Cultionary

Aim: To look at how we perceive different cultures and nationalities; to explore how we stereotype different cultures

Age: 8+   **Time:** 25 mins

Materials: List of cultural identities

Step 1: In a circle, ask participants to think about one thing that belongs to their culture, e.g. being on time, having your dinner at 6pm, GAA etc.

Step 2: Break participants into teams of 3 or 4. Ask each team to come up with a name for their team. The name should be something that they feel defines culture, e.g. food / music / clothes etc. Encourage the teams to pick something specific which could be a funny name for their team, e.g. cabbage & potatoes; chicken tikka masala; sliothar / baseball / karaoke.etc.

Step 3: Distribute the cultural identities among the teams, giving each team one. Tell them not to tell the other teams what their identity is. They will have to mime that culture to the other groups. Give them 5 minutes to think of an action/short mime that they can do to represent the culture that they have. The mime should be simple and brief. Allow each group to take turns representing the culture they have. The other groups can guess which culture the mime is of, by shouting out their team name first – and then having a guess at the culture. Give one point for each correct answer, with a point also going to the team who did the mime (to encourage good miming). The team that doesn't call out their team name before guessing loses a point. Complete several rounds of the game.

Debrief: Was it hard to mime or guess the particular cultures? How did it feel to portray a culture in one action? How did it feel to have your culture represented in one action? Were the portrayals fair or unfair? Do you think other groups would be happy if they saw your mime of their culture? Can you think of any examples where stereotyping might lead to unfair treatment of a cultural group?

Note to leader: This is a fun game, and can be quite simple. The teams should be able to come up with mimes fairly quickly. This highlights how easily we can categorise and generalise identities. This is something natural that we all do. However, we can also reduce very diverse populations e.g. Indian or American into one single action. This may not always reflect how those groups see themselves, or would like others to see them. Avoid having the game become an exercise in spreading purely negative stereotypes by challenging any misconceptions the teams might have. If the group have questions about whether something is 'racist', you may find the following definitions useful.

WARM UP
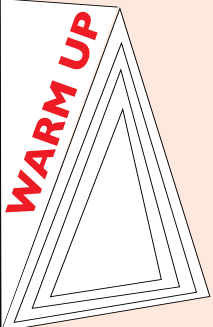
Take a Photo!
In a circle, everyone chooses a random photo from the photopack and says one thing they have in common with a person in the photo. At another time, ask everybody to name one difference.
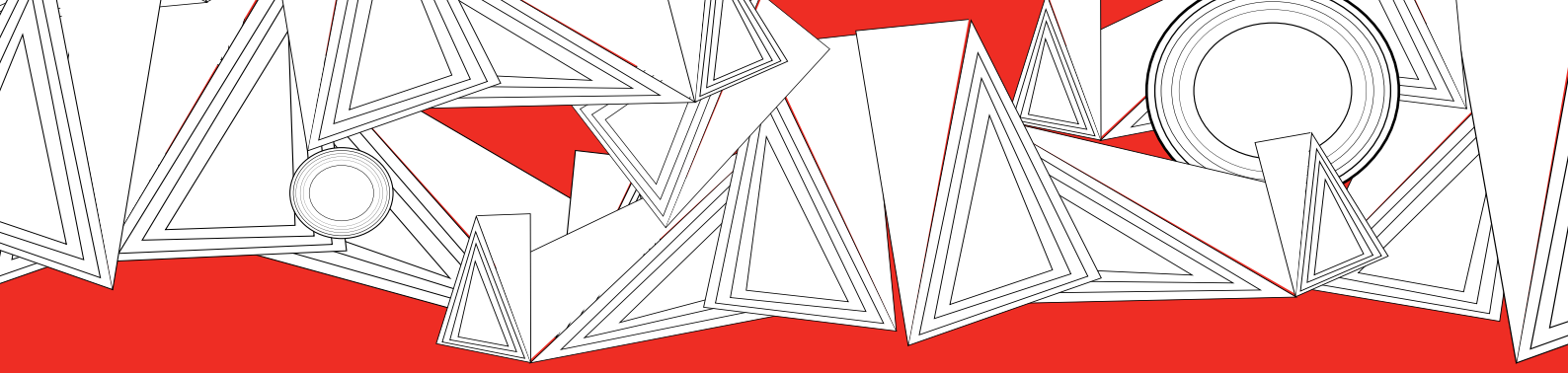
☆ **Stereotype:** An overly simple or generalised idea about the typical characteristics of members of certain groups. Stereotypes can be positive, negative or neutral.

☆ **Prejudice:** An attitude or belief towards members of certain groups, simply because of their membership of that group

☆ **Discrimination:** Treating a person from a particular group less favourably than another person, e.g. because of their. gender

☆ **Racism:** Treating a person less favourably, based on their ethnic identity and perceived notions of superiority/ inferiority.

List of suggested identities:

Irish Traveller	British	Brazilian	Catholic
'Culchie'	Muslim	Protestant	South African
'Dub'	American	Egyptian	African
Arab	Australian	Indian	Mexican

Activity adapted from 'Schools and Clubs Against Racism Education Pack', National Coordinating Committee for European Year Against Racism/NYCI 1997, and YMCA Y-Share Our World