class community is part of different societal groups that have privilege or experience oppression based on that particular identity. This exercise will probably be uncomfortable because we will be making obvious the societal issues that bond us and separate us.

All of the stats we read are true, both nationally and for our campus. If you want the data later, we can make that available to you.

Please be aware of your own feelings during the activity and the questions that made you feel that way. Also, realize that this exercise can be quite painful for some and quite surprising for others. To be respectful of the experience that others are having, we ask that you do this activity in complete silence. Do not make comments under your breath or giggle, as you may influence the experience of others who can hear you.

If you not feel comfortable moving to the side that best matches your identity, please move to where it feels safest for you and think about why it may feel safer. Again, please remain silent throughout this entire exercise. You will have time to discuss it and ask questions after it is over.

One side of this room represents groups who are oppressed or targeted in society based on that identity. The other side represents the group who has privilege or advantage around that identity.

Just to warm up, let's practice a couple...

If you are left handed, please move to this side of the room. If not, please move to the other side. Come back to the center.

If you are under 5 feet, 10 inches tall, please move to this side of the room. Come back to center.



GENDER

If you are a **woman**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the other side:

- In 2010 women made only 75.5 cents for every dollar that men earned – this is a gain of only 10 cents in 55 years. For college graduates, this translates to an annual salary of \$51,000 for men compared to \$30,000 for women.
- 50% of our teenage girls are dieting and one in five has an eating disorder^{vi}.
- Every hour, 78 women are raped – leading to one-fourth of all women being raped during their lifetime^{viii}.
- In the U.S. alone, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. The U.S. has four times as many shelters for abused cats and dogs as it has for abused women.

AT UCSB (YOU WILL NEED TO RESEARCH FOR YOUR CAMPUS):

- At UCSB, 25 sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement each year. However, only 5% of assaults are reported which means that 475 assaults actually occur each year.
- A study of sexual assaults amongst college students found that 73 percent of the assailants and 55 percent of the victims have used drugs, alcohol or both prior to their assault.
- While women make up the majority of the undergraduate population (54%), they represent only 26% of the faculty with some departments having only 1-2 women.
- Last year at UCSB, 73 students, staff, and faculty filed complaints for sexual harassment. 81% of these were women. Sexual harassment is believed to be far more underreported than sexual assault.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are a **man**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- Men's actions are often dictated by the anxiety of having their manhood challenged, and feel compelled to defend their manhood and hide any signs of sensitivity or emotion. Violating this gender norm can result in verbal harassment and even physical assault.
- It is estimated that men are three times more likely than women to be the victims of violent assault. In addition, 1 in 5 boys will be sexually victimized by the age of 18, with the perpetrators usually being close blood-relatives, neighbors, babysitters, friends of the family, etc. On average abuse happens around the age of 10.
- Men often turn to patterns of alcohol and other drug abuse to compensate for their inability to convey emotion or express themselves. Alcohol and drug use, compounded with society's message to men reinforcing aggression and violence, also contributes to the physical abuse men do to themselves and their families.
- Before the middle of their lifetime, 40% of men will experience depression. Men are socialized to not cry, show sadness, loss of will, or any of the signs of depression that might lead loved ones to encourage them to seek help. Men are five times more likely to commit suicide than women



AT UCSB:

- At UCSB men represent 45% of the student population.
- A recent study indicates that male college students fail academically at twice the rate of women.
- 43% of college-aged men have admitted to using coercive behavior to have sex, including ignoring a woman's protest and or using physical aggression.
- According to a study of 500 colleges, 18% of male students admitted to threatening or physically assaulting people they thought to be gay.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

CLASS & EDUCATION

If you grew up in **poverty, the lower class, or the working class** (as opposed to middle or upper class), please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- In the U.S. today, 13% of people live under the poverty line (\$19,157/year). Contrasted with the top 1% of this country's population who own 32% of the nation's wealth, with the average annual income being 3 million dollars (2002).
- People who grew up in poverty or in the lower class are more likely to have parents who worked a night shift or on weekends. They are more likely to have parents die at a younger age due to physically dangerous work or living in neighborhoods with toxic substances that cause serious illnesses and death.
- Because of historical oppression limiting access to education and white-collar jobs, more minorities live in poverty. 25% of Native Americans, 25% of African Americans and 22% of Latinos live below the poverty line in the US.

