

First Impressions of LGBTQ People

Reflective – 101 – Low Trust – 10 mins – szp.guide/firstimpressions

Materials

- Participant sheet

Setup

- N/A

Facilitator Framing

- This activity helps participants ease into thinking about LGBTQ identity, people, and experiences from their own perspective.
- 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).

Goals & Learning Outcomes

- Participants will reflect upon their first impressions with LGBTQ people and identity.
- Participants will reflect on how their understanding of LGBTQ people and identity has changed over their lifetime.
- Participants will have an opportunity to hear how diverse the group's experience with LGBTQ 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 start with 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 require you to share anything with the group that you don't want to. If there is any question you're struggling with skip it and come back 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 something that came up for them while they were answering the questions that they would like to share?
- Does anyone have an experience that was significantly different that they'd be interested in sharing?
- What about question 5, would anyone share how their understanding of these issues have changed over time?

Wrap-up

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

Often there is a mention of language or vocabulary that has shifted over the course of someone's exposure to the LGBTQ community 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 LGBTQ identity within a medical environment?". They can also be modified in a way to focus on a particular subpopulation of the LGBTQ community, "What was your first impression of bisexual people?" or, "What is something that you are still unlearning about transgender identity?"

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.

First Impressions of LGBTQ People

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. When's the first time you can remember learning that some people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer?
2. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)
3. When's the first time you can remember learning that some people are transgender?
4. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of transgender people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)
5. How have your impressions/understanding of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning) people changed or evolved throughout your life?