

Lookism and Diversity

Objective - to identify how appearances affect bias.

Time - about 45 minutes.

Equipment - flipchart and markers for each group

Instructions:

Divide the class into small groups - about 4 learners to a group and issue each group a flipchart and markers.

Each group will make two flipcharts. One will be titled "How prejudices and bias focus on the physical characteristics of people" and the other will be titled "How prejudices and bias focus on the dress and makes up of people".

Under each title they will list how people are hindered for not meeting a group's or organizational standards (norms).

Coach the groups as they work their way through the exercise. These are some of the items that might be listed:

Physical Characteristics

- Too short
- Overweight
- Too light or too dark
- Too young or too old
- Disfigured
- Not graced with "good looks"
- Features that are less desirable than social or cultural norms

Dress and Makes Up

- Dresses out of fashion
- Body piercing
- Hair length
- Informal dress
- Impression of informality
- Expression of cultural, ethnic, religious, generational, or personal standard.

After the small groups have worked on the activity for about 25 minutes, bring the groups together and have each group present their findings.

Discuss what is fair and legitimate to ask of people when it comes to workplace norms about physical characteristics and appearances:

- Ability to do the job.
- Loss of customers and money due to how an organization's personnel look.
- Safety requirements.
- Loss of good personnel because of bias about appearance.