AT UCSB:

- High school students whose parents make \$35,000 per year or less have only a 1 in 17 chance of going to college compared to a 1 in 2 chance for families who make \$90,000 or more per year.
- 18.9% of freshmen enrolled in UC System are considered low-income (less than \$30K)
- At UCSB, 20% of freshmen earn a family income less than \$30,000. Comparatively, 40% of freshmen earn a family income of more than \$100,000.
- A national report on college students who work found that the students who work the most, more than 25 hours per week said that it negatively impacted their grades, and limited their class schedule or choices. Almost two-thirds (63%) said they could not afford college if they did not work full time.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.



If you grew up in a home where **neither parent was college-educated**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- Nationally, children of parents without college degrees are less likely to attend college themselves. If they do, they are less likely to find a job after graduation or move into supervisory positions. They also make less money in those jobs
- First-generation students are not able to turn to their parents for advice regarding typical college matters such as applications, financial aid, writing papers, and graduation requirements.
- First-generation students, compared to their counterparts, spend more time studying and preparing for classes, spend more time working in paid employment, and spend much less time partying and other forms of leisure activities.

AT UCSB:

- 39% of UCSB students have parents who have less than a 2-yr. degree while 37% of UCSB students have parents who have earned degrees beyond a bachelor's degree
- Approximately 29% of all admitted students in the UC System are considered First-generation

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

DISABILITY

If you have a **disability** that is either physical, emotional, mental, or learning, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- Only 56% of our nation's youth with disability graduate from high schoolⁱ
- Over 60% of all working age Americans with disabilities are completely unemployedⁱⁱ. Among individuals with disabilities who do work, the average earnings are a full 35% less than for workers without disabilitiesⁱⁱⁱ.
- Nearly half of the 24 million people with severe disabilities in this country lack health insurance^{iv} leaving them with exorbitant health care costs.
- Persons with disabilities make up more than 50% of the homeless population^v.

AT UCSB:

- Currently, there are 149 UCSB students who have a physical disability (visual, hearing, mobility, or other functional).
- 171 UCSB students have a diagnosed learning disability and 107 are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder.
- 24 students have an acquired brain injury and 170 have a diagnosed psychiatric disorder.
- UCSB is a very wheelchair-friendly campus for students. However, this is not true for instructors who find that not all classrooms have a ramp to the teaching area. In addition, many students find that their instructors' offices are not wheelchair accessible.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.



IMMIGRATION

If your parents or grandparents are from another country (i.e., **immigrants**) please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- Children or grandchildren of immigrants struggle to keep their heritage in a country that pushes for a melting pot. “American history” often contains little or negative messages about their own history and English-only legislation makes it challenging for new immigrants to succeed.
- People who have emigrated to the U.S. with professional degrees, such as doctor, engineers and attorneys, are often forced to take working class jobs because of culturally-biased and English-only licensing tests.
- Throughout U.S. history, the language, religious and cultural practices of immigrants have been systematically outlawed in school as well as social and political life.
- Legal immigration has been so severely limited that many families are forced to emigrate illegally to find a better life for themselves. In the last decade, U.S. trade policies like NAFTA have severely limited the economic opportunities for people in South American and Asian countries thereby increasing illegal immigration from those areas. The current immigration legislation is at the center of protests and debates across the U.S.
- 38 percent of immigrant children live in families which the parents have not obtained a high school diploma.
- Children of first generation immigrants make up 26 percent of poor children in the United States.
- 1/3 of all immigrant household are headed by individuals who do don’t have a high school diploma.
- Only 8.2 percent of 1st generation Hispanic immigrants are headed by college graduates. By contrast, 51.3 percent of 1st generation Asian immigrant families are headed by college graduates.
- One out of six poor children in the united states is the offspring of a

AT UCSB:

