

Dispelling Stereotypes Discussion Cards

Recommended Age: 14+

Goal

- To allow youth to think about and express their ideas and values.
- To give real-life examples that illustrate discrimination issues.

Have Ready

- Discussion cards. Depending on group size and time, pick 5-6 cards that cover a variety of forms of discrimination.

Instructions

- Hand out cards and ask youth to talk about their card in small groups.
- After a few minutes, bring the classroom back together. Ask each group to read their card and share their thoughts. Ask the rest of the classroom if they agree or have anything to add.
- Each card has a correct answer, key talking point, an example of an experience of privilege, and a suggestion on how to create equity. Build your debrief around what youth share and name the form of discrimination.

Cards and Debrief

Ageism (Note: beginning with this category can assist with 'buy-in.')

- **All young people shoplift. (False: Ageism)**
This is an example of an ageist stereotype directed at young people. Shoplifting is not restricted to youth. Some stores (e.g., clothing stores, grocery stores, convenience stores) that are kept in business largely by youth make youth leave their bags at the front (which older customers don't have to do), only let a limited number of youths in the store at one time, and routinely watch young customers. In our culture, young people (and senior citizens) are routinely ignored when it comes to decision-making in the community or government. This is not the case in many traditional cultures, where Elders are valued for their experience

and youth are welcomed into conversations due to their stake in the future. **Ageism against teenagers is one of the few types of discrimination that people can grow out of, unlike other discrimination that is based on things that don't change, like someone's skin colour, for example.**

Privilege examples: Being able to shop freely. Not having a quota of how many people your age may enter a shop. Not often being followed by security or watched with the assumption that you are going to shoplift based on your age.

Creating equity: Raising awareness of businesses that treat youth unfairly, signing petitions, boycotting (choosing not to purchase things from a company that has practices or values that you find oppressive).

- **Teens can be responsible parents. (True: Ageism)**

People sometimes assume that teen parents are irresponsible for getting pregnant in the first place. However, no birth control is 100% effective, and not all teens are willing to consider adoption or abortion. Some teens become parents because they want a child and think they can do a good job. **What does a baby need to have a happy/good life? Can a teen provide those things?**

Absolutely; however, it could be helpful to have extra support from the people in their lives. Being a parent is a tremendous amount of responsibility. The job of raising a child can be very challenging for anyone, and teens often get less financial or emotional support than some adults due to stigma.

Privilege examples: When adults become pregnant, it is not assumed to be an unplanned pregnancy. Not experiencing as much judgment for becoming pregnant or choosing to parent. Adults are less likely to be assumed to be incapable or bad parents.

Creating safer spaces: Volunteering to babysit for teen parents you know, offering your bus seat to a pregnant teenager or a teen parent with a baby/kids, not judging parents or their kids, a smile shows you are supportive.

Transphobia & Homophobia

- **School can feel unsafe for 2STLGBQ+ people. (True: Homophobia/Transphobia)**

Do you think all 2STLGBQ+ folks feel safe coming out while in school? Is it safe for all 2STLGBQ+ people to be with their partners in school? 2STLGBQ+ people can face physical and verbal abuse. 64% of youth hear homophobic words, including things like 'that's gay' used as an insult daily in school. Do you hear things like this go around at your school? How could this make someone who is 2STLGBQ+ feel? How could this make people who are straight feel? 59% of youth who identify as heterosexual say that this language is upsetting or makes them also feel unsafe.ⁱ Most schools have washrooms and changerooms that are divided by gender, which can be difficult for someone who doesn't identify as male or female. **Everyone has the right to feel safe in school, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Youth who go to schools with a gender-sexuality alliance (GSA) are much more likely to agree that their school/community is supportive of 2STLGBQ+ people, are much more likely to feel supported in coming out, and are much less likely to see their school as homophobic.**

Privilege examples: Being able to access spaces like bathrooms, changerooms, etc. without having to worry about if you are welcome to use that space based on your gender identity. Not experiencing discrimination or harassment based on your gender identity or sexual orientation/attraction. Having the assumption that your gender identity and sexual orientation is 'the default.'

Creating equity: Joining/creating a GSA to learn about and teach others about homophobia/transphobia and how to stop it. Being aware of your own language (e.g., don't assume the gender of the person someone is dating). Finding a way to support folks who are 2STLGBQ+ if they are being bullied (check in with them, talk to an adult you trust, let the person who is being homophobic know that their behaviour is not cool (if safe to do so).

