



Inclusivity



Teacher's Guide (for Grades 7-12)

CLASS ACTIVITIES

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Introduction

PURPOSE

At YouthSpeak, our vision is to inspire and empower youth to live resilient and meaningful lives. Our mission is to assist youth facing challenges through leadership training and empowering them by sharing personal stories in order to promote mental health, well-being, empathy, and hope in assemblies and workshops. We aim to make sure no child or youth feels alone, and those who are struggling with mental health or challenges are connected to available support tools to improve their overall well-being.

The purpose of this teacher guide is to provide valuable and easy-to-follow awareness-building activities. This teacher's guide is a resource that teachers can use in their classrooms with their students. The activities in this teacher guide are intended for the intermediate/senior divisions but may be modified for your unique classroom.

HOW TO USE

This teacher guide has eleven activities that are designed to address anti-racism, anti-homophobia and neurodivergence awareness. They can be used in the classroom to help students understand and explore important topics on diversity and equity from a young age. Each activity has an estimated time frame and a material list at the top of the page. The specific steps on how to run the activity are under it. There are also virtual alternatives for each activity so you can use these activities in your online teaching as well. Teachers do not need to follow every step for each activity and can revise the steps to suit their unique classroom.

SAFE SPACE

Please remind students that the classroom is a safe space and encourage them to have open discussions about anti-racism and inclusivity. Discussing these topics can bring up strong thoughts and feelings, and it is important to let them know that if students are experiencing any negative feelings and need help, that the teachers, administration, and other caring adults are always there to listen and support them.

1. Treating an Injury

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 10-15 minutes

MATERIALS: Band-aids, chart paper, cue cards, markers

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the inequalities that exist in society, and how they can make people feel. By the end of this activity, students will be able to explain what inequality is, and the impact that inequalities can have.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the students that they will all be assigned an injury, and to gather into groups based on the assigned injury.
2. Assign a variety of injuries by handing out cue cards with their injury on them.

Examples: a cut on their hand, headaches, broken legs, broken arm, etc.

3. Encourage the students to dramatize their injury, while staying seated.
4. Tell the students that they will be receiving first aid care that will help them.
5. Take out a box of band-aids, and pass them out to all of the students, and tell them that they have now been treated.
6. Ask the students, group by group, whether the band-aid has helped their injury.
7. Discuss as a class what this means for every group of students that had an injury that a band-aid wouldn't help.

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the students that they will all be assigned an injury. From a selection of 4-5 different injuries, read out the students who are assigned each injury.

Examples: a cut on their hand, headaches, broken legs, upset stomachs, broken arm, etc.

2. Encourage the students to turn on their cameras and dramatize their injury.
3. Tell the students that they will be receiving first aid care that will help them.

4. Put an image of a band-aid on the screen being shared with students.
5. Ask the students, grouped by their assigned injuries, whether the band-aid has helped their injury.

For example: For those that were assigned a headache, would a band-aid help your injury?

6. Discuss as a class what this means for every group of students that had an injury that a band-aid wouldn't help.

Possible discussion questions:

- Was this fair for every student?
- Did every student receive equal treatment?
- What could have been done to make sure that everyone got treatment for their own injury?
- Why is it important that everybody receives different treatments?
- What would you have done differently?

2. Allyship Awareness

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 10-15 minutes

MATERIALS: Poster sized paper and art supplies

OBJECTIVE

To brainstorm with students what allyship means to them. By the end of this activity, students will be able to describe what allyship means, the importance of being an ally, and provide different examples of how you can be an ally.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to the students that we will watch a video about what allyship is and have a discussion about it.
2. Show Students a video explaining allyship.

Suggestion: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dg86g-QIM0

3. Facilitate a class discussion on what allyship means to them.

Prompts:

- a. If you could define allyship in one word, which word would you choose?
 - b. What is an example of a scenario in which someone is acting as an ally?
 - c. What were some misconceptions that you had about allyship prior to this activity?
 - d. How would you explain allyship to someone that had some of those misconceptions, to bring awareness and understanding?
4. Have the students get in small groups and discuss different examples of how they could be an ally, whether in the community, globally or in their own classroom and school.
 5. Have the students create posters that creatively list the different ways that they can be an ally, that can either be put up in the room or a school hallway display.
 6. The students can then participate in a gallery walk and see the different posters that their classmates created.

