

## Potato examination

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### Summary

This activity helps you eliminate stereotyping and recognize the uniqueness of each individual.

### Aims

To learn more about stereotypes.

### Participants

any

### Method

examination, discussion

### Source

Patreese D. Ingram (2017). *More Diversity Activities for Youth and Adults*. Retrieved from:  
<https://extension.psu.edu/more-diversity-activities-for-youth-and-adults>

### Keywords

culture, diversity, awareness

### Contributor

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### Description

Select one potato and tell a story about it. Hold up your potato in front of the group and say, "I have here a potato. I don't know about you, but I've never thought that much about potatoes. I've always taken them for granted. To me, potatoes are all much alike. Sometimes I wonder if potatoes aren't a lot like people."

Give one potato to each participant. Tell them to examine their potatoes, get to know its defects, bumps, and scars for about one minute or so in silence. Get to know your potato well enough to be able to introduce your 'friend' to the group.

After a few minutes, tell participants that you'd like to start by introducing your "friend" to them. (Share a story about your potato and how it got its bumps.) Then tell the participants that you would like to meet their friends. Ask who will introduce their friend first. (Ask for several, if not all, to tell the group about their potatoes.)

When participants have introduced their "friends" to the group, take the bag around to each person. Ask them to please put their "friends" back into the bag.

Ask the group, "Would you agree with the statement 'all potatoes are the same'? Why or why not?"  
Ask them to try to pick out their "friend" back. Mix up the potatoes and roll them out onto a table.  
Ask everyone to come up and pick out their potatoes.

After everyone has their potatoes and you have your "friend" back, say, "Well, perhaps potatoes are a little like people. Sometimes, we lump people of a group all together. When we think, 'They're all alike,' we are really saying that we haven't taken the time or thought it is important enough to get to know the person. When we do, we find out everyone is different and special in some way, just like our potato friends."

Discuss the answers to the following questions:

1. When we lump everyone from the same group together and assume, they all have the same characteristics, what are we doing? What is this called?
2. Do you know a lot of people from your environment you tend to lump together? Do they all fit the stereotype?
3. Why are stereotypes dangerous?

## Material

A paper bag with potatoes, one potato for each participant, and one potato for the trainer.

## Advice for Facilitators

Ask participants to think about the community they live in. If they have problems give them some of the following groups: women in their community, men in their community, women in work, men in work, group of parents, etc.

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Category: Social Learning, Group size: Small group, Duration: 30 min

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