STANDING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

Materials Needed: None
Length of time: About 15-20 minutes
Size of group: Groups of 15

Have participants sit in a circle. Preferably no more than 15 in a group. If there are more people in attendance, start another circle.

Have people introduce themselves around the circle.

Introduce yourself as the facilitator, and explain the following:
- For the purpose of the exercise, each person in the circle will re-introduce themselves by saying:
  - "Hi, my name is ________, and I am a lesbian/gay man, REGARDLESS of how they self identify.
  - Remind them that nothing said in the room leaves the room, and that confidentiality is to be respected.

Once introductions are completed, begin the discussion by asking questions which the participants are to respond to as if they self-identified as either a gay man or lesbian.

Examples:
- "How do you feel about PDAs? Are you comfortable showing affection to your partner in public?"

- Are you 'out' to your family? Your friends? Your roommates/floor mates?
  - Why or why not?"
  - What is most difficult for you about being out/ not out?"
  - "What do you wish could be different?"

- Other questions will arise during the session, and will often bring the most productive discussion to the table.

- After discussion seems to be winding down, or the time allotted for the program has nearly elapsed, (reserve 10 minutes at the end for processing), invite people to step out of their roles and take a few moments, in silence, to collect themselves.

- Ask the group how the experience has affected them. What, if anything, do they have a better appreciation for? What behaviors of their own do they take for granted, if any? What are they most committed to changing?

- It is helpful to have a second facilitator to take notes on a flip chart or white board, so that the processing has a visual component as well.
Other Considerations:

Please remember to be sensitive to any and all emotions that arise during this program!

To change this program to address other issues, here are some ideas:

- Have men and women trade genders for the purpose of the session.
- What do they see or feel differently? What do they do differently as a member of the opposite gender?
- Have participants take on the roles of a traditionally oppressed racial or ethnic group.

Ask similar questions to the ones used in the GLBT simulation, with some changes.

Examples:

- “What, if anything, is different when you apply for a job than when your Caucasian friends apply?”
- “Are you treated differently in public than the white majority? How so?”
- “Would you date a person of another race? Why or why not? What is the reaction to a mixed couple?”
- “Is there anything you resent about being (African-American, Latino/a, Asian-American, Native American, etc) in this society? What? Why? What could make that different?”