

Date: February 15, 2017	GHS Seminar
Grade Level: 11 th	Seminar Meeting
Recommended Sequence	* Reminder, that this is a two-part Seminar that will continue on Feb. 11 th to allow you time to get through it and have kids process the information.
Objective(s) / Learning Target(s):	<p>Students will be able to . . .</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on ways we make assumptions about others based on our own experiences and biases. 2. Consider how our assumptions may influence the way we treat others, both positively and negatively. 3. Describe two goals for challenging their own personal assumptions before interacting with someone they don't know well.
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print "I Would Assume Stimulus Statements" (below) and cut them apart. Select 10-12 statements and place them in a paper bag or basket for the activity. • Decide how you want to divide the class in half. Set up the desks or chairs in two concentric circles, facing each other (half the class will sit in the inner circle facing out; half in the outer circle facing in).
Suggested Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to share any good news they might have since the last time your Seminar met (it can be good news from something school-related, extra-curricular related, or personal). You can even model this by sharing some good news of your own. 2. Remind students that the past two Seminars have been spent talking about how people judge us, but today we are going to examine our own assumptions about people. <p><u>Introduction:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you first meet someone, how do you form an impression of who they are and what they might be like? (List student ideas on the board). <i>Examples: appearance, grooming; what they wear how they talk; where they are from; whether they are shy or outgoing; whether they look me in the eye or not; what they communicate with their body language.)</i> 2. These first impression are often based on assumptions we make about others. Our assumptions may or may not be based on facts, or even be rational. Today we are going to do an activity that tests our own personal assumptions and makes us think about what the effects of those assumptions might be. We'll also consider what we can do so our assumptions don't get in the way of trying new things or getting along with others. <p><u>Activity:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to sit in two concentric circles facing each other. Students will start out partnering with the person facing them. After each turn, the inner circle will stay seated; the other circle will move two places to their right, so students will have a new partner with

whom to discuss the next statement.

2. I'm going to have several of you randomly select a statement from this bag. Each statement is a hypothetical situation that you might encounter – some of you may have experienced something similar to these statements personally. The person who selects the statement will read it aloud to the entire group. Once the statement is read, I'll ask you to discuss with your partner (the person facing you) what assumptions you each made about the person or situation described. Go with your first impressions or thoughts about this. Consider what you assume about the person's age, appearance, abilities, personality, gender, race, or social class, or intentions. If you have an odd number of students indicate that you will name a different person with each question to join another pair of students in their discussion.

3. I'll give you three minutes to discuss each statement with your partner(s). Each of you should add your insight to the discussion – don't depend on one person to do all the talking. When I call time, I'll ask each of you to share your assumptions and I'll write them on the board.

4. Have a student volunteer randomly select a statement from the bag or box and read it to the class. Then have the partners discuss their assumptions. Call time and write down student reactions before continuing with the next statement. At the end of each situation, probe as necessary to encourage students to consider points such as the following:

- *What was your first reaction about what this person was like? How did you feel about them? (attracted, repulsed, disgusted, curious, wary, disappointed . . . etc.)*
- *What assumptions did you make about what this person was like? What personality traits did you attribute to this person? (lazy, successful, kind, mean . . . etc.)*
- *What assumptions did you make about their appearance? Culture? Abilities? Religion? Resources?*
- *Did you assume this person was the same race as you? A member of the majority culture in our community?*
- *What assumptions did you make about this person's gender or gender orientation?*
- *What assumptions did you make about what they might be feeling or what they might need?*
- *If this person was well-dressed or attractive, what assumptions did you make about what they were like (personality, popularity, success, self-esteem)?*
- *Conversely, if this person was poorly dressed or unkempt, what impression did you have about their personality, popularity, success, or self-esteem?*
- *If you felt disappointed by the person's actions, what assumptions did you make about their intentions?*

	<p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What did you learn about your own assumptions from this?2. Why do you think we make assumptions about other people? <i>(experiences or lack of experience, rumors, media influence, our beliefs or things our families, believe, what someone else tells us, etc.)</i>3. Look at the list of assumptions on the board. What assumptions can help us?4. How do you think the media influence our assumptions about people? Our ideas and beliefs? Our stereotypes or biases?5. How can our assumptions limit us or our ability to make new relationships or experience new things?6. What ideas do you have about ways we can challenge our won assumptions about people? <i>(Write student suggestions on the board)</i>7. What did you learn about each other in this activity? What were some things that surprised you?
<p>Wrap - Up:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We often make assumptions about people without really knowing them. Making assumptions about people can limit our experiences and interfere with our ability to get along with others. When we take time to get to know individuals, we often find that we have interests, thoughts, opinions, and values in common with each other.2. We learn to make assumptions from our experiences, from our friends and families, and from our society. Today we saw some ways that assumptions can get in the way of making relationships.3. I want to challenge each of you to continue thinking about ways you can change your assumptions about others so that you will get the most out of life. When we can appreciate others for things we have in common and respect them for our differences, we're more likely to decrease the levels of social stress, anxiety, and judgments that we feel.

I Would Assume That . . . Stimulus Statements

1. You are meeting a blind date for the first time. You have talked on the phone and know that you have a lot in common, but you don't know what the person looks like.	2. You see someone who is overweight eating an extra-large fast food meal.
3. You hear about someone in your school who has just been diagnosed with HIV.	4. You have heard that a student from Afghanistan is starting school in your class.
5. You see a toddler walking around apparently by himself in a busy store.	6. You see a mom ignoring her screaming baby in the grocery store.
7. You hear that a person who is in the same grade as you is pregnant.	8. You see the wife of your next door neighbor with two black eyes and a swollen lip.
9. You meet a new classmate who has two parents of the same gender.	10. You see someone who is very attractive and well-dressed walking down the street.
11. A person in your class always gets the best grades. Everyone expects him to be a doctor, just like his father.	12. A kid in your class always wears a necklace with a cross on it.
13. A person in your class always wears dirty clothes and smells really bad.	14. A student at your school recently came out of the closet and is very open with everyone about being gay.
15. You have a told a friend that you really don't like it when she uses profanity constantly. You say it makes her sound stupid but she keeps doing it anyway.	16. A person you don't like keeps asking you out, even though you keep making excuses about why you can't get together.