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start off by showing students a video explaining allyship.
 - a. Suggestion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dg86g-QIM0>
2. Restate the information from the video in order to help the students understand what allyship is, and then ask them to discuss what it means to them.
 - a. Prompt: What does it look like or sound like?
3. Using a program such as Google Docs or Google Slides, invite students to brainstorm the importance of being an ally as a class, and record their answers.
4. Brainstorm different examples as a class of how they could be an ally, whether in the community, globally or in their own classroom and school.
5. Have the students create posters that creatively portray the different ways that they can be an ally. Students can have the option of creating it on paper, taking a picture and uploading it or using google slides.
6. The students can then look at all the posters in the Google Slide document.
7. These ideas can then be shared and discussed in a whole-class discussion, where the students can be encouraged to expand on their thoughts and ideas.

3. Radical Privilege

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 15-20 minutes

MATERIALS: Gym or Outdoor space like a running track, paper and pencils

OBJECTIVE

To demonstrate to students the concept of privilege. By the end of this activity, students will be able to recognize the role privilege plays in society and how some are systemically hindered from getting ahead.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have students write down statements of privilege on slips of paper. Provide a few examples if needed.

Suggestions:

- a. I have never had to worry about my family being stopped by a police officer.
 - b. I have never had to have the racism talk with my parents.
 - c. Knowing that being open with your sexuality isn't going to change how people view you
 - d. Others don't get frustrated with you in public for needing special accommodations or holding up lines.
2. Go outside or to the gym and have all the students line up against a wall or in a line.
 3. Tell students that they are going to have a race across the gym/field. Before they begin, you are going to read some statements first. If a statement relates to a student and is considered a privilege, they take 2 steps forward.
 4. After reading out the statements, some students should be starting much farther ahead than others. Prepare students to race and blow the whistle.
 5. After the race, bring students together to discuss the activity. Some possible questions/prompts are:
 - a. Was the race fair?
 - b. Did the race show us who was the fastest? Why or why not?
 - c. If everyone started at the same spot, how would the results have been

different?

- d. What do we have to do to bring everyone onto the same level?
 - e. Discuss the difference between equity and equality.
6. Facilitate a discussion on oppression, and how it is not just in the past, but is a very present issue for many communities
 7. Follow up with a video.

Suggestion: https://www.youtube.com/watch/vX_VzI-r8NY

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read 10–15 statements aloud about privilege (could be about race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, neurodivergence).
2. Have students put up their fingers when they identify with a privilege.
3. After reading out the statements, some students should have more fingers up than others.
4. Bring students together to discuss the activity. Some possible questions/prompts are:
 - a. Why do some students have more fingers up than others?
 - b. If everyone experienced the same amount of privilege, how would the results of who had more fingers up be different?
 - c. What do we need to do, to make sure everyone has an equal number of fingers up in the air?
5. Discuss the difference between equity and equality.
6. Link the activity to the experiences of diverse people in the past, present and future as well as anti-racism, anti-homophobia, anti-ableism.
7. Follow up with a video:
 - a. Suggestions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1l3wJ7pJUjg>

4. Remarkable Role Models

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 15–20 minutes

MATERIALS: Blackboard / whiteboard / projector / paper

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to diverse role models that have had major impacts on our society in the past and present. By the end of this activity, students will be aware of the amazing contributions that the role models have had on a national and international level. Additionally, the introduction of diverse role models has the ability to promote resilience among students of marginalized communities.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Gather images of inspiring diverse role models for students. Try to get a wide range of professionals! This will have the ability to demonstrate to students that they can be anything they want to be!
 - a. Suggestions: professors/teachers that have changed the world of academia, activists, professionals in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), lawyers, etc...
2. Have students choose a role-model of their liking and write a description about why they chose this role model and how this inspires them to be what they want.
3. Have students present their ideas to the class. A class discussion can also be initiated.

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a PowerPoint that can be viewed by students that feature images of inspiring diverse role models, and profile summaries with links to further information (websites, videos). Try to get a wide range of diverse professionals. This will have the ability to demonstrate to students that they can be anything they want to be!
 - a. Suggestions: professors/teachers that have changed the world of academia, activists, professionals in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), lawyers, etc...

