

## **Cross the Line Activity 2**

This activity I am going to ask you to do in complete silence. In a moment you will get up and spread out along the line. We ask that you do not stand next to your friends. Also, when you participate in this activity, please make your own decisions. Please listen to your heart...how these things affect you! All silently stand up and move to the other side of the line.

Demonstrate this activity. This line represents privilege and power. When I read a category, if it applies to you, I ask you to cross the line to the other side, then turn around and look at those on the other side. When you cross the line you are crossing over to side in our country that has less power, less privilege. I'd like to remind you that you may show others on either side of the line your support by holding the "I love you" sign. Remember this means, I support you, I'm here for you. Please remember that your feelings are welcome here.

### **Please Cross the line if you are under the age 18**

In this country if you are under 18 your opinion is often invalid, or unimportant. Being under the age of 18 you are not allowed to vote. Youth in this country are often times told they are immature, powerless and small. Sometimes adults abuse their control and determine what you do, or how you think. Youth are led to believe that their thoughts and feelings are not valued in our society.

### **Please Cross the line if you have ever been teased, hurt, bullied, beaten up or been identified in a derogatory manner because of the color of your skin?**

Do you realize throughout the world there have been many people have been killed because of the color of their skin? Every person is different and unique and that should be celebrated, not ridiculed. America is a country made up of individuals from many nations. What if your brother, sister, or mother had a different color skin, would you love them any differently? The color of our skin does not determine anything, other than the color of our skin. We are all humans, living beings with feelings and emotions.

**\*\*If no one crosses the line- what are we missing out on? What could we be learning from individuals from other cultures? How do you think an individual from another race feel if they walked into this room today? We are all humans, living beings with feelings and emotions.**

### **Please cross the line if you have a Physical disability whether you can see it or not**

Did you know that people with disabilities were not recognized as having the same rights as those protected by the Civil Rights Act until 1991? Just over a decade ago, it was not a crime to discriminate against a person with a disability. These individuals stand before us today proving that people with disabilities can succeed. I'm sure every person has experienced a struggle at some point in their life. People with Disabilities overcome struggle everyday and continue to succeed.

**Please cross the line if you are a woman**

Every time this topic is mentioned I have a group of males push one of their friends across the line. Why do we think that being a female is an insult? What message is being sent to all the women in this room? In our society, women are portrayed to have less power, make less money, and often do similar jobs as their male counterparts for less money. Women have historically not been encouraged to accept challenging careers that may take away from their ability to clean, cook, and care for children. We are taught never to show our anger, to always be perfect, to stay thin, and tend to the men in our lives. We fight with other woman and degrade our own to compete for attention and affection.

**Please cross the line if have your parent, or guardian has passed away**

We often look to our parents to mold and guide us. Our parents do the best they can to provide for us, to show us love, and help us find our way in life. Some of us do not have the opportunity today to leave this room and talk to our parents, to say thank you, to say I love you. The death of a parent can leave a blank spot in our lives, and we are expected to pick up the pieces and figure out how to move on. Many work places only allow several days to grieve after the death of a parent. We have been told over and over not to feel, not to show emotion. Your feelings are welcome here today.

**Please cross the line if a friend, family member, or someone you love, died due to drinking alcohol or the result of an alcohol related accident.**

In a state where alcohol is portrayed at every sporting event, every social gathering and often times in our own families, we are made to believe it's the only way to fit in. "It's not just alcohol," It was there life. When people drink alcohol their ability to make rational decisions becomes impaired. The alcohol industry tells you to drink responsibly, yet while under the influence the human brain is incapable of making responsible decisions. These people stand before you today to prove that alcohol does kill. At some point in your life you may be faced with a difficult decision.

**Please cross the line if you have lost a friend or loved one from a tobacco related disease**

The tobacco industry will spend over a million dollars by the time I am done reading you this statement. They are marketing their products to you. They are selling you an image that using tobacco will help you feel free, alive, relaxed and stylish. Tobacco damages every organ in your body. Watching someone suffer and grieving their loss is not stylish, it's not free, or relaxing. It hurts. It's painful. The tobacco industry can not control your thoughts or make your decisions. Please keep these people and their loved ones in your thoughts.

