Diversity Web –

(Display large spider web image on slide deck or on flipchart)

Tell participants: We are going to do this activity in 3 rapid fire rounds. Ask them to quickly form a large circle—similar to the far outside strand of a spider web; Facilitator stands slightly inside circle or in the center.

Round 1 - Address the Group:

You are being asked to engage in a Diversity Web (variation on Diversity Shuffle). Keep in mind this is a SafeSpace; you will weave yourself into the web according to your own comfort level. You’ll be asked a series of questions to which you will respond “Yes” if you identify. However if you identify with a Yes, but you aren’t comfortable having that known in this group, don’t respond. We also honor the Vegas rule: What you Hear Here, Stays Here.

Facilitator Note: This activity is an exercise in awareness, getting to know others, and as role models for 4-H Youth…it helps us visualize Differences with a positive lens.

For this 1st set of questions, if your answer is YES, take a step toward the inside of the Web. If your answer is NO, stay put. You may be asked to take more steps toward the inside. You’re at the whim of the facilitator!

Ask:

1. Have you ever felt sad or cried?
2. Is the frame of your body in the form of a bony skeleton?
3. Have you ever felt proud of something you’ve done?
4. Do you have any veins under your skin?
5. Have you ever made a mistake?
6. Have you ever worked with young people under the age of 21?
7. Do you have any muscles in your body?
8. Have you ever been thirsty?
9. Does your body contain at least one functioning organ?
10. Have you ever wanted to be loved?

Facilitator Notes/Outcome: You want to ask as many questions as possible to get them all into the “inner circle.” Of course all answers will be Yes, so all participants are huddled tightly together-too tight!

You can back out of the circle and return to your original position: What did you notice/feel?

Facilitator notes: You may get answers such as “too warm or too hot”—relate that to a build-up of energy—for the next 3 days, let’s take that and turn it into positive energy! You may get answers such as “uncomfortable” - “Felt too close” –

Debrief on Round 1

This first set of questions shows how we are bound together in our humanity. We need to remember that first before we can celebrate diversity and create safe environments that promote inclusivity
Round 2 – Second set of questions: if your answer is YES, please move backward two steps. If your answer is NO, stay put.

Ask:

1. Do you have black hair? (natural or from a bottle)
2. Are you wearing a red shirt today?
3. Are you left handed?
4. Can you touch your tongue to your nose?
5. Are you wearing shoes that tie?

Notice who is in your identity group. Please return to your original position in the web. You might ask if it matters that someone wears tie shoes, or point to your own hair and ask if it matters that you have brown hair, or green hair, or no hair when you work on a project together or play on a sports team, etc.?

Debrief on Round 2: These questions pointed out difference --do these differences really matter? Are we aware enough to understand the differences that simply don’t matter when we engage, collaborate, work with others?

Variations on Diversity Web: This version is formatted for 15-20 minutes. A longer variation would allow for, more questions, and more in-depth debrief after each round of questions, which can be valuable especially for the Round 3 Questions.
Round 3:

For this 3rd set of questions, if your answer is YES, please move into the center of the Web. If your answer is NO, stay put. If you are a MAYBE “on the fence” – for the purposes of this activity let’s have you identify as a YES – of course honoring your comfort level -

Ask: (facilitator note: after participants identify with Yes and enter center of web, thank them, ask them to return to perimeter)

1. You were a first generation college student - return to Web Perimeter
2. Your native language is other than English
3. You, or a family member, close friend have been affected by alcohol or chemical dependency
4. You have been described as outgoing, gregarious
5. You are of Jewish heritage
6. You have been singled out, demeaned, ignored/looked over, or insulted based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation…anything else
7. You are a Veteran or grew up in a military family
8. You, or a family member or close friend, have a visible or hidden disability or impairment
9. You grew up in a town or area of less than 1,000 residents
10. You have (or had) more than 2 siblings
11. You spent some of your childhood years in a single-parent household
12. You have lived outside the U.S. for more than 3 months
13. You have slept outdoors
14. You, or a close friend or family member identify as LGBT
15. You live or have lived in an urban area of more than 1 million people
16. You grew up on a farm

Look around at the people inside your strands of the web…return to the outside strand

Debrief on Round 3:

This set of questions reveals the differences that make you unique, that may have made your life more challenging than your neighbor but developed your personal resiliency, and are the differences that define who we are, how we perceive and take action in the world, and what we can bring to the table. These differences enrich our own lives, our communities, our families--they are the differences that strengthen the web of life.

Nurturing Diversity and Growing Inclusivity

The spider web is strong, resilient, a tool for sustaining life; it’s beautiful, amazing, and, at the same time, it’s fragile and vulnerable. Each strand of the web represents our diversity! If we tear out strands because we don’t identify with them, or understand them, or we fear them, or we haven’t been exposed to them, then we weaken the web and lose the sustaining power of our humanity!

--Deborah Mann