2. Explain to students the importance of each individual.
3. Have students choose a role-model of their liking and ask them to create a Google Slide explaining what they found inspiring about the role model they have chosen. They can include pictures, and text either by typing or using the audio-to-text feature.
4. Follow up whole-class discussion: Encourage the students to share their pages, and screen share the Google Slides of the students who have volunteered to share.

Discussion prompts: What did you learn from external sources such as the video and website links?

5. You Are Not Alone

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 15-20 minutes

MATERIALS: Sticky notes (at least 2 per student), background music (optional)

OBJECTIVE

To foster a safe classroom community where students can recognize similarities between themselves, empathize with each other's concerns, and support one another.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student 2 sticky notes.
2. Have students write anonymously:
 - a. One thing they are concerned about when they are at school.
 - b. One thing they are looking forward to or feel positive about in this course or school year on the other sticky note.
3. Designate one area of the room to be for the "Concerns" and a separate area to be for the "Positives."
 - a. The areas should be wide enough for all students to post their sticky notes
 - b. E.g., Walls, whiteboards, blackboards, chart paper, etc.
4. Have students post their sticky notes (next to each other in rows) to the appropriate space (concerns vs. positives) and instruct them to spread them out.

Feel free to play soft background music for Step 5-8

5. Have students quietly walk around the class with a writing utensil and:
 - a. Read all the sticky notes (Concerns and Positives) AND
 - b. On at least one sticky note of each type, write a checkmark if you relate to it or a positive/sympathetic expression (e.g., same, me too, I know right?).
6. Pause the class and ask them to:
 - a. Take one sticky note from the "Concerns" board to their own desks AND
 - b. Anonymously write a positive, encouraging, supportive comment (could be a piece of advice or how you relate to it).
7. Have students return and post the sticky note back on the "Concerns" area.

Students can go back to the board and retrieve their original "Concerns" sticky note and read over the comments.

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create Kahoot off the website Kahoot.com and ask questions surrounding mental health and popular concerns adolescents may have.
 - a. How do you feel today?
 - i. Good
 - ii. Bad
 - iii. Great
 - iv. Okay
 - b. Are you concerned about the school year?
 - i. True
 - ii. False
2. Kahoot allows students to create anonymous usernames, allowing them to feel more comfortable picking their honest answer.
3. When ready to do the activity, provide the students with the pin so that they can participate in the quiz.
4. After completing the Kahoot, have a discussion with students about the answers and explain that what they are feeling is normal, to reassure them that they are not alone.

6. Walk a Mile in My Shoes

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 10–15 minutes

MATERIALS: Blackboard / whiteboard / chart paper

OBJECTIVE

In this activity, students will be learning about empathy, and considering perspectives and experiences that are different from their own. By the end of this activity, students will be able to describe empathy and the importance of learning about different perspectives from their own.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As a class, read a poem that was written by a person from a marginalized community that describes a perspective that might be different to students. For example, a poem where the author describes feeling isolated and has had opportunities taken away from them or is treated differently due to the colour of their skin, sexual orientation, ability, etc.
2. As a class, discuss the themes of the text, and the different feelings expressed by the author.
3. As a class, discuss the idea of putting themselves in someone else's shoes. Provide examples that are relatable to the students.
4. Arrange the students into small groups and hand out task cards that feature different shoes and a brief descriptive summary of an experience.
5. As a group, the students can discuss the different perspectives, and compare them to their lives and experiences.

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Screenshare a poem that was written by a person of a marginalized community that describes their perspective and can be read aloud as a class.

For example: a poem where the author describes feeling isolated has had opportunities taken away from them or is treated differently due to the color of their skin, sexual orientation, ability, etc.

2. As a class, discuss the themes of the text, and the different feelings expressed by the author.
3. As a class, discuss the idea of putting themselves in someone else's shoes.

Provide examples that are relatable to the students.

4. Screenshare a series of task cards that feature different shoes and a brief descriptive summary of an experience.
5. As a class, the students can discuss the different perspectives, and compare them to their lives and experiences.

