

The Heart Exercise for Groups

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/bullying-education-resources/



Overview

This group exercise is a powerful way to help students develop empathy for each other in this authentic hands-on lesson.

Subjects Bullying Education | **Estimated Time** 50 minutes | **Grade Level** Middle and High School

Adapted from <http://www.campusactivism.org/server-new/uploads/foundationsessions.pdf>

Activity

1. Place students into group of at least four and give everyone a large sheet of newsprint and markers.
2. Explain to students that they are going to do a lesson that you need them to take seriously because the topic of the lesson is bullying and everyone has been bullied before at some time in their life.
3. If you want, ask students to close their eyes, put their heads down on their desk and listen for your instruction. Ask them to raise their hand if you have ever been bullied, or made fun of, heard people say bad things about your skin color or religion. You have a choice to either tell the students to keep their hands up and open their eyes or you can just report back to them that everyone's hands were up. In six years I have never had a class where there was someone who didn't raise their hand.
4. Pass out the handout "The Heart Exercise" to each group and read aloud the first section to students as they follow along. Allow students time to complete each section of the Heart Exercise (5-10 minutes each). At the end of the activity have students debrief first with their group by answering the questions on page 2 of their worksheet. Then have the class debrief together and have each group volunteer their answers. You may choose to hand students' work on the board or wall so students can see the similarity that each group had with each other.