

Creative Interventions and Activities Clearinghouse

Name the Difference: Exploring Diversity Through Writing

Stella B. Kerl-McCain

Lewis and Clark College

Purpose:

The purpose of this creative intervention is to explore and become more comfortable with confronting issues of diversity in the counseling session.

Materials Needed:

3x5 inch cards

Procedures:

This exercise can be used with any of the specific populations and any of the models that you may wish to use to illustrate the multiple dimensions of racial/ethnic identity and other status differences. Using any multi-dimensional or multi-contextual model, the class lists various categories for each dimension. For example, suppose your model has four dimensions in it. Make a list of possible characteristics of a client within each dimension (i.e., born in U.S., spoke another language growing up, currently English dominant, parents divorced at early age, lower SES growing up but now a fairly wealthy business owner, ethnic phenotype, etc.).

The class creates a list of presenting problems for coming to counseling. Combine one or more characteristics from each dimension onto a 3x5 card, then add one presenting problem. Each card should contain at several contextual variables and one presenting problem. Students blindly select one card each. Students then pair up to role-play one counselor, one client (can use triads with an observer, if desired). The “client” is a role-played character based on the information on the 3x5 card. The counselor’s objective is to bring up, in some way, the differences in terms of power/status/race/class/gender/etc. between them and their “client.” Discuss and switch roles.

Process Questions and Follow-Up:

When all students have had a turn to be counselor, discuss with the class.

Practice Setting:

Counselor Education