

## Exploring the issues.....sharing opinions!

Debating - Activity 2

### Agree-Disagree-Neutral

- On three separate pieces of paper print one of the following words – agree, disagree, neutral.
- Post these three words in three different corners of the room
- Read out one of the statements on the reverse of this page.
- Instruct students to move towards the word that best expresses their opinions, beliefs or feelings about the statement,
  - **Discuss the beliefs or feelings for choosing to agree, disagree or neutral** in this smaller group and
  - Appoint a spokesperson to report back to the larger group.
- Invite each spokesperson to share their group's feelings or opinions with the larger group **without inviting any discussion.**
- Instruct students to return to their seats.
- Here are some suggested questions to help process this activity in the larger group:
  - How did this feel for you?
  - Did you feel yourself being pulled by the group discussion or by the spokesperson's report?
  - Did you feel approval; did you feel understood during the discussion and the sharing?
  - Did you experience irritability or anger upon hearing opinions, beliefs or feelings that were different from yours?
  - Did the discussions reports allow you to reexamine and rethink your own position?
  - What might these statements target within each individual?
  - How do you account for the variety of feelings or opinions surrounding each statement?
  - What does this activity tell you about people and their reactions to certain statements?

## Opposing viewpoints....dueling facts!

Debating - Activity 3

### What is formal debate?

- Two teams oppose one another on a specific topic.
- The specific topic is called a proposition.
- The team that best defends its position wins the debate.

### How does a formal debate work?

- The proposition must be clearly stated – **see Propositions For Use With Discussion/Debating Activities.**
- One team takes the “for” position, the other takes the “against” position.
  - Debaters must defend their position with facts (research-based) and well-structured arguments.
- One person can speak on behalf of the team, or each member can take a turn.
- Each team is given the same amount of time to make their arguments.
- After the initial arguments are made, teams are given a set amount of time to plan their rebuttal in which they must expose the weak points of the opposing team's position.
  - “Sticks and stones” are not allowed, good analytical thinking and strong arguments and presentation skills earn the team points.
- Each team is given equal time for their rebuttal.

### Who decides the winner?

- A judge decides the winner based on their evaluation of which team most persuasively presented its position.
- Check to see if your school's Language Arts Department has someone skilled in this area or invite another class or community representative (politician, addictions specialist, etc.) to judge your debate activity.