7. Privilege Bracelets

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 20-30 minutes

MATERIALS: Bracelet string, two different colors of beads

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the concept of privilege by reflecting on their positions in life. By the end of this activity, students will better understand how people's experiences differ based on concepts such as race, sexual orientation, ability, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make sure each student has enough string to make a bracelet and a bunch of both colours of beads.
2. Tell students to tie a knot on the end of their string
3. Read a bunch of statements to students that are either privileges (i.e., "I see people like me in the media I consume") or disadvantages (i.e., "I am regularly stopped at airports") based on marginalization. If a privileged statement relates to them then they take 1 colour bead. If a disadvantage statement relates to them then they take the other colour bead.
4. Have students compare bracelets at the end and have a discussion about how people's experiences differ.
 - a. How does it make students feel when they have fewer beads than other students?
 - b. What can we do to make it fairer?
 - c. Relate this to racism, homophobia, ableism and allyship (ie: standing up for your friends).

MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a Google Slide that has a variety of circular "beads" and a string that can be edited, and make it available in Google Classroom so that every student can access it and submit it at the end of the activity. Make enough slides for every student and put their names at the top of the slide created for them. (ie: I see people that look like me on TV and in movies).
2. Explain to the students that they are going to be creating bracelets using Google Slides, and have them find the slide with their name on it. Tell the

students that you will be reading them some statements and that they need to think about whether they relate to them or not and add a bead to the string if it does.

3. Read out the different statements
4. Have students compare bracelets at the end and have a discussion about how people's experiences differ.
 - a. How does it make students feel when they have fewer beads than other students?
 - b. What can we do to make it fairer?
 - c. Relate this to racism, homophobia, ableism and allyship (ie: standing up for your friends).

8. Powerful Paper

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 10-15 minutes

MATERIALS: Paper, Recycling Bins

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD: This activity works best when the students are in class.

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the concept of inequality vs. equity, by having students try to get a piece of paper in the recycling bin despite some being closer to the bin than others. By the end of this activity, students will better understand the concept of inequality and will be able to better visualize how inequality can severely impact those who experience it.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place a recycling bin or two at the front of the classroom.
2. Have students either stand in rows or set the desks in rows. With at least 3 different rows of students. Some closer to the recycling bin and others further behind.
3. Give each student a few sheets of paper. Have students crumple their paper into paper balls.
4. Instruct all students, despite being placed in different rows, to try and throw their paper balls in the recycling bin at the same time.
5. Some students in the back rows should have more difficulty than students in the front rows. Debrief with students about how this is unfair and promote them to express how they felt during the activity.
6. Link the activity concepts of privilege, anti-racism, anti-homophobia and inequality.

9. Opposing Opportunities

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7 to 9

TIME: 20-25 minutes

MATERIALS: Popsicle Sticks, Glue, Instruction Sheets

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD: This activity works best when the students are in-class

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the concept of inequality with the introduction of imposed unequal barriers. This is done by students all trying to assemble something, but each group is given different instructions (some more challenging than others). By the end of this activity, students will have a better understanding of the frustrations that accompany inequality.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Separate the class into groups.
2. Give each group their respective popsicle sticks, glue and instruction sheets. However, each instruction sheet will differ in some way. One or two groups will receive instructions that are easy to follow while other groups will purposely be given instructions that are difficult.

Suggestion: (could be written in another language, can be written backwards, have missing information, be in braille, etc.). Each instruction sheet will detail a shape that the students are supposed to create with popsicle sticks and glue.

3. Some groups will finish before others and some groups will not be able to complete the exercise at all.
4. Debrief with the class after the activity. Have them explain why this activity was fair or unfair.
5. Link the exercise to anti-racism and to systemic inequalities that continue to persist. Additionally, discuss how skin colour can affect one's ability to equally participate in society.

10. Dealing with Microaggressions

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 10 to 12

TIME: 20–30 minutes. This activity can be completed over multiple days.

MATERIALS: Scenarios written out for students

DELIVERY: This activity can be completed in class, or virtually using breakout rooms.