- 55% of UC students report that they have at least one parent who is foreign born (less than 40% at the UCSB campus).
- Only 50% of UCSB students come from household where only English is spoken, 32% come from a household where the family does not speak any English.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

RACE & ETHNICITY

If you are **Chican@/Latin@** or Hispanic or of Chican@/Latin@ or Hispanic heritage, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:



- Since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the U.S. has initiated hundreds of invasions and interventions in Central and South American countries, leading to the deaths of tens of thousands of people and wreaking havoc on the lives and economies of local populations^{xii}.
- Mexico once extended into the land now known as southern Oregon, yet the Spanish language has been removed from schools in many areas through anti-bilingual laws.
- During the L.A. riots of 1992, the greatest numbers of people killed from any single racial or ethnic group were Chican@s; the greatest damage was done to property owned by Chican@s.
- One-fourth of Latina/o Americans live below the poverty level.
- In 2006, there were 153 anti-Hispanic hate crimes in California, which accounted for 18.1% of the total hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/national origin, which was a 4.1% increase from 2005.

AT UCSB:

- 20% of UCSB students are Chican@/Latin@ with 3,227 total out of 18,077 undergraduates.
- In the 1980s, several Chicano students engaged in a lengthy hunger strike to force faculty to create a requirement where all students had to learn about the experience of minorities within the U.S. (the current ethnicity requirement).
- 55% of Latina/o American youth drop out of school. Out of 100 Chican@ students who start in elementary school, only 8 will graduate from college.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are **Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander**, or of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- After the Civil War, Chinese Americans were brought over for hard labor to build the railroads of the U.S.
- In the late 19th and 20th centuries, whites passed more than 600 separate pieces of anti-Asian legislation limiting or excluding persons of Asian ancestry from citizenship until 1952.
- During World War II, 120,000 Japanese Americans were taken from their homes, stripped of their property and placed in internment camps in the U.S. Enrolled college students were removed from campuses by military police and taken to internment camps.
- 250,000 Filipinos were asked to fight in WWII for the United States. In return, they were promised US citizenship and veterans benefits. This promise has yet to be fulfilled, and today, in their 80s, only 46,000 are left and continue to be denied their rights.
- One-third of all Vietnamese Americans live below the poverty line.
- In 2006, there were 52 anti-Asian/Pacific Islander hate crimes in California, which accounted for 6.2% of the total hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/national origin, with a 4.0% increase from 2005.

AT UCSB:

- 18% of UCSB students are Asian/Pacific Islander. That is 2,927 students out of 18,077 undergraduates.



- According to the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, 20-25% of minority students on college campuses are victimized annually by hate crimes.
- In October 2002, a hate incident occurred on the Asian American Pacific Islander Interest Hall in San Nicolas. A handful of unidentified people entered the 5th floor of San Nicolas from the elevators, threw smashed eggs and yelled racial slurs like 'chink' directly at residents. Nobody was ever found to be responsible, and the community never quite recovered. As the year went on, lack of response from certain areas of the university created many different challenges for the building staff and the students. No one was found to be responsible.
- Asian American students at UCSB are retained at 89% compared to 92% of White students.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are **Black, African American** or of African heritage, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- The first Black Americans were slaves, brought to the U.S. against their will to provide free labor to European immigrants.
- From 1619 until slavery officially ended in 1865, 10 to 15 million Africans were brought to the U.S. and 3 times as many, another 30 to 35 million, died in transport^{-xviii}.
- Black families make approximately \$ 0.60 to every \$ 1 earned by white families^{xix}.
- During the recession, black Americans lost jobs at twice the rate of white Americans^{xx}.
- Due to limited job opportunities and racist laws, one-fourth of all adult male African Americans is in prison or on parole.
- Black women have a life expectancy of 5 fewer years than their White counterparts; for Black men, the gap is 7 years^{xxi}.
- Black Americans are twice as likely to suffer violent crimes as are White Americans.
- In 2006, there were 432 anti-Black hate crimes in California, which accounted for 51.2% of the total hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/national origin, with a *decrease* in 11.8% from 2005.

