

# I Am Not a Label

**Purpose:** Explore the ways in which society and others can influence our identities and how accepting the labels that others impose on us can impact our perception and understanding of ourselves and others.

## ADVISOR NOTES:

### 1. Examining Stereotyping in Activities 42–45

Activities 42–45 work well together, so, if possible, try to use them in consecutive advisory meetings to help your advisees consider how assumptions can lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

**APPROXIMATE TIME:**  
40 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

**HANDOUT**  
I Am Not a Label  
Discussion Questions

**HANDOUT**  
Don't Misunderstand Me!

## PROCEDURE:

### 1. Reflect on the Labels that Are Placed on You by Others and Society

- Start by asking your advisees to review their Starburst Identity Chart from Activity 20, and invite them to add new ideas that come to them. Model this process by projecting or recreating your identity chart on the board and doing a “think aloud” where you explore how the recent advisory discussions about identity, assumptions, and perception help generate new ideas about your identity.
- Next, ask advisees to respond to the following questions in their journals. Tell them that they will not have to share if they don’t feel comfortable doing so.
  - Look at your arrows pointing inward, which represent how others and society perceive you. Choose one that you feel does not represent you. What is it, and why does it misrepresent your identity?
  - How does it feel to have others or society label you in this way?
  - If you could share how you feel with someone who has this belief about your identity, what would you tell them?
- Invite volunteers to share an idea from their response and then move to the next activity.

### 2. Have a Discussion about Labels and Identity

- Pass out the handout **I Am Not a Label Discussion Questions** and give your advisees a few minutes to jot down some ideas for each question.

- Explain that the group will use the **Fishbowl** discussion strategy to explore the questions (visit [facinghistory.org/advisory-media](https://facinghistory.org/advisory-media) to learn about this teaching strategy). You can invite advisees to “tap” each other out when they would like to enter the conversation.

### 3. Don't Misunderstand Me

- End the meeting with the handout **Don't Misunderstand Me!** Explain that everyone should complete the two sentence starters. Let them know that they will be sharing what they write with the group.
- Sit in a circle and use the **Wraparound** strategy to share misunderstandings and truths about group members' identities (visit [facinghistory.org/advisory-media](https://facinghistory.org/advisory-media) to learn about this teaching strategy).



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## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** Record your responses to the following questions in the space provided.

1. Where do we get ideas about the labels we use to describe other individuals and groups of people?
2. When, if ever, are labels useful?
3. When, if ever, are labels dangerous?
4. How do you feel when society, a group, or another individual labels you in a positive or negative way?
5. How can you challenge and remove the labels that others impose on you?
6. How can you become more aware of the labels you place on others and the consequences that those labels may have?



# Don't Misunderstand Me!

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Don't Misunderstand Me! | Name: _____   |
|                         | One misunderstanding someone might have about me is . . . |
|                         | But in reality, the truth about me is . . .               |
| Don't Misunderstand Me! | Name: _____   |
|                         | One misunderstanding someone might have about me is . . . |
|                         | But in reality, the truth about me is . . .               |

Adapted from Kristina J. Doubet and Jessica A. Hockett, *Differentiation in Middle and High School: Strategies to Engage All Learners* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2015), 165.