

Class Activity #4

“Define This Word”

This activity demonstrates how you can look and sound ‘smart’ to others despite not understanding the messages and information being communicated to you. For many individuals with FASD, they engage in this activity daily in environments not limited to: school, job settings, social situations, and following directions (like using public transportation, doing chores or following work tasks).

Individuals living with FASD require more time to process the information being given to them and often need clearer, visual examples to best understand what is being taught. To avoid judgement, shame, and isolation, those with FASD cope by becoming very skillful at convincing others that they understand the information being provided or the directions given. These individuals often converse in ways that persuade us to assume they understand the information or directions; however, it can frequently be the case that the material was not communicated adequately and, therefore, the intended message was not received by the person.

Word List

True definition

“Kynophobia”

The fear of dogs

“Trypophobia”

The fear of holes

“Glossophobia”

The fear of public speaking

“Atychiphobia”

The fear of failure

“Triskaidekaphobia”

The fear of the number 13

“Omphalophobia”

The fear of belly buttons



Directions:

- Give each group one word from the word list. Do not provide the definition. Provide 5 minutes to complete this activity.
- Have the students define their given word without using references materials (ie. cellphone or dictionary etc.).
- Have the students explain their reasoning for 'why their definition is right'.
- Have the groups present their definition and reasoning.
- Have the class vote on which group's answer is most 'convincing' of the word's true definition and explanation.
- Ask the students about 'what they were feeling' knowing that they had to present their answers (which were, very likely, a complete guess) to the rest of the class. - For example, were they feeling scared, anxious, uneasy, or embarrassed due to the risks of being 'outed' by their classmates for being 'wrong' and, therefore, as not knowing the correct answer (and, perhaps, being labelled as 'stupid')?