

NAME: The Box

SOURCE: Adapted from Roslyn Weisman's Owing Up Curriculum

INTENTION: This exercise is helpful for groups to explore the difference between personal values and compliance to cultural/family/peer expectations (peer pressure).

MATERIALS:

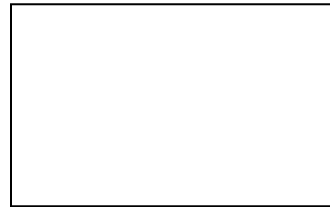
1. White board and marker

SCRIPT: (Written instructions for Group Leader)

Many times when we say something is a "value" it may not be something that is important to us personally. Instead it is something we have learned is important to other people, our family or our friends. We may value fitting in and getting along, but not everything we think we need to do to fit in or get along.

This activity can help us to talk about the difference between what we think is important and the expectations of the people around us.

Draw a large box on a white board or sheet of paper:



What do boys need to look like, act like, and be like in order to get respect from others?

Write these responses inside the box.

What do boys need to look like, act like, and be like in order to not get respect from others?

Write these responses outside of the box.

Examples or prompts to get things going: ***Where would you put being athletic, poor, well dressed, overweight, sensitive, emotional, good at school, or dating a lot of girls?***

Draw another box:

What do girls need to look like, act like, and be like in order to get respect from others?
Write these responses inside the box.

What do girls need to look like, act like, and be like in order to not get respect from others?

Write these responses outside of the box.

Examples or prompts to get things going: ***Where would you put being athletic, not stylish, overweight, competitive, good at school, dating a lot of guys?***

DISCUSSION: Possible questions or topics to address

- How do people respond when people act outside of the box to try to get them back into the box?
- When people choose to reject cultural values, to act outside of the box, is this just another box? Do people who are rejecting some values tend to reject all values or feel reluctant to act inside the box?
- What is it like to comply to expectations that are not consistent with your true values; to pretend you are in the box when you are really out of the box?
- Are there other boxes for race, age, sexual orientation, interests (art, sports, chess, or theatre)?
- How do these boxes cause stress or conflict?
- How could these boxes lead to bullying, abuse, or victimization?
- How do these boxes limit personal choice and freedom?