

Power Shuffle Categories

This is a common exercise used in diversity trainings as a way to physically see, as well as somatically experience, the ways we are both different from and similar to each other. This activity is meant to allow us to see things about one another that we sometimes can't see in our normal interactions. This "newness" sometimes causes nervousness or anxiety; participants should be encouraged to notice their feelings and any reactions they have in their bodies—every experience is the right one!

Afterwards, we will de-brief and reflect. The more honest people are with themselves and the group, the more impactful this exercise will be for the communities' learning process.

CATEGORIES FOR WALKING ACROSS THE ROOM

"If you are/were/have a _____, please walk across the room."

- woman
- elder
- youth
- brought up in a city
- brought up in a rural area
- Jewish
- Buddhist
- Muslim
- not religious
- didn't complete high school
- brought up with less money than most in your area
- raised in a single parent home
- physical or learning disability
- African American or of African descent
- Latino
- Asian American or of Asian descent
- Native American
- Bi-racial
- immigrant
- non-native English speaker
- gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer (if this group has many LGBT, these identities can be asked separately)
- experienced mental illness in your family
- experienced alcoholism or addiction in your family

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR

Facilitators should make certain not to rush people through their feelings and/or break the mood with the facilitators' own feelings or anxieties.

This exercise is not meant to be an individual comparison of whose disempowerment has been harder or who has been disempowered the most. It is meant to point out that a) our society has created divisions between groups based on "-isms," and that these divisions are not substantial or fair, and b) we are all hurt by these divisions.

Human beings are social animals who need and want community, but we have been taught, coerced, and legislated into not creating cross-cultural community. We have all been deeply wounded by this and are missing out on new perspectives and varied experiences and being fully loving and compassion beings by complying with the way we have been divided. We each have the power to be more open, reduce divisions, and create a greater, more robust community.