

ENGAGING YOUNG MEN AS ALLIES TOOLKIT

Curriculum Unit #2: Inside/Outside

(This is adapted by YWAT from a project that was originally developed by Karen Akamine)

OBJECTIVE

To express the self that you let people see on the outside and explore the self that is on the inside, underneath.

TIME

1.5 hour

MATERIALS

- 9" X 12" Colored Construction Paper
- Chalk Pastels
- Paper Towels
- Pens and Writing Paper

Alternative Variations: This activity could be done using collage instead of pastels. Plus if you are doing collage, you could do it on boxes or paper bags instead of construction paper.

SESSION AGENDA

- Intro/Ground rules: 5 min
- Check-in: 10 min
- Journal Writing: 10 min
- Creation: 30 min
- Poetry Discussion: 20 minutes
- Closing Circle: 10 min

FACILITATOR NOTE—SPACE SET-UP

It helps things go smoothly when you have the supplies prepared and set up in advance. Try various folds so it will be easy to show the teens some possibilities. Use the pastels to make an

example yourself. That way, you can make sure the supplies are ready and you'll notice if there's anything else to add.

ACTIVITY

Welcome:

When possible, try to individually welcome each participant and let them know you're glad they're there. One-on-one contact can help them get connected and feel safe and comfortable enough to truly use their time for themselves.

Introduction:

The project we are doing is called "Inside/Outside." It is a chance to explore the "you" that people see on the outside, and the "you" that you know is on the inside. We will be using folded paper and pastels to create our inside and outside selves in shapes and colors." (Optional: show samples.)

Ground Rules:

We need some ground rules to help create respect and safety. Can anyone think of a ground rule that would help? Are there any other ground rules you'd like to add?

Check-in Circle:

"Before we start the art, we'll have a check-in circle so everyone has a chance to share their name, how they are feeling today, and any feelings about doing art." (This is a time to reassure anyone who's scared of art that it's fine, and to tell anyone who "hates" art that's fine too. Remind them that they don't have to do it. They can just watch if they want to. If they are given the freedom, they will probably choose to join in, even if they say they're just going to watch. If they don't want to say anything for "check-in," let them know that's fine too.)

Journaling Warm-up:

"Let's start with a journaling warm-up. Divide a paper into two columns. On the left side, write 'Inside' and on the right side, write 'Outside.' Fill the left side of the page with any words that describe how you feel on the inside, and fill the right side of the page with any words that describe the 'you' that people see on the outside."

Creation:

"Now pick a piece of construction paper and fold it so it has an inside and an outside. Think about the outside of you, and then start with the outside of your paper. On the outside are you bright or dark? Are you sharp or soft? Are you foggy or clear? With the pastels, use shapes and colors to draw how you are on the outside. When you are ready, move to the inside. Open up your paper and begin to think about how you are on the inside. Are you bright or dark? Are you one color or many colors? Are you soft or rough? Use pastels to draw shapes and colors that show

the inside “you” on the inside of your paper. When you are finished, take some time to write any words that go with your drawing.”

Poetry Discussion:

“Now I would like to have three volunteers who are willing to read the following poem. Thanks for reading this. What is this poem about? Who is the poet speaking to? Have you ever felt that you “wear the mask?” When have you worn a “mask?” When do you take off your mask?”

WE WEAR THE MASK

By Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906)

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, --
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.
Why should the world be overwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
 We wear the mask.
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise,
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
 We wear the mask!

Naomi Remen writes:

“Most of us wear masks. We may have worn them so long; we may have forgotten we have put them on. Sometimes our culture may even demand we wear them (p.146, My Grandfather’s Blessings).” What does this quote mean?

Closing Circle:

At the end of the session, a Closing Circle can give each participant an opportunity to share what she/he created and talk about what it means and how it felt to make. Just like the Check-in Circle, give each participant a chance to speak. Validate their courage for opening themselves up to their own creativity and respecting whatever came out.

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