

The Two-Sided Mask



This activity is designed for adults, but could work with adolescents as well. It has its roots in analytic psychology. The goal is to examine the similarities and differences in one's persona, the outward manifestation of our personality, and our self, the inward manifestation of our personality. This exercise has the potential of being helpful to those who are still struggling with issues of identity.

In the field of multicultural counseling, it could also be used to get some understanding of the internal and external levels of acculturation. For this, I would make sure a number of multicultural images are available for inclusion on the masks. A resource such as *Multicultural Clip Art From Around the World* (Schneck, 1995) provides a great many images for this purpose.

Process

Before starting the activity, make sure you have enough "masks" for your group. The raw masks are paper plates with holes cut out for eyes and some ribbon or string attached to the sides so that the mask may be worn. You will also want to have a number of magazines and other resources, such as clip art, ready, as well as yarn, beads, feathers, and other odds and ends as seem appropriate to the group with which you are working. You will need to have markers or crayons, scissors and glue ready as well.

Give each participant one of the masks. Have them identify the outside and the inside of the mask. Have them begin to decorate the outside of the mask with items, which reflect what they think people see when they look at them. You can ask them to think about how their friends see them, or co-workers, or family. Glue images or draw on the mask how they think they are seen by others.

When they are done with the outside, have them turn the mask around. Now, have them think about how they see themselves, and decorate the inside of the mask with objects or drawings, which reflect how they see themselves.

When done, have the participants talk about how they see themselves, and how others see them, using the masks as visual aids.

As facilitator, pay attention to differences between the two sides. Also, look for acculturation in multicultural participants.