

Activity: Silent Interviews

Time: 30-45 minutes, including pair discussions and group de-briefing session

Included are:

- Facilitator notes/instructions
- 2-page participant handout
- Also needed: enough 'pairs' of different candies to accommodate the number of participants (e.g., for 20 people, you'll need 2 each of 10 different candies)

Facilitator Notes:

- Select one piece of candy from the basket on the table up front.
- **Pair off** by finding the person whose candy matches yours.
- Using a list of questions I will give you to use, you will be asked to write down what you would guess your partner would answer.
- You will need to do this silently, without either of you speaking. Laughing is expected! (and it's okay to eat your candy now) 😊
- Carefully read each prompt, and **write down what you would guess your partner would answer** if s/he could speak to you.
- **Do not talk, write notes to each other, use non-verbal or sign language, or ask questions** of the facilitator. Simply respond to the prompts as best you can, based only on what you can see (or know) of your partner. You will both be working at the same time.
- You will have about **5 minutes** to write answers to the questions.

Interview Prompts:

- Where were you born?
- What is your ethnic self-identification?
- What social class do you identify with?
- Did you attend a public or private high school?
- What languages do you speak in addition to English?
- What is your religious affiliation or faith community?
- How many different countries, or states w/in the US, have you lived in?
- Are you the first person (or from the first generation) in your family to attend college?
- When asked to identify your 'race' on the US Census form, what do you answer?
- When you introduce yourself socially (e.g., at an AAUW meeting) what significant parts of your personal identity do you highlight? What do you omit or prefer not to disclose?

Pair processing:

- Share your responses with each other within your pairs, and correct mistaken assumptions or guesses.
- If you don't wish to answer any question on the list – or correct an answer that your partner has written – you may just say "Pass."
- Pairs will have 20 minutes for this, with a reminder at 10 minutes.

Activity: Silent Interviews

Purpose: To provide us with an experience of how we can misunderstand others by making assumptions about them based only on what we can see.

Participant Directions:

- Pair off with someone you don't know well (preferably), **without speaking**.
- Interview your partner using the following list of questions, but do it silently, **without speaking, writing notes, or using hand gestures or facial expressions to communicate** with your partner. Laughter is fine, and probably unavoidable! 😊
- Read each prompt carefully, and then **write down what you would guess your partner would answer** if s/he could speak to you.
- Don't ask clarifications of the facilitator, just respond to the prompts as best you can, based only on what you can see – or possibly already know – of your partner.
- You will have **5 minutes** to write down your answers to the questions.

Interview Prompts:

- Where were you born?
 - What is your ethnic self-identification?
 - What social class do you identify with?
 - Did you attend a public or a private high school?
 - Do you speak any languages in addition to English?
 - What is your religious affiliation or faith community, if you have one?
 - How many different countries, or states within the United States, have you lived in?
 - Are you the first person in your family (first generation) to attend college?
 - When asked to identify your 'race' on the US Census form, what do you answer?
 - When you introduce yourself socially (at an AAUW meeting, for example) what significant parts of your personal identity do you highlight?
What do you omit or prefer not to disclose?
- **When 'time' is called by the facilitator, share your answers with your partner and discuss what you guessed correctly and what was incorrect.**

Silent Interviews: Questions for group processing

1. Was it possible to complete this exercise? Why/why not?
2. How did the activity make you feel? Did you laugh? If so, why?
3. Does this experience change your view of your partner, or of the other people in this group?
4. How does this exercise relate to planning our local Branch program meetings and efforts to diversify our membership?
5. As individuals, how can we carry what we have learned in this exercise out into our daily lives?