AT UCSB:

- 2.6% of UCSB students are Black/African American. That is 477 students out of 18, 077 undergraduates. Only 36 of UCSB graduate students are Black/African American. That's 1,283 students less than their White counterparts.
- In the late 1960s and early 1970s, African American students protested to increase representation on campus and to create the Black Studies department (see the plaque on North Hall).
- 96% of African American freshmen were retained after one year compared to 91% of White student population
- On Saturday, April 29, 2006, a hate crime occurred on the African American Interest Floor in Santa Rosa Residence Hall. Graffiti which read, "Fuck Niggers," was found on a bathroom door.
- In 1999, a similar hate crime occurred against the RA for the African American Interest Floor in Santa Rosa.
- African American students at UCSB are retained at 88% compared to 92% of White students.



Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are **American Indian or Native American**, or of American Indian or Native American Heritage, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- All of the land of North America, including the land we are standing on at this very moment, originally belonged to Native Americans^{xiv}.
- The United States government, with the stated intention of committing genocide, introduced diseases, like smallpox, to Native American populations^{xv}. It is estimated that there were up to 20 million American Indians at the time of first contact with European immigrants – by the turn of that century, there were only 200,000, a loss of 19 million, 800,000 lives.
- American Indians have been herded onto reservations and their land has been stolen; there are currently 500 federally recognized Native American nations within the U.S. and some of these are endangered by mining, logging or toxic waste dumping from outside interests on their land^{xvi}.
- Over 2,000 American Indians have been lynched since the Civil War.
- The practice of all Native American religions was outlawed for over 200 years until 1978^{xvii}.
- The rate of rape against Native American women is 3 times higher than it is against women of other racial/ethnic groups and 85 percent of these rapes are committed by people of another racial group.
- American Indians have among the poorest health care and among the highest rates of poverty, teen pregnancy, alcoholism, depression and suicide of any social group.
- In 2006, there were 4 anti-American Indian/Alaskan Native hate crimes in California, which accounted for 0.5% of the total hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/national origin.

AT UCSB:

- 1% of UCSB students are American Indian/Alaskan. That is 138 students out of 18,077 undergraduates.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are **Jewish** or of Jewish heritage, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- In just about every society that Jews have lived in throughout their existence, they have been subject to oppression and persecution, such as: forced conversions, banishment, and discrimination, violence, prevented from practicing their religion, and even attempted genocide. Often, this persecution occurred in places where Jews had lived happily for years, decades, or centuries.
- After living in Germany as a people for thousands of years, 6 million Jews – 1/3 of the world's Jewish population – were killed in Nazi death camps during WWII. Even today in the U.S., some people deny that the Holocaust ever happened.
- Membership in neo-Nazi groups has increased by 300% since 1988^{ix}.



- Vandalism against U.S. Jews increased by seven percent in the last year.^x
- On a per capita basis, Jews were victimized by hate crimes at a higher rate than any other identity group in the U.S. during the 1990s^{xi}.
- The Anti Defamation league's Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents counted a total of 1,460 incidents of vandalism, harassment and other acts of hate against Jewish individuals, property and community institutions in 2007
- In 2006, there were 246 anti-Jewish hate crimes, a decrease in 7.0% from 2005.

AT UCSB:

- Nationally, 2.4% of college students identify as Jewish. That would be 430 students at UCSB.
- Jewish students are not excused from classes or assignments to observe their holy holidays.
- Each year, swastikas and other anti-semitic symbols are found spraypainted on campus buildings and must be removed.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are **Middle Eastern or Muslim**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- Following September 11, hate crimes against people who appear to be of Middle Eastern descent or Muslim rose 900%.
- In 2006, there were 94 anti-Arab or Middle-Eastern hate crimes in California, which accounted for 11.1% of the total hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/national origin, with an increase of 5.6% from 2005.

AT UCSB:

- Following Sept. 11, the Muslim Student Association received hate mail and death threats on their club answering machine.
- Fliers were posted around both UCSB and SBCC campus bathrooms threatening Muslims with beatings and death if they showed their faces on campus.
- Approximately 145 UCSB students identify as Islamic and 127 identify as Hindu.
- There is no way to estimate the number of students at UCSB who are Middle Eastern because they would only be able to mark "White" or "Other" on university forms.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

If you are **biracial or multiracial**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- Throughout U.S. history, in literature, film and other aspects of social life, multiracial children with one White parent were considered "better" than people of color and at the same time considered impurities to the white race.
- Before 1967, 38 states had laws prohibiting marriage between whites and blacks. Under these laws, any interracial children born in these states were considered illegitimate.



