

## Main Activity: Our Diversity Iceberg

Adapted from operationrespect.org

Draw or post a picture of an iceberg in your PowerPoint or class and name it "Iceberg of our differences."  
(Sample below)

**10% of the iceberg is above the waterline: These are the differences about us that we/others can see.**

### Iceberg of Our Differences

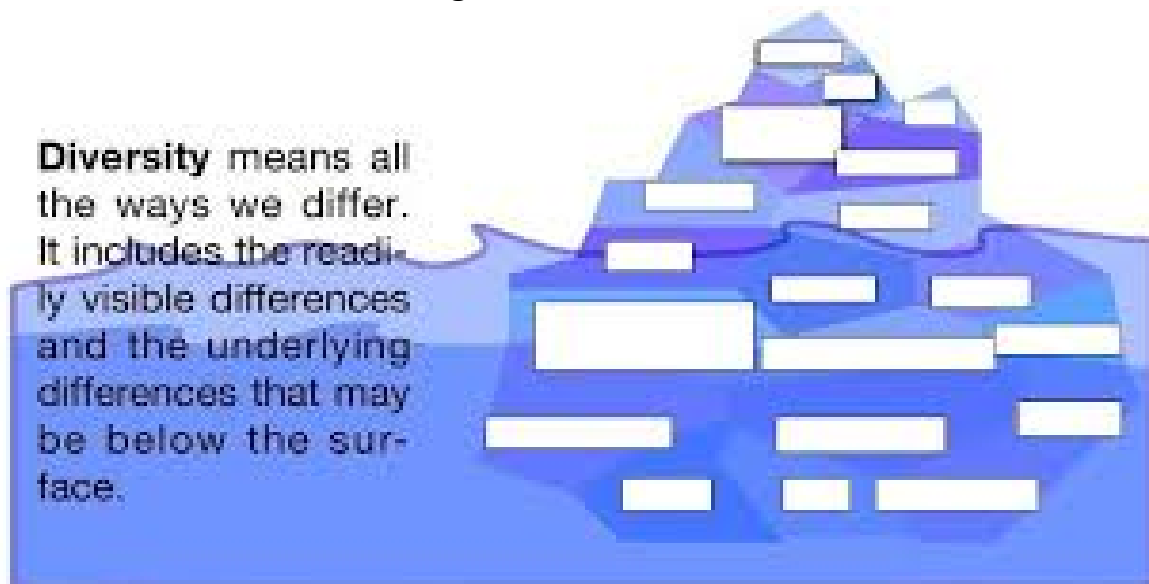


Image borrowed from Future Child Advocates (FCA) Cross the Line – Diversity Iceberg Activity Ideas

**90% of the iceberg is below the waterline: these are the difference that we/others can't see.**

Activity – It is important to frame the discussion around the definition of **Diversity** “meaning all the ways we differ. It includes the readily visible differences and the underlying differences that may be below the surface.”

I will then ask the students to give me examples of an area of difference and tell me if it is an **Above the line** or **Below the line** characteristic. This is a good way to encourage discussion on differences. If the students in the class struggle to fill up the top or bottom of the iceberg or you need examples to help get your students started you can talk about the ones I have included:

Above the line examples: size, appearance, gender, age, color, race(sometimes!), etc.

Below the line examples: religion, education, family, ethnicity, beliefs, talents, etc.

This opening activity then leads in nicely to the “Cross the Line” exercise.

Submitted by Deb Novak during Rethinking Race Open House and Roundtable hosted by ITL

# Crossing the Line

Being a part of The University of Akron and this class, we recognize diversity as all of the ways that each of us is unique – not only with regard to categories we usually think of – race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability and national origin – but in hundreds of other ways. Things like values, hobbies, interests, family background, politics, etc.

In order to visualize how diverse we are we're going to participate in an activity called "Crossing the Line." The exercise itself is fairly simple. I will ask that all of you gather on one side of the room in a line and face its center. Once everyone has gathered together, I will call out specific categories/labels/descriptions and ask that all of those to whom this applies walk to the other side of the room. For example, I might request, "Cross the Line if you have a mustache" If this describes you and you feel comfortable acknowledging it, you would walk to this side of the room. Once there, you will turn and face the crowd you just left. While this is occurring, I ask that each of us get in touch with our feelings and think about those people who are both on your side of the room and the other side of the room. Don't be afraid to "make the human connection" and look at each other, make eye contact and silently acknowledge our similarities and differences. After a few seconds, I will ask those who crossed the line to return to the original side of the room, and I will continue with another category.

This is a challenge by choice activity, so there is no pressure to cross the room if you don't feel comfortable doing so. You will need to make that decision. At the conclusion of the activity we will discuss what we felt and what we learned. There may be times when this activity makes you feel slightly uncomfortable. I would urge you to lean into that discomfort since it may mean that you are about to gain an important learning or insight. However, if the discomfort becomes too intense, you may stop participating at any time. No questions will be asked and we will respect your decision.

**There are a few important ground rules for this activity.** (The Facilitator may need to revisit the ground rules if participants begin to talk or begin become restless.)

1. **The first involves listening.** Let's have silence throughout the exercise – no talking, snickering, giggling, nonverbal messages.
2. **It is imperative that we respect the dignity of each person who is here. All that is shared should remain confidential. Nothing that is offered should leave this room.** However, if after the class you really need to talk or process this exercise please feel reach out to me.