- **There have always been more than two genders. (True: Colonization/Transphobia)**

In our society, there are often only two genders recognized: female and male. However, there have always been more than two genders, and many societies and places in the world have

acknowledged and celebrated this before, and since, colonization.ⁱⁱ There are many ways throughout the world to understand gender diversity. Some examples include Two-Spirit people on this land and Hijra in South Asia. Plus, even beyond just gender, sex itself is not as binary as we talk about. Some folks are intersex, which means a mix of biological sex characteristics. Humans are really complex and diverse; it's one of our strengths.

Privilege examples: Seeing your gender identity reflected in popular culture and media. Not having your gender identity and cultural knowledge around sexuality and gender invalidated. Being able to access spaces like bathrooms, changerooms, etc. without having to worry about if you are welcome to use that space based on your gender identity. Being able to easily access culturally specific knowledge around gender identity. Having the assumption that your gender identity and sexual orientation is 'the default.'

Creating equity: Talking to your school and other places you visit about having 'gender-neutral' bathrooms. Asking people who identify as transgender how they'd like to be addressed instead of just guessing. Learning about the history of colonization and its effects on gender identity.

- **2STLGBQ+ people can be good parents. (True: Homophobia/Heterosexism)**

Children require love and support, which can be provided no matter what someone's sexual orientation is. There is no proof that having a 2STLGBQ+ family causes any child to be confused or to have any less of a healthy childhood. Those beliefs are rooted in homophobia. **How might kids of 2STLGBQ+ parents be treated at school?**

(Note: If they say that the kids will be teased, mention that if kids are picked on because they come from a 2STLGBQ+ home, this isn't the parents' or the kids' fault. It's the people who are doing the bullying who make the choice to hurt someone because of who that person's parents are, and that is not okay.)

Privilege examples: Having parenting and pregnancy information and resources applicable to your gender identity and sexual orientation/attraction. Not having your parenting skills questioned or attacked based on your gender identity or sexual

orientation.

Creating equality: Being supportive of people who come from 2STLGBQ+ homes. Joining/creating a gender-sexuality alliance (GSA) to learn about/teach others about homophobia and how to stop it. Being aware of your own language (e.g., don't assume the gender of who someone is dating). Finding a way to support 2STLGBQ+ folks if they are being bullied (check in with them, talk to an adult you trust, let the person who is being homophobic know that their behaviour is not cool (if safe to do so)).

Racism / Xenophobia

- **Canada always welcomes newcomers (immigrants and refugees) from all over the world with open arms. (False: Xenophobia/Racism)**

While our society seems to be excited about newcomers, we are not always making them feel welcome.ⁱⁱⁱ Canada often presents itself as a welcoming multicultural nation. While this is an important ideal to strive for, in practice it doesn't really happen. Over the last hundred years, Canada actively blocked non-white immigration through laws that made it difficult, or outright illegal, for folks from places like China and India to immigrate to this land.^{iv} While these laws have since been reformed, we still don't recognize people's education unless it's from a Euro-Western institution. Newcomers may deal with racist comments about things like their accent or right to be here. Often, people who do not speak English or have a non-Canadian English accent are treated as lacking in intelligence and/or inferior. This discrimination is called xenophobia.

Privilege examples: Being able to speak your language everywhere. Not constantly being othered through questions like "So, where are you from?" "What kind of food is that?" and comments like "Your food looks strange/smells." or "We speak English here." Not being directly impacted by laws and rhetoric regarding refugees and immigrants. Seeing yourself and your experiences reflected in popular media. The assumption that your accent is a sign of intelligence, as opposed to inferiority.

Creating equity: Looking beyond the cultural norms of the place you are being raised in. Thinking critically about how mainstream

media portrays people's countries of origin. Connecting and involving newcomer youth in school activities. Being welcoming and open to learning about other people's cultures and traditions.

- **Police treat people of all skin colours the same. (False: Racism)**

If two groups of teenagers were hanging out in a playground at 10 p.m., one being white and one being Indigenous, which one would be more likely to be checked out by police? We live in a culture where white people have more privilege than Indigenous people or other people of colour because of the racism that has been built into everyday life (systemic racism). In a country like Canada, many of our federal and provincial systems (like government, laws, police forces, etc.) were created by and run mostly by white people. They end up being harder on and providing far less effective service to people who aren't white. We see this with the extremely high rates of missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada.

(Note: Additional information on the systemic oppression of Indigenous people within Manitoba/Canada can be found in Appendix C.)

There are more Indigenous people in jail than any other group. This doesn't mean that Indigenous people commit more crimes, it means that if police, judges, and lawmakers all assume that a certain part of the population is trouble because of racist ideas that exist in our society, they are going to follow that group more. Police have a better chance at catching a group they are following committing a crime than they would catching the group they aren't watching. This often means people who aren't white get charged more often and are more likely to get longer sentences. The legal system hasn't been effective in promoting the health or safety of Indigenous people.

