



THE MASKS WE WEAR

People often compare themselves to others. They also wear different masks or put on different faces, depending in the particular norms of the social situation they are in. Masks provide a comforting way for them to hide their true selves and fit in and they serve as a protective barrier to avoid getting hurt. Teenagers, in particular, often go through tumultuous times and experience a roller coast of emotions, leaving them more vulnerable to loss of identity. This activity allows participants to analyze, demonstrate, and explore the different ways they act around the important people in their lives.

Materials

- Paper plates (at least 3 for each person)
- Magazines or newspapers
- Pencils or pens, colored markers/felt pens
- Optional: Craft (paddle pop) sticks, glue or tape

Procedure

1. Begin with a discussion about why people wear masks.
2. Ask participants to think about the masks they wear and how they change daily. Provoke thought about how they act at home, school, and social events and around friends, boys, girls, strangers, teachers, sports coaches and others.
3. Hand out the materials and have each participant decorate three masks, with each mask representing how he/she presents himself/herself most often.
4. When everyone is finished, ask them to discuss their masks and how they change from day to day and situation to situation. If you use craft (paddle pop) sticks, participants can attach them to their masks so they can hold the masks up to their faces when describing the different situations in which they wear them.

Discussion Questions

- Which mask do you feel most comfortable in?
- Which mask would you like to get rid of?
- How will you use what you have learned today?