

## People of Color

Time: 20 Minutes

**Purpose:** To think about how we define the groups and labels we assign to others.

As our population becomes more and more diverse, we have adopted new language to identify “people groups.” These labels may or may not be the preferred terms for the individuals involved.

– U.S. Census Bureau Survey

**NOTE:** This can be a sensitive activity and requires a nonthreatening and respectful approach.

**Materials:** Prepare two easel pages similar to the sample on page 2.

### ACTIVITY

#### Instructions:

1. In a **large group**, ask each individual to define the term “People of Color.”
2. Create a group definition of the term. To get the discussion started, ask:

*What are the characteristics of the group? (This will generate a lively discussion as individual perspectives and beliefs come out and are challenged by others. The group may not reach an agreement. If this is the case, use the disagreement as a learning tool about the difficulty using this term.)*

3. Ask who would be assigned as a “Person of Color” according to the group’s definition of the term. How do they feel about the term and the group’s definition?
4. What term would they prefer?
5. Ask the group for preferred names of their cultural group.

#### Debrief:

##### **Ask:**

What are the positives and negatives of using this terminology? (Using the appropriate terms demonstrates respect and appreciation for others. However, without knowing what is preferred, an attempt at being respectful may result in a wrong assumption and be offensive.)

How will you know what term to use? (Ask the person, “What term do you like to use to represent your group?”)

How important are these labels in a workplace? (They are important in honoring differences, but have nothing to do with a person’s skills, talents, and abilities.)

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The information on the second easel page is taken from a U.S. Census Bureau Survey. The list represents the top three preferred names for these cultural groups, as ranked by the groups themselves.

Talk about this list with the group and get reactions from any members of these groups as to their preferences. Expand the conversation by learning about terms related to disability, sexual orientation, nationality, or others.

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On the first easel page, write the following:

**People of Color**

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On the second easel page, write the following list:

**Preferred Terminology**

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Hispanic  
Hispanic  
Of Spanish origin  
Latino

White  
White  
Caucasian  
European American

Black  
Black  
African American  
Afro-American

American Indian  
American Indian  
Native American  
Indigenous

*- Source: U.S. Census Bureau Survey*