

# WHERE I STAND

Students/participants consider dignity from a variety of perspectives through an interactive movement exercise. The teacher/facilitator posts two signs—Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree—on opposite sides of the room to create a continuum. The teacher/facilitator reads a series of statements about dignity and students position themselves along the continuum. Throughout the exercise, students/participants reflect on and debate a variety of statements about dignity as a means of better understanding dignity and its role in their lives.

AGES 10+ | TIME 10-15 MIN

## MATERIALS

Two signs, one with Strongly Agree and another with Strongly Disagree

## DIRECTIONS

Select one or more of the Statements + Answers below to use with your students/participants. Post two signs—Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree—on opposite sides of the room to create a continuum.

**PONDER, DISCUSS:** Read the statements about dignity and ask students/participants to position themselves along the continuum. After students/participants are positioned, ask at least one student from 2-3 points

along the continuum to share his/her reason for standing there. After they share their thinking, tell the students/participants that it's okay to move to a new place on the continuum and give them the time to do so, if they so choose.

**Facilitator Note:** the items that are bolded and preceded with an asterisk "\*" are examples of dignity. Those that are not bolded and do not have an asterisk are not examples of dignity.



**DIGNITY IS...**

- **\*Listening respectfully to someone who has ideas that are very different from your own.**
  - Feeling like your ideas don't matter
  - Pitying a child who lives in a war zone.
- **\*Recognizing that prisoners are human beings**
  - Feeling sorry for a girl who isn't allowed to attend school.
  - Feeling like you deserve special treatment because of who your family is, how much money you have, what country you come from, etc.
- **\*Realizing that even people who do terrible things have dignity**
- **\*Apologizing when you make a mistake**
  - Distrusting someone because they practice a different religion than you do
  - Feeling like your religion, country, and culture are the best in the world
- **\*Doing your part to make sure that all human beings have food, shelter, safety, opportunity, and freedom**
- **\*Knowing that you are important, that you matter**

**MY EXPERIENCE WITH DIGNITY**

- I have always been treated with dignity
- Someone I am close with has experienced being treated without dignity
- I have witnessed others being treated without dignity
- I have personally experienced being treated without dignity
- I have always treated everyone with dignity
- At some point in my life, I have disregarded someone else's dignity
- If I see someone's dignity being disregarded, I step in and try to help.

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?**

- I believe that the people who do not honor and recognize all human being's dignity don't deserve to be treated with dignity.
- I believe that violations of dignity are only a problem if it impacts me, my friends, and my family.
- I believe that no one can take away my dignity
- I believe that treating dignity with contempt leads to a breakdown in everyone's access to freedom, justice, and peace.
- I believe that treating all people with dignity is a faulty concept because not all people are valued equally.
- I believe that sometimes it is difficult to treat others with dignity
- I believe that all human beings deserve to be treated with dignity, regardless of their class, race, religion, behaviors, beliefs, politics, sexuality, etc.
- I believe that "when we honor others' dignity, we strengthen our own" (Donna Hicks)
- I believe that we can all do more to incorporate dignity into our lives

**REFLECTION, DISCUSS:** Using Think/Share, debrief with the students/participants after the activity with the following questions:

- Which questions were easy to answer and which were more difficult? Why?
- How did it feel when you found yourself standing in the majority? In the minority?
- How did this exercise challenge your thinking and/or make you feel more strongly about your point of view?
- What have you learned about dignity? About yourself?
- Other thoughts, questions, or comments?

**EXTENSIONS OR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS**

- This can be done with a variety of statements. For example, definitions of dignity, people who do/don't represent dignity, historic and current events that do/don't represent dignity, behaviors associated with dignity, statements specific to your school environment, etc.

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