

WELCOMING DIVERSITY

Activity developed by La Xixa Teatre



OVERVIEW

Naming and explicitly welcoming the different identities that are present in a group, as well as the different positions that might be held in relation to a topic. This is essential to create a climate of safety. Participants feel seen and recognized while the facilitator, who holds the place of authority and power within the group, openly acknowledges all forms of diversity without imposing value judgements.



DURATION

10 minutes



PARTICIPANTS

Adaptable for any number of participants



MATERIALS

No materials are required.



OBJECTIVES

- Create a climate of safety for participants
- Visualise the diversity that is present within the group
- Generate a positive and welcoming environment to be able to work with sensitive and complex issues



PREPARATION

To prepare for this activity, you must take some time to reflect on the following:

- What identities/diversities might be present within the group of participants?
- What are the topics that will be discussed about/worked on? Are these sensitive topics? What are the different positions that might arise in relation to these topics?
- How do you feel in relation to this topics? Are there identities or positions you feel strongly against?
- What strategy will you use to make sure that participants who hold a position or identity that is difficult for you will be given equal respect and space to be seen, recognized and heard?

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INSTRUCTIONS STEP BY STEP



This activity is preferably done at the beginning of the workshop.

1. Ask participants to stand in a circle.
2. Welcome the diversity within the group by saying, for example, the following:

“Before we begin, I would like to welcome the diversity present in the group. Welcome to all participants:

- who are young, and those who are not so young;
- who feel male, and those who feel female, and those who feel neither;
- who love others from a different gender and those that love others from the same gender and those who love people regardless of their gender, and those who do not feel sexually attracted to any gender;
- who are sexually active and those who are not;
- who do not mind talking about sexuality, and those who feel uncomfortable talking about it, and also those who feel they should not talk about it at all;
- who are of all origins, religions and beliefs;
- who feel they have a strong group of friends and family, and those who feel they have only a strong group of friends or just a strong family, or those who feel they have neither;
- who have lived in this town since they were born, and those who were born in a different place but have lived here for some time, and those who have just arrived here;
- who are “popular” and those who are not so “popular”, and those who mind being popular and those who do not;
- who wish to change things about themselves and those who do not wish to change anything about themselves;
- (etc.)”

3. Invite participants to welcome any diversity that they feel is in the group and that has not been named.
4. Ask participants to close their eyes for one minute and breathe deeply.
5. Ask participants to open their eyes, and thank them for being who they are and for being present.

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DISCUSSIONS AND DEBRIEFING



This activity does not require a discussion.

TIPS AND HINTS



You can adapt “the speech” to your group of participants and to the topics that will be worked on.

As you name the different diversities feel the energy of the group to identify areas and topics that might be more challenging for the group, and that might have to be addressed at a later moment during the workshop with special care.

THEORY



Mindell, A. (1992) *The Dreambody in Relationships*. Penguin Books Ltd: New York.