**Please cross the line if you have ever been called gay, queer, or faggot.**

In most schools you can hear these terms everyday. What does this mean? People should feel free to love whoever they want. Why individuals who love the people of the same sex should be deemed as less human, less worthy of love, or less deserving of rights. Homosexuals continue to struggle each day to have the right to love freely. Some say it's okay that they love someone who is the same sex, but don't allow them to show their love. Love is something that should be celebrated. When we were little children, it was okay for 2 girls or 2 boys to hold hands. Why as adults do we need to fear who that a male hugging another male make them gay. Or worry if a female lesbian talks to me, or hugs me; they are trying to convert me. Homophobia is the fear of being the same. Yet EVERYONE in this room deserves to love, and to be loved.

**Please cross the line if you have ever been teased, bullied, or harassed by someone in this room**

Many people act out or say hurtful things to save face. Most people, who bully, have also been bullied themselves. Who have you hurt with your words, or actions? Do you remember what you said? Did they cross the line? Teasing and bullying have driven many young individuals to harm themselves or others. How can you fix this? Have you ever apologized? You will have the opportunity later in this program to reach out to each other.

**Please cross the line if you have ever lived where there was violence or gunshots, or you didn't feel safe.**

We may not realize that many individuals go to bed each night being fearful. It is often difficult to be successful at school if you are always afraid for your safety. Some people do not have the chance to walk outside their home after certain hours. Others may live day by day, not knowing what the next day will bring. We want everyone to feel safe, right here, right now.

**Please cross the line if you have ever been hit, slapped, spanked, pushed, beaten or physically hurt by someone you loved?**

Notice there are some who did not cross the line. Did you even know it was possible to live your whole life without being hurt physically by those you love? Nearly 30 % of American woman have been abused by a spouse or boyfriend. Over 3 million children each year are at risk of physical abuse from a parent and another 29 million children commit and act of violence against a sibling each year in America. Physically harming a loved one can lead them feeling withdrawn, low self-esteem or push them to commit an act of violence against another individual. Violence is never the answer.

**Please cross the line if you or someone you know has ever thought about ending their life**

It is a fact that not "fitting in" makes many kids more than sad. Rejection affects character development and can leave lasting scars. More than 1.5 million Americans under the age of 15

are seriously depressed. We have the ability today in this room to change these statistics. We are so glad that each and every person is here with us today. There are \_ people in this room tonight. I ask each one of you to put your right arm around the shoulder of someone next to you, and now the left arm. There is not a lack of people in this room; there was a lack of connection. That's all it took include another person, to demonstrate that they are valued here today.

**Please cross the line if you were ever told or teased because you were fat or too big**

Where did we learn to judge each other? Who says what body size is the right size. We are all unique & beautiful. When did we learn to be so cruel? Today you get to decide. You are your own person. You are not your body. Your body is a part of you but it does not get to determine who you are.

**Please cross the line if a parent, sibling, aunt, uncle, teacher, or other community member has ever called you a bad kid**

It was a lie. There is no such thing as a bad kid. It is our belief that given enough love, support and guidance everyone has the capacity for greatness and success. We all have the power to dream. What is your dream? Don't let anyone ever tell you that you are not good enough. I am good enough.

**Please cross the line if you have ever been called stupid, dumb, or made to feel that way because of a learning disability**

We all learn things differently. There is no right or wrong way to learn things. Learning is not a contest. Our society tells us you must be able to pass a test in order to be successful in our society. People with learning disabilities have gone on to be extremely successful. There is no test to tell you if you are a good person. There is no test to determine if you are a leader. You are smart.

**Please cross the line if you have ever been teased or put down because of the wearing glasses, having braces, by the way you walked, by the way that you talked, or simply because of who you are?**

Is this the community of you dreams? Is this a place of love? Where did we learn to judge? Who taught us to be so cruel? All it takes is you. Starting today you all can do one thing to make a difference in someone's life.

**In just a bit** you will move back into your family. I encourage each to share what they learned by participating in this program. What are you going to do to make a difference? Maybe this activity brought up something that you want to share with your family. Maybe you want to continue to tear down your own walls. Maybe there is someone who is deserving of your apology. These thoughts, feelings, ideas are welcome in your group.