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to microaggressions. During this activity, students will review what microaggressions are and will practice how to deal with them.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let students know that they will be learning about microaggressions and that this topic can be sensitive or triggering to people who have experienced them. Students are welcome to take a break in the hall at any point in this activity if they need some space.
2. Review what microaggressions are:
Any interaction between those of different races, cultures, genders, or sexual orientations that can be interpreted as non-physical aggression.
3. Review the Sandwich Method to respond to microaggressions.
 - a. Notice and respect
 - i. Know that your “gut feeling” is important and to listen to what it’s telling you.
 - b. Step away
 - i. If needed, give yourself time to notice the thoughts that may tell you, your gut feeling is wrong. Talk it through with someone you trust & plan a response.
 - c. Have a voice
 - i. When it is safe and possible, speak up or take action. If it is not safe, let a teacher or adult know.
4. Split students up into small groups of 4–5 and give them 3 examples of microaggressions. As a group, students will come up with responses to these
5. microaggressions using the sandwich method.
6. Once students are finished, bring them back together and discuss as a class

the different ways to respond that people came up with.

- a. Note: There are many different right answers to these questions.
7. For further discussion, ask students what an appropriate way is to respond if you said a microaggression and someone confronts you about it.

Possible Scenarios:

1. Person A asks Person B, "Where are you from?" Person B responds, "I'm from Canada." Person A asks, "But where are you really from?"
2. Person A and B went to a Black Lives Matter demonstration and are discussing the movement. In the discussion, Person A says, "I think All Lives Matter."
3. A woman engineer is told that she doesn't "look like" an engineer.
4. Student A asks Student B who identifies as gay "Why don't you act gay?"
5. Students are in math class. Student A (who is Asian) finishes very quickly, and their friend, Student B, is taking a long time and sighs in frustration. Student A asks, "what's wrong?", Student B says, "I wish that math just came as natural to me as you, you're lucky!"

11. Microaggression Research

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 10 to 12

TIME: 20–30 minutes. This activity can be completed over multiple days.

MATERIALS: Computers

DELIVERY: This activity can be completed in class, or virtually using breakout rooms.

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to microaggressions. During this activity, students will review what microaggressions are and will learn how to deal with them.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let students know that they will be learning about microaggressions and that this topic can be sensitive or triggering to people who have experienced them. Students are welcome to take a break in the hall at any point in this activity if they need some space.
2. Review what microaggressions are:
Any interaction between those of different races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, or abilities that can be interpreted as non-physical aggression.
3. Tell students they will be researching different examples of microaggressions and how to deal with them.
4. Students can either work in a group or as an individual.
5. Students will then take out their laptops and begin researching. All of their findings will be posted to a class Google Doc.
6. At the end of the activity, let students share their findings with their classmates.
7. Further discussion prompts if needed:
 - a. What do each of these microaggressions imply?
 - b. How should people respond if they are told they have said a microaggression?

12. Wikipedia Edit-athon

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 10 to 12

TIME: 30–60 minutes. This can be done over multiple days.

MATERIALS: Computers

DELIVERY: This activity can be completed in class, or virtually

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to diverse role models that have had major impacts on our society in the past and present. By the end of this activity, students will be aware of the amazing contributions that the role models have had on a national and international level. Additionally, students will be actively helping increase awareness of important diverse figures.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell students what they will be learning about and making Wikipedia pages for important people of colour.
2. Explain to students that they can get creative and use multi-media platforms (Microsoft Word, digital art, DIY poster, etc)

13. Unlearn Family Dynamics

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: gr. 7-12

TIME: 45-60 minutes

MATERIALS: photos of LGBTQ2S+ families, single parent families, and blended families and youtube video "LGBTQ Family: I Have Two Moms"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgmBGkY_AHs&list=TLPQMTAxMTIwMjFjSHMmFziR_cw&index=2&ab_channel=AMAZEOrg

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD: can be used in class and online

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to different family dynamics. This activity will allow students to explore the similarities and differences they perceive between families who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and other types of families. Challenges students to normalize and understand that all families are acceptable, regardless of gender and/or sexuality.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduce the activity to the children and ask students to view the selected photos of LGBTQ2S+ families, you can show them these photos as a class or within groups.
2. Create a discussion, and ask them the following questions.
 - a. What do you see in the photos?
 - b. What is happening in these photos? Can you describe their emotions, feelings, and/or thoughts? How can you tell?
3. Once the students have observed and discussed the photos for 10 minutes, you can follow up with one of the youtube video recommendations.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgmBGkY_AHs&list=TLPQMTAxMTIwMjFjSHMmFziR_cw&index=2&ab_channel=AMAZEOrg
4. Use the following questions to create conversation about the video
 - a. What do the family in the photos and the people in the video have in common?
 - b. What can we do as classmates to be more supportive towards those who identify as LGBTQ2S+ and/or come from LGBTQ2S+ families?

