

First Impressions of LGBTQ People

Reflective 101 Low Trust 10 mins LGBTQ

Goals & objectives

- To explore participants' first awareness of queer and trans* identities
- Help people realize how socialization has impacted their understanding and predispositions toward gender and sexuality
- To make salient where participants are coming from and where you came from and the evolution and changes in everyone's understanding over the years

Step-by-step walk through

1. Refer participants to the participant sheet, and let them know to ask you if they have any questions.
2. Tell them they have 5 minutes to answer, and to write as much as they can.
3. Engage in a dialogue debriefing the participants' experiences answering the questions, thoughts on their answers, and then their answers to the final question in particular.
4. Wrap-up the activity.

Wrap-up

These are questions you may have never considered, or have answered many times throughout your life. Your answers are important to keep in mind as we continue this training, because your past experiences influence your current predispositions, and it's important to unpack what we already know and believe before we try to learn new things or open our minds to new experiences.

Make it your own

The questions can be modified to focus more specifically on particular identities if you are doing a targeted training.

If you lead a small discussion after allowing participants to share their responses and discuss their implications - make note though this will take up more time than allotted for. Discussion questions could include: What was it like do this activity? Were there any thoughts or realizations you had that surprised you? Is there anything that you wrote down for any of the questions that you'd like to share? Why do you think it is important to consider these types of questions?

All-Star Tip

This is an activity where it can be really important to talk about your own journey, to be that imperfect role model. This can help assure participants that they aren't alone in having to go through processes of unlearning and re-imagining things. Being vulnerable and sharing your process of unlearning is a great technique here if you want to spend the extra time doing so.

First Impressions of LGBTQ People - Participant Sheet

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. When's the first time you can remember learning that not all people identified as straight and that some identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other queer identities?

2. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other queer people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)

3. When's the first time you can remember learning that not all people identified as cisgender and that some people identified as trans*?

4. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of trans* people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)

5. How have your impressions/understanding of LGBTQ people changed or evolved throughout your life?