- “One-drop” rules declared that any individual with even one drop of Black blood was considered legally black – during times of slavery, such policies encouraged the rape of female slaves by white slave-owners in order to increase their labor force.
- People of multiracial backgrounds only very recently have a racial identity in the official public, social or legal history of the United States.
- In 2006, there were 45 anti-multiple races/group hate crimes in California, which accounted for 5.3% of the total hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/national origin, with a *decrease* in 26.2%

AT UCSB:

- According to the national Census, 1.6% of the population in the U.S. identifies as two or more races.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

If you are **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ)**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- It is estimated that over 40% of homeless young people in major U.S. cities are LGBTQ. Over 25% of young gay men are kicked out the house upon coming out to their parents.
- Between 50 and 70% of LGBTQ youth experience verbal or physical abuse in school, and about 28% will drop out of school because of harassment from family and peers.
- LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers and they comprise over 30% of adolescent suicides annually, making suicide the leading cause of death among this group.
- Violence against the LGBTQ community is on the rise. Nationally, they represent the largest group of victims of hate crimes.
- In October 1998, Matthew Sheppard, a college student, was murdered for being gay. This hate crime, as well as the thousands of other hate crimes committed annually constantly remind LGBTQ students that it is risky to tell others.
- In 39 states, a person can be fired from their employment simply because they are LGBTQ, and have no legal recourse.
- In 2003, the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force issued a report entitled *Campus Climate*. Results indicated that 36% of undergraduate students had experienced harassment within the past year for being LGBTQ and 79% said the harassment came from fellow students. 20% feared for their physical safety because of their sexuality orientation or gender identity and 51% concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation. Nearly half (43%) rated the campus climate to be homophobic.
- In a study of 500 campuses, 24% of college students admitted to name-calling people they thought were gay.



- In 2006 there were 246 hate crimes based on the sexual orientation of the victim, which accounted for 18.8% of total hate crimes in California
- Anti-male homosexual hate crimes increased 7.3% from 2005 to a total of 206 for 2006 in California.

AT UCSB:

- Approximately 2,000 undergraduate students at UCSB identify as LGBTQ (10-15%). However, 45% are not at all “out” to their parents.
- Several UCSB students, staff, and faculty have been victims of vandalism and beatings because of their sexual identity.
- In 1999, a hate crime occurred in Santa Rosa Hall against an RA, who was openly gay.
- In Santa Barbara in March of 2002, a 37-year-old gay man, Clinton Risetter, was murdered for being gay. The suspect doused him with gasoline while he was sleeping and set him on fire, burning him to death. The suspect later turned himself in and told police he committed the crime because he didn’t like gays.
- UCSB is one of less than 100 campuses to offer an LGBTQIA minor program. The campus also houses the Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity and 13 student organizations that are focused on LGBTQIA issues.
- UCSB’s Recent Campus Climate Survey found that 75% of LGBTQ students felt that Isla Vista was the least safe area to be out about their sexuality.

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

AGE

If you were ever **under the age of 18**, please move to the target side of the room. If not, move to the non-target side:

- An estimated 27,000 youth age 18 and under need treatment for alcohol and drug problems^{xxii}.
- An estimated 5.1 million children under the age of 6 are living in poverty^{xxiii}.
- Approximately 1 in 4 girls is sexually abused before age 18; for boys the figure is 1 in 6 before the age of 16^{xxiv}.
- Every 13 seconds a child is abused in the United States^{xxv}.
- Recent studies have shown that more than 20% of adolescents in the general population have emotional problems.
- The suicide rate for adolescents has increased more than 200% over the last decade^{xxvi} and is now the 3rd leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds and the 6th leading cause of death for 5-14 year olds^{xxvii}.
- Approximately 38% of all homicide victims are under the age of 24^{xxviii}.
- An average of 22 youth are victims of homicide each day^{xxix}.
- Homicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for persons 15-24 years of age^{xxx}.
- Youth often lack the mobility or legal resources to escape or change these realities.
- An estimated 905,000 children were victims of maltreatment.



