

## SEQUENCED ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEEP LEARNING

### **Icebreaker Introduction (small group exercise)**

Goals of the activity:

1. To have fun
2. To begin group interaction in a non-threatening manner

Have participants divide into small groups of 4 or 5

Each participant introduces themselves by sharing the following information:

1. Your name and your major
2. A “fun fact” that others may not know about you
3. An adjective that describes you & begins with the first letter of your first name & a brief description of why you picked it

### **Commonalities Activity (large group activity)**

Goals of the activity:

1. To begin learning about each other in a more personal way
2. To develop a cooperative and supportive atmosphere

Depending on the content being taught, the facilitator decides what topics they want participants to form “clusters” around. The facilitator then calls out the cluster topic and participants form clusters according to what they have in common. Each cluster then shares what their “commonality” is with the whole group. The facilitator may make a few comments or ask each cluster a question or two.

Example Activity:

In a class on poverty, I want the students to think about how they “see” people in poverty, what it means to “truly be seen” by someone, and how we often function on “auto pilot” and make assumptions without even realizing it.

In order for them to experience different levels of “being seen” and experience how we control how much we let others “truly see” us, I developed 3 cluster topics that *can* be identified by the information we get when looking at someone and 3 cluster topics *cannot* be identified by the information we get when looking at someone.

*First 3 clusters:*

Length of your hair

Color of your shirt

Type of shoes you’re wearing

*Second 3 clusters:*

City you were born in

Birth order

Least favorite year in elementary school

After the final cluster, students return to their seats and I ask them if they can think of anything that was different between the first 3 clusters and they last 3 clusters. Eventually someone comes up with the difference.

We have a brief discussion about how we often think we have things in common with others based on what we can actually see and make assumptions about others based on this info, how it's more difficult to know the "unseen parts" of others and that we often have a lot more in common with others than we realize.

### **Follow-up activity to Commonalities:**

#### **What does it mean to be "Seen?" (Individual worksheet & large group sharing)**

Goals of the activity:

1. Participants begin to move into their risk or growth zone
2. Participants demonstrate support of one another
3. Participants demonstrate developing trust of one another

To continue the discussion of the concepts from the Commonalities Activity, a worksheet was developed with questions that would move the conversation to a deeper level. Completing the worksheet gives students the opportunity to wrestle with the questions privately. After the majority of the students have completed the worksheet, the facilitator leads a conversation addressing each of the questions. The hope is that students will enter into the conversation and demonstrate to the classroom community that they are willing to take risks by sharing their thoughts and feelings as well as actively listening and offering support to others.

#### *Worksheet Questions*

1. Describe what it means to you to truly be seen
2. Describe a time you felt truly seen, including how it felt
3. Is it easy for you to let others truly see you? Why or why not
4. Do you take time to truly see yourself? Do you see yourself through compassionate eyes or critical eyes?
5. Do you regularly take the time to get out of "auto-pilot" mode and truly see others? Why or why not, what are the consequences of either behavior?
6. What are some of the assumptions you make when you see persons living in poverty? If you really saw them, do you think you'd make the same assumptions? Why or why not

#### **Material provided by:**

**Shelley Schuurman, PhD., LMSW**

**Assistant Professor**

**GVSU School of Social Work**