

PURPOSE

→ To define labelling and stereotyping while showing the limits they place on both individuals and relationships

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this activity, the students will be able to:

- identify connections between labelling and bullying
- define stereotyping

MATERIALS

- Sticky labels with positive and negative qualities written on them (see “Hints” section below for some examples)
- PowerPoint slides #19–20

PREPARATION

- Create sticky labels (one per student)
- Have PowerPoint slide #19 ready but not showing

SUGGESTED PROCESS

1. Tell the students that the next activity will explore labelling.
2. Attach a label to the back of every student. Tell them they are not allowed to look at their own label and no one else should tell them what it says. Emphasize that the labels are randomly attached and have nothing to do with the student’s actual qualities.
3. Ask the students to talk to each other about their future goals. They can circulate and speak to several different people. They need to treat each other according to their assigned label. For example, “hyper” may be repeatedly told to calm down and relax.
4. After eight minutes have the students come together in a circle remove their labels.
5. Show slide #19 and debrief the activity using the questions below.

Reactions (What?)

 - How were you treated by others? What was that like for you?
 - Any similar experiences? Different experiences?
 - How did it feel to label others?
 - How did this treatment impact the message you were trying to communicate?

Processing (So What?)

 - How does labelling limit what you are able to see and understand about someone?
 - How can labelling lead to unfair or hurtful behaviour?
 - Is having a positive label always a good thing?
 - How is labelling related to bullying?
 - What impact can labelling have on a school environment?

Applying (Now What?)

 - What did you learn from this exercise?
 - Will you do anything differently after this exercise?

6. Say “If a label is something we put on a person because of the way we believe they look or act, what is a stereotype?” Allow for a few responses. Reveal slide #20: **Stereotypes are labels that we put on groups of people without knowing much about them.**
7. Place a garbage can in the middle of the circle and remind the students again that **THEY ARE NOT THEIR LABEL.** Ask each person to throw their label in the garbage.

CONCLUSION

- Labels and stereotypes give us incorrect and narrow ideas about people.
- Labels and stereotypes can also be used as a reason for treating people unfairly and sometimes as a reason to bully others.
- It is important to question the labels and stereotypes we have for people and look beyond our assumptions to see the whole person.

HINT

- Please choose labels that will be meaningful to your group, yet not unsafe. Some examples you may want to include are: hyper, athletic, cute, friendly, emo, wannabe, smart, unclean, lazy, forgetful, weak, musical, funny, hipster, doofus, techie, etc.
- You may wish to consult with your Adult Advisor for this part of the activity.