1.9 Seeing the Whole Person

Objectives

Create an awareness of ways in which language can reduce people to one aspect of their beings.

Apply techniques of language to "put the person back in."

Materials needed

Copies of the handout

Time needed

Five to ten minutes

Instructor directions

Help your students examine the sentences on the following page in which a person or group of people is equated with a physical trait, a specific role, or a medical diagnosis.

Have them rewrite the sentence to "put the person back in."

1.9 Seeing the Whole Person Handout

Directions

Examine the following sentences in which a person or group of people is equated with a physical trait, a specific role, or a medical diagnosis.

Rewrite the sentences to "put the person back in."

We are being led by the blind.

After two hours of negotiation, the perpetrator was apprehended.

She is fat.

The psychotics are on Ward One.

In the first sample, subjects were run through the long version of the procedure.

The wives held a barbecue.

Even though he was a liberal and she was a conservative, they got along pretty well.

Dr. Reed specializes in the treatment of stuttering.

The country club does not admit Jews.

He was seen at the premiere with a blonde on each arm.

In the summer, the gays hang out at River Park.

Ms. Singer prosecuted a vicious homicide in district court today.

The blacks sit by the emergency exit and the whites sit by the kitchen.

Answer the following questions:

Why might we accept at face value statements emphasizing certain traits or diagnoses but not others? (Does "He is zit," or "She is cancer" sound "right"?)

How does the reduction of a person to one aspect of their being perpetuate power disparities, emphasis on difference, and cycles of oppression?

How are both the oppressor and the oppressed diminished when "the person is left out"?