14. What do you meme?

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 9–12

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: “do I wear blue because I’m a boy or am I a boy because I wear blue?” meme picture. This image can be googled and used.

https://www.google.com/search?q=do+i+wear+blue+because+meme&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjOn8_EmJH0AhUuqnIEHQv3DaYQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=do+i+wear+blue+because+meme&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQAzoHCCMQ7wMQJlChAljsB2CcCWgAcAB4AlABcogB3QSSAQmZljOYAQCgAQGqAQtnnd3Mtd2l6LWltZ8ABAQ&sclient=img&ei=xIKNYc6tAq7UytMPi-63sAo&bih=716&biw=1440&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCA861CA861#imgrc=10jAdlInt3LeZ5M

OBJECTIVE

Challenge students to think beyond the gender stereotypes that they grew up on. This activity will allow students to understand that the gendered stereotypes and expectations that are presented to them does not always have to be followed. After this activity, students will have a greater understanding of how gendered stereotypes affect our behavior.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduce the activity to the students and ask them to analyze the meme/statement, give them 5–10 minutes to jot down their original thoughts, feelings, etc.
2. Challenge the students to think deeper about the meme/statement by asking them the following.
 - a. What is the stereotype that is being presented? Do the colours/clothes we wear indicate what our gender is? For example, if I wear pink does that make me a girl?
 - b. When were you taught that certain behaviours/activities were only for a specific gender? (boys are good at sports, girls are more creative, etc) and where do you think these assumptions come from?
3. End the activity by asking the students to share how they would answer the question. See prompts below.
 - a. Can you identify the issue with this question?
4. Explain to students that an individual's clothes and outer appearances does not dictate their gender or sexual orientation.

15. Circles of Ourselves

ORGANIZATION

GRADE: 7-12

TIME: 30 minutes

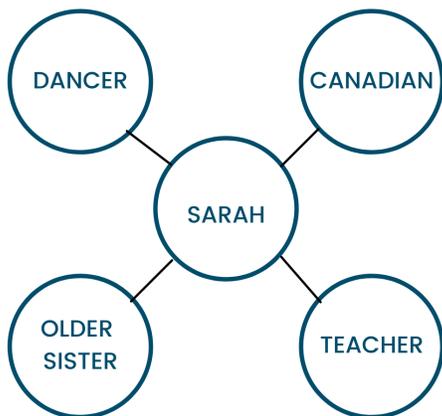
MATERIALS: blackboard/whiteboard, paper, and writing utensil

OBJECTIVE

This activity will deepen students' understanding of themselves, their community, and school environment. The chart of circles will help students identify their roles, hobbies/interests, and what makes them who they are as an individual. Sharing their numerous identities can help them break the stereotypes that are present and create friendships with classmates. Circle of ourselves is a great tool to teach intersectionality & inclusivity.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Instruct students to draw a circle and write their name inside of it, using connecting lines to additional circles that are big enough to write a couple of words inside. See below.



2. Before instructing students to create their own chart, prompt students to think about who they are as a person and brainstorm what they identify with. You could use the examples below to help.
 - a. What is your background? (e.g., race, nationality, place of birth, religion)
 - b. What is your gender/preferred pronouns? (e.g., girl, boy, non-binary)
 - c. What are your hobbies? (e.g., track runner, sports fan, a creative)
 - d. What is your role in your family? (e.g., big sibling, younger sibling)
3. Ask students if they feel comfortable sharing their circles with the class, it does not have to be the whole chart but they can pick & choose what to

share. Recommend teachers to show their own “Circle of Ourselves” chart as an example.