Any questions?

Let's begin...

**Note to facilitator** - You may want to highlight the questions you will use or not use in your class. You may add to the list of questions provided below as these are merely suggestions.

It is important that you pause to give participants time to cross the line, stand on the opposite side of the room (pause for 3-5 seconds once everyone has crossed and turned around) and then give them the cue to return or "cross back."

## Cross the line if...

You trust others easily.  
You trust the facilitator of this activity.  
You trust the people in this room.

You are from this state.  
You are from this region (the North/South/East/West).  
You were born in another country.

You are a fan of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert popular sports team).  
You are a fan of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert rival sports team).

You are right handed.  
You are left handed.  
You are ambidextrous.

You are the oldest child in the family.  
You are the youngest child in the family.  
You are the only child in the family.  
You have four or more siblings.

You are a vegetarian.  
You have food allergies.

You consider yourself a Democrat.  
You consider yourself a Republican.  
You consider yourself a Socialist.  
You consider yourself an Independent.  
You honestly don't care about politics.  
You think you will vote in the next election.

You are single.  
You are engaged.  
You are married / partnered.  
You are divorced.

You have traveled outside of the United States.  
You have lived outside of the United States.

This school was your first choice of college.  
You feel people at this school, truly see the real you.  
You are happy with the direction that your classes are going.  
You plan on graduating from this school.

You wish you had more money.  
You have a tattoo.  
You miss high school.  
You look forward to going home.  
In the past year, you have been in a relationship and been hurt.  
You forgive others easily.  
If you believe you have found the person you are going to marry.

While in college...  
You want to be an RA.  
You want to be a member of a Greek letter organization.  
You play hall sports.  
You drank underage.  
You violated visitation policy.  
You were documented for a campus violation.  
You were on probation at your university.  
You want to be on the dean's list.

You consider yourself Catholic.  
You consider yourself Protestant.  
You consider yourself Atheist.  
You consider yourself Agnostic.  
You consider yourself another religion other than those mentioned  
You don't align with any particular religious sect.

You consider yourself a person of color.  
You consider yourself multi-racial or multi-ethnic.  
You have immediate family members of a different racial/ethnic background from yourself.  
You feel you know very little about your cultural heritage.  
You have ever been discriminated against based on your race.

You consider yourself a feminist.  
You consider yourself an environmentalist.  
You consider yourself an activist.  
You don't believe in recycling.

You have to wear glasses or contacts.  
You have a learning disability.  
You have or had some type of serious medical issue.  
You have some type of medical disability.  
You have ever broken a bone.  
You are able bodied.

You would describe your family as blue collar or working class.  
You would describe your family as middle class.  
You would describe your family as upper class.  
If you have ever felt embarrassed about your family's economic class.

Your parents are married (never divorced).  
Your parents divorced or currently going through a divorce.  
You come from a single-parent home.  
You have a step-family.  
You were raised by someone other than your biological parents.

You have a parent that you have never met.  
Both of your parents are still living.  
Both of your parents are deceased.  
You consider yourself estranged from your mother.  
You consider yourself estranged from your father.  
You wish you were closer to one or both of your parents.  
You have a sibling that you are close to.

You have a family member who is gay, lesbian or bi-sexual.  
You identify as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual.  
You know someone who is transgender.  
You have questioned your sexual orientation.

You do not drink at all  
You have struggled with alcohol / drug use in the past.  
You currently have an addiction that you would like to tackle.  
You have experienced the effects of alcoholism in the family.

You have experienced the effects of violence in the family.  
You have had a friend or relative who attempted to commit suicide  
You have experience the effects of drug addiction in the family

## Cross the line if...

You feel that you are a person of great worth or significance.

You have a low self-esteem.

You feel physically unattractive.

You feel physically attractive.

You would like to lose ten or more pounds.

You worry too much.

You feel lonely.

You feel disconnected from the world around you.

You have seriously considered suicide.

You feel that you have someone in your life who is proud of you.

You feel loved by someone.

You feel comfortable saying I love you to people of your same gender.

You are truly comfortable sharing your feelings with others.

There is something you need to say to someone in this room...that you haven't said.

You are proud of the person you are today.

You would re-live your life if you could.

You are for the most part, happy with your life.

You feel that others really understand you.

You think that you treat others the way that you should.

You have ever lost someone you loved.

You carry any guilt over the loss of anyone (like you maybe could have prevented it).

You are a virgin.

You wish you were a virgin.

You have ever had unprotected sex.

You have ever had a pregnancy scare.

You have ever gotten a girl pregnant.

You have had a sexual experience that you regretted.

You are a survivor of sexual abuse or assault.

You have overcome a major medical issue in your life.

You've ever stood by and watched while someone was hurt and said or did nothing because you were too afraid.

You have cried at least once in the past week.

You have cried at least once in the past year.

You want a hug right now.

Cross the line if you should have crossed the line during an earlier question...but for whatever reason you did not.

### Discussion Questions:

- What kind of feelings did you have as you participated?
- What was the hardest part for you?
- What did you learn about yourself? About others?
- How did you feel when there were very few of you on one side of the room?
- How were you influenced by the movement of others?
- What do you want to remember about what we've just experienced?
- What if anything, do you want to tell others in this class about your experience of this activity?