Privilege examples: Seeing your ancestry/culture reflected in the laws and justice system. Feeling comfortable around/protected by the police. Not being targeted by police based on your culture or ethnic background. Not worrying about police violence.

Creating equity: Educating your friends about racism, educating yourself on these issues, not laughing or taking part in racist jokes, watching police (Winnipeg cop watch).

Decolonization

- **It is disrespectful to name buildings and roads after people who aided in colonial violence, such as founding Residential Schools. (True: Decolonization/Racism)**

Canada is a nation built on colonization. Many of these people were active supporters and founders of systems of genocide, like Residential Schools, both in Canada and throughout the world. For example, the namesake of Bishop Grandin, the well-known roadway in St. Vital, actively championed the creation of Residential Schools. Cecil Rhodes, whose name is on a school in Winnipeg, helped create apartheid in Africa. Canada's first Prime Minister, John A. McDonald, has many buildings named after him or statues in parks, but he was vocally against Indigenous people's rights. **How do you think it feels for people to walk into a building, maybe even go to a school every day, that is celebrating someone who used violence to try and eliminate their ancestors?**

Privilege examples: We aren't taught the full stories of some of Canada's founders. We act like they founded a nation on land that wasn't already occupied. We treat people like John A. MacDonald or Bishop Grandin as heroes, rather than take a deeper look at their actions.

Creating equity: Learn about the real history of the land we now call Canada. Rename buildings, roads, and parks. Move statues to museums so that they become a means of education, rather than celebration.

- **It is disrespectful for sports teams to use stereotypes of Indigenous culture for names, logos, and mascots. (True: Decolonization/Racism)**

The term Eskimo is a racial slur for many Indigenous people. Would the use of racial slurs be acceptable for other groups? **Who owns these teams and who profits from them?** Those with a lot of privilege in our society (rich, white males) generally own sports teams. In the example of these teams, these owners continue to make money off of logos/mascots that many people find to be

racist. Even if images/names used by sports teams are considered by them to be heroic or brave, it's still insulting and not theirs to use. **The fact that these team names still exist today is a clear indication of the existence of racism in our society.**

Privilege examples: Seeing your ethnic or cultural background portrayed in the media and in sports as determined by people who belong to that group. Being able to watch and attend sporting events without seeing racist stereotypes of your culture. Having your voice heard when you are saying that something is harmful.

Creating equity: Not purchasing or wearing major sports teams merchandise that uses Indigenous imagery, visiting changethemascot.org to find out more information and help pressure the owners of these teams to change their team name, acknowledging your privilege and where it comes from, educating your friends about racism, researching the true history of Canada, learning about the land that you work, play, and live on, educating yourself on Indigenous culture, not laughing or taking part in racist jokes.

Ableism

- **It can be challenging for physically (dis)abled people to navigate sidewalks, buildings, and other services. (True: Ableism)**

Our landscapes and services are not always designed to accommodate people living with (dis)abilities. Sidewalks are often uneven or randomly end. Our snow clearing isn't very good and can leave people with mobility (dis)abilities stuck indoors for most of the winter. Transit Plus is expensive, is sometimes only available for doctor's appointments, and is known for sometimes making people wait hours to get picked up or dropped off. Smaller communities don't even offer these services. Buildings, bathrooms, grocery stores, etc. are not always accessible.

Privilege examples: Most spaces being accessible to someone based on them not living with a (dis)ability, including bathrooms, public transit, pathways, music venues, airplanes, and grocery stores.

Creating equity: Holding governments accountable to accessibility laws. Investing in transportation systems.

Retrofitting old buildings as much as possible. Designing new buildings with accessibility in mind.

- **People with (dis)abilities have equal access to sexual health support, including condoms, birth control, and education. (False: Ableism)**

Often, people with (dis)abilities, especially those with developmental (dis)abilities are treated as non-sexual beings and assumed to not be sexually active. This is of course not true. We all have sexuality, and this includes (dis)abled people. People with (dis)abilities are not always given information about and supplies they may need for sex because some doctors or caregivers assume that they do not need to know. In other cases, they may be forced to use birth control without consent.

Privilege examples: Accessing information related to relationships and sex through healthcare providers, educators, and caregivers without the assumption that this information is not applicable.

Creating equity: Listening to people with (dis)abilities to find out how you can support them. Not making assumptions about people's sexuality.

Fatphobia

- **People who are fat are discriminated against in today's society. (True: Fatphobia)**

What types of bodies do we often see portrayed in the media? If a fat person is a star, what kind of movie/TV show is it? Comedy.

