

Stand & Declare

http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/reflection_manual/activities.html

This activity helps everyone learn to disagree without being disagreeable, but must be carefully facilitated. Questions are intentionally stated to allow for personal interpretation and to limit responses to one of the four categories.

1. Set up your space with four corners.
2. Each corner should have one of the following signs posted so they are visible to the rest of the group. Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.
3. The facilitator makes a statement to the group, to which members can strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.
4. Groups form around each of the four responses to the statement, showing the group's "differences."
5. Members from each opinion group are asked to explain their stance, fleshing out the many facets of the issue. People must listen carefully, and can change positions if they change perspectives. Several group members will want to take some sort of an intermediate stance, but should be encouraged to choose the stance about which they feel the strongest, or which is their instinctive response.
6. Debrief the process: Part of processing this activity can then be discussion how it felt to be so limited, to be categorized.

Sample statements:

- There are not enough art programs offered in BPS
- Communication is very important in any work environment
- We need more jobs for young people
- Students should have a say in all school-based decisions
- Drugs use is a big problem in our community
- If you don't solve the problem then you are part of the problem

Alternative to Stand and Declare (from Students Trained in Advocacy and Community Service)

Different groups are asked to stand in front of the rest of the participants. For example, all **Latino/a** individuals stand in front of the room. The group then answers four questions:

- What is wonderful about being **Latino/a**?
- What term do you never want to be called again?
- How can the participants that are listening be helpful to **Latino/a** people?
- Do you feel heard?

After the group in front of the other participants answers the questions, another, group is selected to gather together and answer the questions. This exercise is affirming and provides an opportunity for individuals to draw on their own experiences, their own stories, etc. This tends to be a good exercise for building common ground and bonding groups.