

## **BUSINESS APPLICATION: DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

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| <b>Overview</b>  | Workers will address the issue of discrimination in the workplace. They will also identify strategies for combating it. |
| <b>Time</b>      | 65 minutes (Session can be broken into two 40-minute sessions)  |
| <b>Materials</b> | Paper and markers; masking tape   |

### **Procedure:**

1. Remind everyone that discrimination takes many forms. Ask participants to brainstorm examples of discrimination. List their answers on paper or a chalkboard. Include any of the following that participants neglect to mention:
  - Teasing, name calling, or using derogatory terms for race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender
  - Excluding someone from activities, or ignoring or denying requests based on the requester's race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity
  - Sexually, physically or verbally attacking someone (especially with the 'authorities' ignoring, condoning, or even encouraging this behavior)
  - Treating someone unfairly in the workplace, public spaces, or educational institutions (for example, denying someone a job or a raise on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age)
2. Ask participants to think of a time when they or someone they care about was treated unfairly or unequally because they were members of some specific group. Ask for volunteers to share these experiences; use the questions that you wrote up prior to the session.
3. Record the main idea of each experience on a single sheet of paper. (You will use these ideas later.) If participants hesitate to volunteer, begin the discussion by describing an incident that you witnessed or that occurred to you or to someone you care about. Ask participants to identify what would have helped in the situation. Then encourage others to share their stories.
4. Ask what strategies and techniques the students might use to confront and combat similar discrimination, if they saw it happening now. Help them identify effective techniques. List their ideas on the board or paper. Some ideas include: assertively asking the harasser to stop; standing up for the person who is being discriminated against; distracting everyone with humor; calling someone in authority, etc.
5. Explain that you are going to give the group a few minutes to practice the new technique using the five steps. Divide participants into groups of four or five and assign each group one of the posted discriminatory situations that were listed earlier in the session. If necessary, add more situations to the list.
6. Tell the participants that they will have 15 minutes for this next part. Go over the following instructions:
  - Decide as a group if the five steps to stopping harassment would work in the situation presented to the group. If so, create a role play to demonstrate how to use the technique. If the group doesn't think the steps will work, create a role play for another technique that your group believes might work.
  - Practice role playing the situation.
  - Be prepared to perform your role play for the other groups.
  - When the groups have finished, have them present their role plays. Invite other participants to make additional suggestions for confronting and combating discrimination.

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Adapted from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/lessonplans/discrimination.htm>

Instead of using a chalkboard/dry erase board, the teacher could use Google presenter. This could provide a more effective presentation which will grab the audience and make for a memorable lesson what will stay with the listeners. By creating this lesson with Google presenter, you could also make this lesson available online for future reference.