Learn + Serve + Give

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Facilitator Instructions: Post-it Note Empathy Building Exercise

OVERVIEW:

1. Provide all group members with 16 small Post-it notes, laid out in a 4 x 4 square.

2. On each of the Post-it notes in the first row, write the name of one person who is important in your life.

3. On each of the Post-it notes in second row, write the name of one item that is important in your life (e.g. phone, toothbrush).

4. On each of the Post-it notes in the third row, write one relationship role that is important in your life (e.g. parent, friend, sibling).

5. On each of the Post-it notes in the fourth row, write one activity that is important in your life (e.g. reading, sports, drawing).

6. For a moment, reflect on the people/items/relationships/ activities that you wrote on your Post-it notes. Why are they important? What difference do they make in your life?

7. Stand up and move to one seat/space to the left or right. Randomly choose four Post-it notes to take away from your neighbor's grid.

8. Again, move one seat/space, in the same direction as last time. Randomly choose one Post-it from each row of your neighbor's grid to take away.

9. Go back to your own spot and review the Post-it notes that remain in your grid.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

16 Post-it notes per participant

Pen/pencil/marker for each participant

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Imagine only having what remains in your Post-it note grid. What are your initial thoughts? How do you feel?

2. Someone else made the decisions for you as to who/what remains; how does that feel?

3. If you had control of what to remove from your grid, would you have made different choices?

4. Of the remaining people/items/relationships/ activities, what seems most important? How does that differ from what you thought when you created your initial 16 Post-it notes?

5. What from your grid would you miss the most?

6. What are the situations that may take away people or things of importance without our choice?

7. What other thoughts/feelings emerged when considering your losses?