

Images in Our Minds

Materials:

- All materials needed for this activity are included in the instructions below and the PowerPoint.

Instructions:

1. Hang up the Big 8+ poster or refer to it as a handout. For this activity, you may choose to refer to the poster throughout the activity or wait to review the poster at the end of the activity.
2. Discuss how our brains come up with images when we hear words or phrases so fast that we often don't even know why. The images just show up!
 - Our brains are influenced by what we see and hear in the media; what is seen on TV and online. The more we stop and notice what our brains are telling us the more we can decide if we agree with our brains. Think of the fast immediate brain reaction as your 1st thought. We often have a first thought that may not actually be what we believe or value or what is in our heart, it is just in our immediate brain.
 - When we don't agree with our brain we can purposely work to bring up different images or 2nd thoughts that are more in line with our beliefs, values, and what is in our heart. First thoughts are often a single image that is limiting to ourselves and others. When we work to recognize our second thoughts and alternative images, we challenge ourselves to think of more possibilities for everyone.
 - Now let's see what our brains do as we listen to a few stories.
3. Read the 1st short story. You can print the stories out as handouts or put the stories on a slide for all to see and read together.
 - The **parent** handed the **children** their lunches and kissed them good-bye as the **other parent** left for work. They went into school and saw that the third grade **teacher** was having a severe asthma attack. The school **principal** called an ambulance immediately. When the **ambulance driver** arrived, they quickly rushed the teacher to the hospital. Once in the emergency room, a **doctor** gave the teacher an inhaler that helped with breathing. A **nurse** gave the teacher a shot of medicine that opened up the teacher's lungs.
4. Have the group share what each of the characters in the story looked like in their brains. What image did their brain bring up automatically / spontaneously when they heard the word parent, children, other parent, teacher, principal, ambulance driver, doctor, and nurse? What was their first thought? For example, when we hear the word principal our first thoughts tend to be a man in a suit who is white and maybe balding. Why do many of us see this image? Who is this man in our brains? He is a character who fits the word. This is not usually a real person that any of us

know.

5. We often don't see our own teacher, parent, or doctor, but rather an image. The image is often similar for many of us because it is based on stereotypes and implicit bias. It doesn't mean we actually think only one kind of person can be a teacher or a nurse, it is an automatic brain response based on bias we have been taught. Our first thoughts are mostly based on media images.
6. To help our brains have more inclusive 2nd thoughts let's look at some inclusive images. This PowerPoint shows many images of who these characters can be. You can see on the PowerPoints many images of principals. Many people can be principals. The more we work to notice how our first thoughts can be limiting and work to bring up 2nd thoughts/ images, the more we can see the world in a more inclusive way.

Repeat steps 2-5 for the following stories:

- When I was coming home from school yesterday, I saw a **police officer** arresting and handcuffing a **criminal**. It looked like they had been robbing a **store owner**. There were several **executives** who were walking home from work and had stopped to see what was going on. Soon, a **religious leader** came to tell everyone to move along and stop watching the crime scene.
- On Friday, there is going to be a parade in my hometown. The **soldiers**, who live on the air force base nearby, are going to be showing new airplanes. There will be many floats carrying our city's service workers, such as **firefighters**. The **mayor** will give a speech typed by a **secretary** about how to have pride in our city. For the grand finale, the high school **basketball team** will show off their state trophy on a gigantic basketball court float.
- There was an article in the newspaper about how an **airplane pilot** and a **flight attendant** invited a **homeless person** onto a flight to San Francisco. The hope was that the homeless person could find a job in California, because the **pilot** has a couple of friends, a **plumber** and a **home builder**, who have a good business and may need some help. However, the **social worker** who works with the homeless person encouraged a more detailed plan to ensure that it would be a successful trip.

Conclusion

- Go around the room and have everyone share the kind of careers and jobs they would be interested in exploring. Point out that our choices do not need to be limited by our identities (Big 8+).

Coding Sheet:

Directions: You could use this coding sheet after each story. Write in one word the image that comes to mind for each person. Try to be as honest as you can.

Story #1: Parent

Character	Gender	Class	Sexual Orientation	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Ability	Age
Parent #1								
Children								
Parent #2								
Teacher								
Principal								
Ambulance Driver								
Doctor								
Nurse								

Story # 2: Police

Character	Gender	Class	Sexual Orientation	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Ability	Age
Police Officer								
Criminal								
Store Owner								
Executives								
Religious Leader								

Story #3: Hometown

Character	Gender	Class	Sexual Orientation	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Ability	Age
Soldier								
Fire Fighter								
Mayor								
Secretary								
Basketball Team								

Story #4: Newspaper

Character	Gender	Class	Sexual Orientation	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Ability	Age
Airplane Pilot								
Flight Attendant								
Homeless Person								
Plumber								
Home Builder								
Social Worker								

