

# ACTIVITY 58

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## It's a Small World

When we label people, we hinder our ability to understand what they're really saying. We base our stereotypes on many factors: age, race, ethnicity, gender, regional or foreign accents, appearance, even the vehicle a person drives. When our stereotypes take over, they inhibit our ability to listen accurately to our customers. With awareness of our own biases and prejudices, we can better work to neutralize them and serve all customers the way they wish to be served.

### **PURPOSE:**

- ✓ To heighten awareness of personal biases and stereotypes
- ✓ To identify the impact of our treatment on customers
- ✓ To build a plan for personal change

**TIME:** 20 minutes (This activity may be combined with Activity 57 for greater impact, but use it *after* Activity 57—the sequence is important.)

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Explain to participants the format of Activity 58. Discuss how this activity is designed to create awareness, not to judge anyone or to assign blame for thoughts or actions.
2. Remind participants that they will not be asked to talk about their prejudices, but to discuss the impact certain actions can have on customers. They should feel comfortable in being honest about this.
3. Distribute copies of Activity 58 and allow 7 to 10 minutes for participants to complete the form.

4. To debrief, use the following questions (remember, participants do not need to declare their stereotypes unless they choose to):
- What did you learn about yourself?

• How do stereotypes get in the way of providing *Knock Your Socks Off Service*?

• What did you identify as a change in behavior going forward?
5. Congratulate participants for their candor and willingness to explore this topic. Encourage them to make any changes they identified.

Stereotypes

- **Column A**, list several stereotypes or assumptions. (We've listed a few to get you started.)
- **Column B**, describe your assumptions about people who fit the stereotype.
- **Column C**, describe how you think about or treat people who fit the stereotype.
- **Column D**, write a statement describing how you will treat that person in the future.

A. Person	B. My Assumption	C. My Past Treatment	D. My Future Treatment
People in their 70s	Old, slow, hard of hearing	Called them "dear." Talked louder to them.	Stop calling them "dear." Talk in normal tone of voice.
Teenagers			
People with foreign accents			
People who speak slowly			
People who wear "biker" clothes			
People who have multiple piercings			