

Micro Moments



What's in a Label



15 minutes



Investigating bias

Objective:

To allow learners to see the inherent bias of labels.

Materials required:

- 6 pages flip chart paper
- 3 sheets regular paper, cut in half
- Tape
- Markers / sticky notes pads – 1 per person

Procedure:

1. Place the 5 pages up on the walls around the room
2. Using the cut papers attach an descriptive label to each page
 - a. Black man
 - b. First nations person
 - c. White person
 - d. Chinese person
 - e. Disabled Person
 - f. LGBT Person
3. Ask the participants to mark on each sheet a descriptor of that particular group. Clearly state they are not being judged on what they write, they should not put their names on their comments and that all the materials will be destroyed after the exercise.
 - a. They can either write directly on the paper with markers, or use sticky notes to put their description on the paper (1 description per note)
 - b. Give examples to help focus the group
 - i. Hardworking
 - ii. Lazy
 - iii. Entitled
 - iv. Heroic
 - v. Family orientated
 - c. They can put as many descriptors on each paper as they would like.
4. Give approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. Remind participants that there is no right answer, they should just write down what pops into their head
5. Stop the group and ask them all to leave the room
6. Make a note of which label belongs with each paper then remove the ethnic labels and place them in the middle of the table.
7. Invite the group back in

Micro Moments



8. Explain to them as you were arranging things the labels fell off and ask them to put them back on the correct set of descriptors.
9. The group should struggle here. Encourage them to make decisions quickly and allow them to discuss as needed.

Debrief:

In the relabelling part of the exercise there should be a comment something to the effect that any of the labels could go on almost any of the pages. In debriefing you should make the following points.

1. There are very few 'exclusive' characteristics of any one group and highlight the similarities between groups (both positive and negative):
 - a. Hard working
 - b. Poor
 - c. Family orientated
2. It is important to get beyond the stereotypes
 - a. i.e. if you are tall and black you should be a basketball player
 - b. i.e. Asians are all good at math
 - c. i.e. All Canadians play hockey
3. Ask the group, what is the take-away here
4. Close with the Martin Luther King Jr. quote

*I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the **content** of their **character**.*

Martin Luther King Jr.