**Label Game**

**Space Requirements:** Room with tables to write on

**Equipment:** Sticky Label for each participant, paper, writing utensil

**Group Size**: Two or more

**Alternative:** This can be used to open a discussion on bullying.

**Accessibility:** This activity needs to be done with those that are able to understand that it is a game and will be able to separate the words from the lessons. A way to adapt it for a few in the group that can is tell them what the activity is before and explain the game, while letting them know this is a game not a way people are really feeling in the class. If they have experienced these labels let them know at the end will allow them to share their experience at the end. Also make sure the group knows what is on their groups labels. So, you might need to read the labels to different people in the group so they know what everyone else says-remember to not tell them their own! Make sure someone is audio describing what the drawing is in the group for individuals that cannot see the drawing. If someone has a latex allergy you can also stick the label to the front top collar of their shirt.

**Program Goals:**

1. To increase social skills in the community
2. To increase self-awareness of behavior
3. Introduce common thread throughout disability history and present of being labeled

**Program Description:**

**Instructions:**

Begin this exercise by first talking about invisible and visible disabilities. Invisible disabilities are sometimes a little harder to grasp, so brainstorm, have the group name some. Also have the group name some visible disabilities. Make sure to point out that there is not a hierarchy of disability and invisible disabilities are not more or less of a disability than visible ones.

Introduce ACCESS MAN (The universal symbol for accessibility, the man in a wheelchair), and point out that it does not represent all the different disabilities out there. The participants’ task is to break into smaller groups of three or more, depending on the group size, and come up with a sign for accessibility that represents the different types of disabilities better.

As the participants split into their groups, facilitators and a helper place labels on the foreheads of the participants. While the labels are being placed, explain that they may not look at their own labels or tell anybody else what their labels say, but they must treat each other according to what each person’s label is while brainstorming the new symbol. We are not responsible for the loss of any of their eyebrows, skin, or rashes that may develop from such labels on their heads. Students may be reluctant at first to treat each other by their labels, so facilitators must circulate through the groups, treating the students according to their corresponding label. Don’t be afraid!!! The students will understand after this activity that they are meant to feel awkward and singled out. This should continue on for 3-5 minutes. After this time, bring the students’ attention back to you, the facilitator, yet still having their labels in place on their forehead.

Have each group report back their ideas to replace access man. Note that the groups are not supposed to have a lot of ideas, and if this is so for your group of students, don’t be afraid to rush the group and point out to the larger group their lack of ideas. **“Seriously, you guys are bright, educated students, and this is all you could come up with?” WHY?**  Have participants come up with their own ideas of why they had such a hard time with this task. Note that some of their ideas should lead to the fact that they had labels on their heads and that was what they were focusing on.

**Getting Dr. Phil on the group:** How did this exercise make you Feel? After this discussion, students can remove their labels. You can ask the questions:

**“How many of you felt you knew what your label said?”**

Tying it all Together: The reason that we do this game is to point out that everyone in this room came to class today with your own labels. Labels that you have been carrying around with maybe your whole life. How much money you have, where you come from, what you look like, what sports you play, who your friends are, what music you listen too… We all know what it feels like to be frustrated, to wonder why something is easy for someone else or for everyone else but I struggle with it. Feeling isolated or alone isn’t just a disability experience, it is a human experience. There are two big reasons why people make us feel this way. The first is they do not know any better, or they are ignorant. They know nothing or very little about people with disabilities and do not accept anyone who is not just like them. The second is because we let them make us feel bad! Respect yourself and have pride in yourself, DISABILITY PRIDE!

**Label Game:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ignore me completely** |  | **Do things for me without asking me** |  | **Laugh at all of my ideas** |
| **Help me out** |  | **You are afraid of me** |  | **Act like you can't hear me** |
| **Treat me like I'm dirt** |  | **Like all of my ideas** |  | **Follow my lead** |
| **Listened to every word I say** |  | **Stare at me** |  | **I have a mean temper** |
| **Hurt my feelings** |  | **Tell me how great I am** |  | **Ask me to repeat myself** |
| **I always get my way** |  | **Ask me what I think** |  | **Speak loud to me** |
| **Speak slowly to me** |  | **Treat me like I am sick** |  | **Ignore me completely** |
| **Hurt my feelings** |  | **Do things for me without asking me** |  | **Help me out** |
| **I always get my way** |  | **Treat me like I am stupid** |  | **Treat me like I'm dirt** |