4. Reaffirm that our identities are something that can change as we learn, grow, and come into different roles in life. Some identities will always be a part of ourselves no matter what, for example our race and cultural backgrounds. However, there are labels/identities that others may try to push upon us, but the important thing that matters is that we can create our own social identities and shape who we are.
 - a. Follow up questions
 - i. How are identities connected with each other? (Hint: they are all important parts of what makes you “you”)

Alternatively, you can put students into pairs and have them create a “Circle of Ourselves” chart for their classmates. This will encourage students to create connections from their own assumptions vs what they learned about their partner.

Book Lists to Check Out

31 Young Adult Books with Diverse Characters Literally Everyone Should Read
<https://www.buzzfeed.com/jemimaskelley/diverse-ya>

Diverse and Inclusive Books to Inspire Young Adults
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/teaching-tools/book-lists/resources/diverse-young-adult-book-list.html>

25 Must-Read Young Adult Books with Diverse Characters
<https://www.xoxoerinasmith.com/blog/ya-books-with-diverse-characters>

61 LGBTQIA+ Young Adult Books to read all year long
<https://www.epicreads.com/blog/lgbtq-ya-books-pride/>

Young Adult Fiction
<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/young-adult-fiction/>

Indigenous Books
<https://www.strongnations.com/books/>

Why Kids and Teens Need Diverse Books and Our Recommended Reads
<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/diverse-childrens-books/>

10 Best Young Adult books by Latina authors to read now
<https://www.themujerista.com/the-blog/10-best-young-adult-books-by-latina-authors-to-read-now>

51 Young Adult Novels by Authors of Asian Descent
<https://readingmiddlegrade.com/asian-ya-novels/>

Novels for Young Adults with Neurodivergent Characters
https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/93649.Neurodivergent_YA_Novels

Resources

- Kids Help Phone: Text- 686868 (24/7 support)
www.kidshelpphone.ca
- Therapy for Black Girls: Find trusted, culturally competent therapists that know *our* feelings and can help navigate being a strong, black woman
www.therapyforblackgirls.com
- Hope for Wellness: offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada
1-855-242-3310 (24/7 support)
www.hopeforwellness.ca
- Black Youth Helpline: serves all youth and specifically responds to the need for a Black youth specific service, positioned and resourced to promote access to professional, culturally appropriate support for youth, families and schools.
www.blackyouth.ca +1416-285-9944 / +1833-294-8650
- Youth Line offers confidential and non-judgmental peer support through our telephone, text and chat services.
www.youthline.ca +1647-694-4275
- If you or someone you know is in crisis or requires immediate support, please contact 310-COPE at 1-855-310-COPE (2673) or visit your nearest emergency department.
- Community Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Youth offers resources for Newcomers
www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/health-promotion/youth-resources
- The 519 offers counseling, programs and other services for families, children and youth in the 2SLGBTQ community.
www.the519.org/programs/category/family-children-and-youth/
www.the519.org/programs/category/counselling-services/ +416-392-6874

Apps for Students

- *Calm*: This app teaches activities to help you sleep, breathe and relax.
- *HelloMind*: Worriers can significantly benefit from HelloMind, an app which helps change negative thought patterns.
- *Smiling Mind*: It is designed to help children and adults through the stresses, and challenges of daily life.
- *MindShift*: An app to help teenagers and young adults cope with anxiety. It offers strategies to manage symptoms of anxiety such as writing down your feelings and tracking them. It helps students start to use positive coping skills with reminders and a place to store information.
- *Mindful Gnats*: This app helps develop mindfulness and relaxation skills. It offers lots of choice, such as choosing how long you would like to do deep breathing for, and how long you would like each breath to be.

Want to Get Involved and Help Empower Other Youth and Inspire Change?

Here are some ways you can support:

- Join an event committee
- Attend our events
- Join our Board of Directors
- Follow us on social media



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- **Donate to Canada Helps**
 - You can click the “Donate” Button on the www.youthspeak.ca homepage
 - OR this link will take you straight to the donation page https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/youthspeak-performance-charity-organization/?utm_expId=.Z0WUQV4rT9mKtKTXtGPdnw.0&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyouthspeak.ca%2F
- Share your special skills with our team of youth to help build their leadership
- Perform administrative tasks that are important behind the scenes work

www.youthspeak.ca

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