

ABC's of Diversity

Content Area: Mental health

Infusion: Language Arts, [Social Studies](#)

Grade Level: 9-Adult

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Butcher block paper
Markers
Index card for each student
Container (shoe box, paper bag, etc.)
Pen/pencil for each student

Objectives:

1. At the completion of the lesson, the students will explain the difference between prejudice and discrimination.
2. After class discussion, students will provide responses/demonstrate behaviors that help to eliminate prejudice and discrimination.
3. After completing the activity, students will identify the ways in which prejudice and discrimination can have a negative impact on that individual.

NHES:

- [#1 Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health](#)
- [#2 Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.](#)

Preparation:

Depending on your class, you may select one of the “isms” that may not be volatile or cause the most distress. Options include, but are not limited to racism, sexism, ageism, or heterosexism. Be open to the responses of your class. Responses will be based on their own experiences, family dynamics, etc.

To prepare the chart diagramed below, you may choose to use several sheets of butcher block paper, bulletin board paper, etc. (You need room in which to write responses in each box.)

Names I've been called	Names I've called others
Time when I was treated unfairly	Time when I was unfair to others

You will also need poster for the ABC's of Diversity:

A = attitude (prejudice)

B = behavior (discrimination)

C = consequences (physical, emotional, or economic injury)

Procedures:

1. Introduce the topic of stereotypes, that we have all been either the recipient of a stereotype or used one to describe someone else.
2. Remind students that stereotypical thinking forces group members into a mold, and ignores the fact that everyone is first an individual, and secondly a member of a group. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the harm of stereotypes.
3. Distribute index cards, and instruct students to draw horizontal and vertical lines on the cards to duplicate the illustration above. Tell students NOT to write their names or any other identifier on their cards.
4. Explain that students are to write an honest response in each of the 4 squares. Also explain that you will collect the cards and randomly read and record responses. Allow time to write responses.
5. Give the following instructions;
 - a. In the upper left-hand box, write names you have been called because of your age, racial or ethnic background, physical characteristic, religion, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.
 - b. In the upper right-hand box, write names you have called other people for similar reasons.
 - c. In the lower left-hand box, describe a time when you were treated unfairly because of a particular characteristic such as race, religion, age, etc.
 - d. In the lower right-hand box, describe a time when you treated someone unfairly for a similar reason.
6. Allow time for everyone to finish, then collect the cards and place them in the container.
7. Draw cards at random, read aloud appropriate responses (obscenities are not appropriate) for the first box, and write responses on the diagram. When you run out of room, read quickly through the remaining cards so the class hears all responses (if different from those posted). Make no comments at this time.
8. Repeat the process for boxes 2, 3 and 4, without comment. Abbreviate the "unfair treatments" in boxes 3 and 4 by writing behaviors (for example, spit on, laugh at, tease, or beat up) on the board.
9. Ask students to review the list of names and examples of unfair treatment. Ask for volunteers who have been called names or treated unfairly to talk about their experiences. Help them to focus on the feelings they had when being discriminated against. Then

encourage others to talk about name calling or unfair treatment they have been responsible for.

Note: Depending on your class, you may want to tell students to put in the context of, “I know someone....”

10. Write the term “prejudice” on butcher block or the board and ask for a definition. Work toward a definition consistent with the following:

Prejudice: a certain attitude, usually negative, toward a particular group or member of that group. Prejudice is usually toward strangers, who may have a certain appearance. The word comes from Latin words meaning prejudice.

- Prejudice happens whenever we prejudice others because of race, religion, age, gender, physical size or appearance, occupation, social class, sexual orientation and so on. We decide how we feel about them before we know them.

11. Write the term “discrimination” on butcher block or the board and ask for a definition similar to the following:

Discrimination: different, usually unfair, treatment of a group or member of that group, because of prejudiced feelings about them. The word comes from the Latin word for “divide.”

- Discrimination happens whenever we divide or separate people into groups (physically or in our minds) and treat one group unfairly or unequally because of our prejudices about their race, religion, age, gender, physical size or appearance, occupation, social class, sexual orientation and so on.

12. Display the A-B-Cs of diversity poster. Clarify what each letter represents.

- Ask the group for examples of prejudiced attitudes, unfair behaviors and negative consequences they have observed or experienced.
- Emphasize that there are always consequences when a person is treated with prejudice or discrimination.
- The consequences can be emotional, such as hurt feelings or anger, or they can be physical, such as giving up on a job or punching someone.

Discussion:

1. What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination? (Answer: Prejudice is having an attitude about someone; discrimination is behaving a certain way toward someone.)
2. Look again at the names people said they have been called. How might they have felt when called those names? What course of action may they have taken (retaliation, suicide, etc.)?
3. What about people who name call or treat others unfairly? Do the people who feel or show prejudice and discriminate against others experience any consequences? If so, what? (Today there are laws against discrimination and anyone accused of discriminating against others in the workplace can be prosecuted. There are, however, no laws against feeling prejudice.)
4. In reviewing your responses, can you determine if people in this group have suffered from prejudice and discrimination? In what ways? What could we do to make up for some of that? (Apologize to each other; don't let it happen again; get to know one another better; don't tolerate prejudice or discrimination when it happens.)
5. How can we eliminate prejudice/discrimination in our classroom/school?