Caucus Groups
(adapted from NCBI)

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Time:

-60 minutes

Materials:

-Flip chart or white board
-Markers
-Writing utensil and note pads for each caucus group

Goals:

-Gather into groups with shared identities and talk about common experiences
-Hear firsthand about other groups' experiences
-Discover similarities and differences of group experiences
-Learn how to be allies to other groups

Facilitator Notes:

-Thorough introduction, modeling, and explanation happen in the first session. Afterwards, you can use the caucus group model again and again for different identity groups in subsequent 30-45 minute sessions.
-Have flip charts or boards prepared with the two statements and initial category listings.
-*** = special notes for facilitator during the activity

Implementation:

-Introduction (1-2 minutes)
-Modeling (10 minutes)
-Brainstorming and Choosing (10 minutes)
-Caucus Group Work (15 minutes)
-Report Out (15 minutes)
-Debrief (8-9 minutes)

Introduction (1-2 minutes):
-What we're doing, why we're doing it

Model caucus groups using gender (in a co-ed school, age may be a better substitute so that everyone can participate) (10 minutes)
-Group brainstorms to complete the following statements. Do each statement separately

"What I never want people to do, say, or think about our group is…"
"What I want people to know about our group is…"

-Help bring up statements if students are having difficulty

Statement 1:

Say, "Girls can't fix mechanical things"
Pay us less than men for doing the same job
Say, "Are you PMS-ing?" whenever we get angry
Rape, beat, or murder us
Say, "Women can't be leaders because they're too emotional"
Portray us as sexual objects in the media

Statement 2:

We are capable of doing well in all subjects and careers
Women in leadership can bring new perspective and approaches
We can be sensitive or hard
We come in all shapes and sizes, and all of them are beautiful
We're not all obsessed with shopping
We have worked hard to win voting rights, more equal pay, etc.
We can bring forth life and nurture the next generation

***Reinforce the difference between pride and chauvinism – it is wonderful to say, "we're great." It's another thing to say, "we're better than…"

Brainstorm and choose family structure/family community caucus groups (10 minutes)
-Have the following groups on the board/chart

Live with biological mother and father
Live with adoptive parent(s)
Live between two or more households (due to divorce, separation, etc.)
Live with single parent
Live with same-gender parents
Live with extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.)

-Ask, "Is there a group not up here that you would like to see a caucus group for?" Write up additional categories suggested.
-Ask students to pick one category that they feel passionate about doing caucus group work: "You may be wondering what you choose if, say, you are living with

an adoptive single mom and your aunt. Choose one group that you would like to meet and work with people who share that identity with you and/or a group that you would like to gain better allies for."
-See whether each category can become a caucus group by a show of hands. Remind students that they must hold that identity to join that caucus group – you will have a chance to learn about others later. Ask for people to choose one category only. Cross off categories that do not have any interest. If one person wants to do a category, ask if she wants to do that category with another single person or a facilitator (supporting each other and being each other's sounding board). If not, ask her to choose another category that works.

Divide into caucus groups and brainstorm lists (15 minutes)
-Designate different areas for different groups
-Ask for a note taker in each group to write down all statements
-All statements get written down even if it doesn't apply to everyone
-Remind students about the two statements

What I never want people to do, say, or think about our group is…
What I want people to know about our group is…

***6-7 minutes into the activity, remind students to start on the second statement if they have not already

Report Out (15 minutes)
-Ask each group to come up. Everyone in the group comes up. Ask groups not presenting to welcome reporting groups enthusiastically and give full attention.
-Ask the notes to get passed around so that everyone in the caucus group can be a part of the report out.

Debrief (10 minutes)
-Ask students to answer the following questions in groups of 3-4 people (of any composition)

What touched you?
Did you learn any new information?
Are there commonalities?

-Ask for any answers that people would like to share in larger group

*** Additional Questions for the group brainstorm (optional) ***
-What is unique to me as a member of this group is…
-What I love about being a member of this group is…
-What's hard about being a member of this group is…