Are there often fat people in sex scenes? (No.) This is especially true of fat women, an example of both sexism and fatphobia. Fat people are not portrayed with the same diversity of roles and experiences as thin people are. **When we only see groups of people shown in specific roles (e.g., only in comedies), it takes away their humanity and experiences. Does our culture make fun of fat people? Are we as a society scared of being fat? Knowing that the word 'fat' is an insult in our society instead of a descriptive term shows that fatphobia exists.** These attitudes and remarks then lead to more overt discrimination.

Research has repeatedly shown that weight affects teacher evaluations, admissions into higher education, landlord decisions about tenants, and assessments by medical and mental health personnel and employers.^v What about the size of clothes in the stores, size of airport seats/movie theatre seats, etc.? Our society sometimes considers discrimination against fat people okay; however, it is never okay to be abusive to someone. It is never okay to monitor other people's bodies or eating habits.

Privilege examples: Being able to find clothing in your size at most stores, seeing your body size reflected in the media, seeing your body size being affirmed as healthy in the media and through healthcare.

Creating equity: Following people on social media who encourage care for all bodies. Not laughing at or making fatphobic jokes. Shopping at and supporting stores that carry clothes in many sizes.

Sexism

- **Girls who have sex are treated the same as guys who have sex. (False: Sexism)**

Girls who have sex are often punished for their sexuality, because in our society, guys are the only group permitted to pursue sexual pleasure. This is a double-standard because both groups are treated differently for the same behaviour and is an example of sexism. It makes it harder for girls to express their sexuality because they don't want to be thought of as less than or looked down on. It is also bad for guys, because they feel pressure to be interested in sex all the time and be a sexual expert.

Privilege examples: Guys receive props for having sex.

Creating equity: We all can treat other people with respect.

Not using the slur 'slut' or other similar words, not judging people for their (assumed) sexual activity, (directed to guys) being respectful of girls/women.

- **Women should be able to wear whatever clothes they want, without experiencing harassment or sexual violence. (True: Sexism)**

No matter what someone is wearing, whether it's short shorts or

the hijab, they deserve respect. Sexual assault and harassment are not about sex or what someone is wearing, they are about someone choosing to use violence against someone. **No one ever deserves to be assaulted or harassed.** We live in a society where blaming the victim is common, making it difficult to deal with sexual assault and harassment. The sooner we all believe that everyone is entitled to respect, the sooner we can all work towards ending sexism.

Privilege example: Being able to wear whatever clothing you want without being harassed or objectified, or giving it a second thought. Not hearing comments about your body or clothing.

Creating equity: Not using or joining in when slurs like 'slut' are used, not catcalling women, joining or starting a feminist social media group, rock group, or an anti-violence association at school, raising awareness supporting Denim Day.^{vi}

Additional Activities

Ideally, this activity should be followed by:

- Dealing with Discrimination Action Planning

All young people shoplift.

Teens can be responsible parents.

2STLGBQ+ people can be good parents.

**School can feel unsafe for 2STLGBQ+ people.
(Two-Spirit, Trans, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, +)**

There have always been more than two genders.

Canada always welcomes newcomers (immigrants and refugees) from all over the world with open arms.

Police treat people of all skin colours the same.

It is disrespectful to name buildings and roads after people who aided in colonial violence, such as founding Residential Schools.

It is disrespectful for sports teams to use stereotypes of Indigenous culture for names, logos, and mascots.

It can be challenging for physically (dis)abled people to navigate sidewalks, buildings, and other services.

People with (dis)abilities have equal access to sexual health support, including condoms, birth control, and education.

People who are fat are discriminated against in today's society.

**Girls who have sex are treated the same as guys
who have sex.**

**Women should be able to wear whatever clothes
they want, without experiencing harassment or
sexual violence.**

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- ⁱ Peter, T., Campbell, C.P., & Taylor, C. (2021). Still every class in every school: Final report on the second climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. In *University of Winnipeg* (pp. 1–157). Retrieved from Egale Canada Human Rights Trust website:
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- ⁱⁱ James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender survey. In *US Trans Survey* (pp. 1–297). Retrieved from National Center for Transgender Equality website:
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- ⁱⁱⁱ The Winnipeg Foundation. *Winnipeg's Vital Signs*. 2017.
- ^{iv} Turner, J. & Turner, F. *Canadian Social Welfare* (6th Edition). Pearson Education Canada. 2009.
- ^v Maine, M. (2000). *Body wars: Making peace with women's bodies. An activist's guide*. Carlsbad, Ca: Gürze Books.
- ^{vi} Project of Peace Over Violence. (n.d.). Why Denim? Retrieved June 18, 2021, from Denim Day website: <https://www.denimdayinfo.org/about>