- An estimated 1,530 children died from abuse or neglect. (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services *Child Maltreatment 2006*)
- There was a rise between 2003 and 2004 of 8% in the suicide rate for youth under 19.
- (Brown University Child & Adolescent Behavior Letter; Nov2007, Vol. 23 Issue 11, p3-4)

Look at the people standing beside you as they share your experience [pause]. Look at the people standing across from you as they have a different experience [pause]. Please return to the center.

Anyone who has been targeted at any point in your life, please move to the target side of the room: Look at the people standing beside you. [Long pause]

Now pull the 2 ends of this line together to form a circle. Look around the circle at the people standing in the circle with you.

Oppression is a system that targets some people and rewards others based on group membership. The targeting comes in many different forms and has different but significant impacts; however, the common impact is the damage it does to us.

The targeting hurts us physically, psychologically, and emotionally, as individuals and as groups. For one reason or another, the people standing in this circle with you have experienced the pain of oppression. Some have experienced it for the same reasons as you, others for different reasons.

These people can be your allies. [Pause. Allow the group to take their seats for processing.]



Large Group Processing:

- 1) Let's hear from a few people. How are you feeling?
- 2) How did it feel to be on the disadvantaged or oppressed side?
- 3) How did it feel to be on the privileged or advantaged side?
- 4) Were there certain statistics that were more impactful or meaningful for you than others?
- 5) How did it feel if, while you were on the target side, a statistic was read but it doesn't reflect your own personal experience?
- 6) How did it feel when the statistic read did reflect your personal experience?
- 7) Did any of you hear comments from your peers that upset you during this exercise?
- 8) From someone who crossed the line several times, how did that feel?
- 9) From someone who did not cross the line very much, how did that feel?
- 10) Show of hands, who did not cross the line because you did not feel safe enough to? Does anyone want to share?
- 11) What can you learn from this activity about how to create a more positive community on campus?
- 12) Turn the person next to you. You have 5 minutes to identify a specific action you can each take this week to make campus more welcoming to everyone.



Small Group Processing:

When you get back to your rooms, you will need to process their reactions to *Crossing the Line*. Students this age are pretty resistant to the message so be prepared for that. Keep asking the group for other ideas, thoughts or experiences. It's been my experience that the folks who believe that there is no problem or that this conversation is just "liberals being emotional," speak loudly and boldly at the beginning and can suppress other views. Your goal is to make it easier or safe for those other views to come out.

Also, this is a good week to ask people the history behind their thoughts and beliefs, and more importantly, get them to talk about their feelings. You may have to keep bringing folks back and say "that's a thought, but how do you feel about this?" You may have to repeat this very often.

Be sure to end with action plans. Folks need to walk away with at least a couple of concrete suggestions they can implement in their lives (or else they end up feeling really bad).

How did it feel to be on the target side? How did it feel to be on the privilege side?
Was there anyone who was on one side most of the time? If yes, how did it feel?
If no, what does that mean?

Were there certain statistics that were more startling or meaningful to you than others?
How did it feel if, while you were on the target side, a statistic was read that doesn't represent your personal experience?
Some people think we should only focus on positive information about each group and not talk about the negative stuff. Why would that be a problem?

How do you see privilege and oppression play out at college? Give some examples of where you see institutional oppression play out at this university.
Give examples of where you see stereotypes/prejudice/discrimination within and among students.

What does the term "ally" mean to you?
How does it related to being in the target or privilege group?
What do you need from your allies?
How can you be a better ally?

What are some specific strategies we can walk away with today to be better allies around race?
Class? Gender? Sexual orientation? Religion?

Activities

See options at <http://www.college-success.com/classroom-activities/>



Sources:

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- ^v Source: President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 1995
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- ^{viii} Ibid. Pp. 224 and 219.
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