

Homophobia Role Play

GOAL: To provide a stimulus to spur discussion about assumptions we make in interactions with others; to generate potential alternatives to those assumptions.

TIME REQUIRED: 20 minutes.

MATERIALS: None.

PHYSICAL SETTING: Enough space to perform role play in front of group.

PROCESS: This role play can either be performed by facilitators or by audience volunteers. The format involves reading the scripted roles below and then asking the audience for feedback about the interaction.

This scene takes place in a work setting. The characters are at work on a Monday lunch break. They are co-workers and are just getting to know one another. Watch this interaction and pay attention to your feelings.

Heterosexual person (H); Gay/Lesbian person (GL) -- do not reveal these roles to the audience.

H: Hey, how's everything going? You adjusting to the work around here?

GL: Yeah, I guess it's ok. I've had worse jobs!

H: So what have you been up to? Did you do anything fun over the weekend?

GL: I went out for a little bit.

H: Yeah? Did you have a date or anything?

GL: One night I did. We went out dancing for a while and partied at a friend's house. Nothing too thrilling.

H: So who are you going out with? Maybe I know him (her if GL is male).

GL: Oh, you probably don't know this person.

H: No, really. I know lots of people around campus. I've been seeing a guy (woman if S is male) on and off since I've been at school here and he's (she's) a blast to be around. We should all go out sometime. There's always something going on.

GL: I'm really a private person so I keep to myself most of the time. Thanks anyway, though.

H: All right, but if you change your mind, be sure to let me know! I could probably even fix you up with one of my guy friends (female friends if GL is male).

First, ask participants in role play how it felt to be in their role. What did you notice about this interaction? What assumptions were being made? Have you ever found yourself in this type of situation? How would it feel to be in either of these people's shoes?

Now re-do the role-play with direction from the audience. How could we construct this scene differently? How might the heterosexual person respond making fewer assumptions? "Freeze frame" the role play at times if the actors get stuck or if assumptions continue to be made. If necessary, make specific suggestions for how to be sensitive to assumptions (e.g. respect privacy; use terms such as partner; avoid use of pronouns unless gender is

known). Also note that this scenario does not mean to imply that just because a person is private they are also gay or lesbian or that just because a person is gay or lesbian that he/she will be private about that characteristic.

SOURCE: Developed by Lori Davis and Karen Hampton while they were involved in the Outreach/Paraprofessional Practicum Program, Counseling Center, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.