
COMMON HUMAN TRAIT

The facilitator will use the accompanying Prezi presentation to assist with this activity. Explain that you are going to provide the participants with a list of 13 clues about a common human trait and they have to try to identify that trait. You will display the clues one at a time. If a participant feels that they know the answer to raise their hand, but if they do not they should keep their hand lowered. At the end of the show, take guesses as to what people believe the trait to be. It is likely that some will list sexual orientation as the trait and encourage the participants to believe this up until you reveal the true answer. At this point, you can provide the details towards the end of the slide show and use this information to show the similarities in the research about the two traits. Provide information in the facilitator observations as a way of following up with this exercise and then lead into the facilitation questions.

FACILITATION QUESTIONS

- What is your reaction to learning that these statistics are about left-handedness?
- Everyone should get some scratch paper and something to write with. With your non-dominant hand, write, “Western Oregon University Safe Zone” on that paper. What were the feelings you had when writing this? You may have feelings of inadequacy, frustration, failure, not being able to live up to society’s standards. These are the same feelings that many LGBTQ people face when they have to hide or pass in society on a daily basis.
- Is left-handedness something that can truly be changed? How about sexual orientation or gender identity?
- Why do you think that sexual orientation and gender identity is so morally judged while many other human traits are value-neutral?
- How do you think we can come to a place where sexual orientation and gender identity are accepted like left-handedness is today?

FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS

- Society’s impressions towards left-handedness have been left-phobic in the past. Not too long ago (and still may be done today), teachers will try to force natural left-handed children to write with their right hands. What are some products that are not designed for a left-handed person in mind? (Scissors, desks, cars...) Left-handedness was also a sign of being a witch and has recently been associated with impurity.
- Everyone should get some scratch paper and something to write with. With your non-dominant hand, write, “Western Oregon University Safe Zone” on that paper. What were the feelings you had when writing this? You may have feelings of inadequacy, frustration, failure, not being able to live up to society’s standards. That is sometimes the same feelings that LGBTQ people face when they have to hide or pass in society on a daily basis.
- Relay that this example doesn’t exactly parallel the experiences of sexual orientation and gender identity in society, but it does serve as an interesting example and a metaphor.