

Perception Game

For: Diversity Training

Duration: 10 minutes

Purpose: Reiterates the fact that people from different cultures see and interpret things differently, and all different ways should be embraced.

Supplies: 3-5 assorted colors of paper and 3-5 volunteers

Instructions:

1. Begin the exercise by having volunteers come to the front, facing the audience. Each is given one sheet of colored paper. You will then instruct them to follow your directions exactly as you say. Before you give the instructions, they must close their eyes. Advise the audience that no comments can be made on their behalf. Laughing is allowed!
2. Have the volunteers, with eyes closed, hold their sheets of paper in front of them. Then instruct them to fold the paper in half; then in half again. They must then turn the paper x number of times to the right and left; each time tearing off a piece of paper in the corner. Repeat this three or four times and end by having the volunteers fold the sheet in half one more time and tearing off a piece in the middle.
3. During this whole process, never say specifically which corner to tear. With their eyes closed, ask them to unfold their sheet of paper while holding it in front of them. They may then open their eyes, only to discover that each design is totally different.
4. Debrief:
 - Why were they all different? Did you not give them all the same instructions? Didn't they all follow those instructions? Then why do we have totally different pieces? The difference is because we see, interpret and perceive things differently, just as people of varying cultures see, interpret, and perceive things differently. For these reasons, we cannot always judge someone as "wrong."