

Climbing Out

1. Are You In Or Out?

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space or gym/outdoor space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 10 or more

Time: 15 minutes

Introduction: This activity allows students to role-play two opposite situations: being part of a group and not being allowed to be part of a group. In the process, students will discuss what it feels like to be on both sides. This activity will be conducted in three phases.

Materials:

- None

Activity:

Divide the class into three equal groups. Have one person from each group leave the room. Try to choose students who are confident so their self-esteem isn't damaged when they are excluded.

Phase 1: Have each group form a tight circle, standing with their arms around each other. Invite the three people outside the room to come back in and tell them to join their group. You will have instructed the group to ignore them and not let them into the circles. Let the students try to join the groups for two to three minutes then send them (or three new people) back out of the room.

Phase 2: Instruct the groups this time to let the individual into the group but to ignore them and exclude them from the group discussion. Instruct them on how to exclude that person. For example, if the individual begins to talk, someone should interrupt them so they can't finish speaking. Have the group begin a discussion about what they are doing for fun this weekend before inviting the three people back into the room. Allow this discussion to go on for two or three minutes then send them (or three new people) back out of the room.

Phase 3: This time, instruct the groups to accept the individuals back into their circles, including them in their conversations and helping them feel welcome. Have the group give special attention to the individual, asking questions and showing interest. Give the group a conversation topic. Example: If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you go and why? For this phase, try to pick an individual who could use a self-esteem boost.

Processing the Experience:

- How did it feel to be excluded?
- How did it feel to be ignored?
- How did it feel to be included?
- How did it feel to include the person in the final phase?
- Have any of you ever felt excluded from a group? How did it feel?
- How might it feel for someone who is consistently excluded by the people around them?
- How does excluding others sometimes keep them in the pot?
- What are some ways that you can help someone who is lonely or struggling feel more included?