



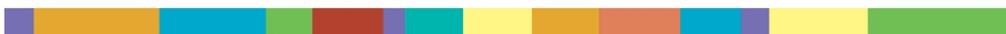
## Just Rescue

Time Frame: Minimum of 45 minutes

Supplies Needed:	<u>Small Groups</u> Flip chart paper or board Markers or chalk Boats with 14 identity slips	<u>Individual Participation</u> Flip chart paper or board Markers or chalk Chart with 14 identities
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Room Set Up: There are two ways to do this activity that I find successful. Small groups at round tables with no more than 10 per group work nicely for a more interactive activity. If the chairs aren't moveable or participants are sat in rows, I prefer to give the handout with a chart listing the identities. Flip chart paper or a board can be used at the front of the room for a "report card" just before processing. Room set up is flexible, but it is *imperative* to spend the vast majority of the workshop time allotment on processing and not on the activity itself.

Facilitator Notes: *If 60 minutes are allotted for this workshop, 10 minutes maximum are used for the interactive part leaving 30-40 minutes to the monolog followed by question and answer. Depending on the energy level and interaction of participants, questions can come during the monolog. This can be played by ear. During the interactive part, you should walk around the room listening to the group's conversations. Whether the activity is done in row seating or at round tables, folks tend to group up and discuss. If you have other staff or facilitators they can walk around or join groups, but I would discourage their participation. This activity needs to be done with similar power dynamics in each group in order to work. Groups will say some really hurtful, awful things. Let the groups respond to this and make a note to bring up these issues later. While running the workshop, facilitators can also observe who the participants are that may need to talk more during the processing, be most uncomfortable with content, as well as finding out how participants self-identified who may move into "teacher" mode themselves instead of learning mode. If you choose to do the "report card," know that the results do not matter at all. This can be a huge time suck, but can also get a rowdy group prepared to focus at the front of the room. When processing the activity, I do not recommend calling specific groups out on things they said or allowing students to do this to each other. You will be addressing stereotypes on a broader sense and let individuals call themselves out. This is FAR more effective. Depending on where the conversation goes, this can be a high risk activity. As a facilitator, you need to be prepared to say the worst things and deal with those reactions. I would also encourage facilitators to*





*develop stories about themselves based on invisible identities or contradictory identities from the perceptions of participants to use during processing. Throughout the script are [facilitator notes in brackets like this.]*

**The Script:** *[This activity is difficult to start late. If participants are trickling in, wait and cut time off of the activity. If you start and late comers show up, just have them join a group and ask the group to catch them up. If using handouts, explain that the room is doing an activity involving these fourteen people and have them take a seat.]*

*[Have students divide into small groups at round tables or move chairs to cluster together, handout charts as folks enter the room.]*

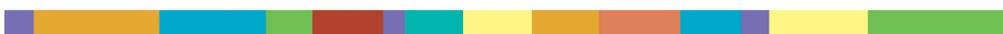
*[Using the chart loses a lot of the impact of the activity but is great for very large groups or theater style or row seating.]*

Hello! My name is *[insert name]* and I have an activity that isn't your ordinary diversity activity. My approach is about making folks uncomfortable. If you leave this activity uncomfortable, it is your own fault. ☺ Can I get a volunteer from each group to the front of the room please. *[With the group of volunteers, explain they are secretary and hand each person a "boat" and 14 identities on slips of paper. Have each secretary make sure they have 14 identities as they tend to fall out etc. Instruct the secretaries to not open the packets or read anything until instructed to do so. At the end of the workshop, please bring me back the boats and the slips of paper. Thank you!]* As the volunteers get back to their seats, I would like to inform you that this is your group secretary. They don't actually take notes or anything, but let's thank them for volunteering. [applause].

*[If using the chart, pass them out as folks enter or around the room. Encourage folks to gather up and work in groups. Make sure the group is quiet and focused on you for directions.]*

Now, I am going to give you the directions for the activity, but you will need to listen as I won't repeat them and you can't ask questions of me once we start. Are you ready?

I am the Mayor. You are the Mayor's Council. You may not work with other groups. There is a storm; a big storm raging outside. There are fourteen people stuck on a roof. There is one boat that holds ten people. You have *[insert a number of minutes that is far less than what you are actually giving them – I usually say three - five minutes]* to solve your problem. You may start now.





*[Walk around the room and listen to the conversations. The more you do this activity the more you realize that the same conversations happen. Pay attention to the process that each group is utilizing to solve the problem. If you see a group doing anything different that putting ten people in the boat and leaving four on the roof, mention to them quietly that they will get a chance to talk about their process and to be patient with the other groups.]*

*[If you are doing the report card, draw a grid on the flip chart paper/board listing the 14 identities down a column and group numbers across the top row. Draw in the grid lines. Use another color to put X's in the squares.]*

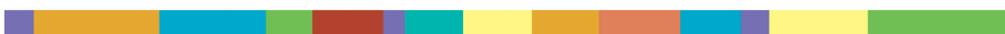
*[Make an emergency announcement loudly in the room.] This is an emergency announcement. The water levels are rising much faster than expected. You have thirty seconds to finish your decision. [Keep an eye on the groups. When most groups are done or shortly after the emergency announcement, pull the group's attention back to the full group.] FREEZE. I say freeze because I know some groups may not be satisfied. Freeze doesn't mean it is over, it just means stop where your group is at in your process.*

*[If doing report card...] I have noticed in the hundred's of times that I have done this activity, no one can focus on me until they know who every group saved. Now it is important to note that there isn't a right answer to this predicament. But, I know you need to know this so, what I am going to do is go through each group with each person on the roof. I need the group to say YES if that person gets "on" and NO if that person is "off." [Be careful with working because you don't want to talk about process here, just YES and NO for the report card. And the groups will come up with all kinds of solutions.] [Proceed through each group and each person putting an X in the box if they say YES.] There, now you can see whatever one decided. Now, let's talk about how this was decided. Let's talk about process.*

*[If doing the handout I would not recommend doing the report card due to time and people in the back won't be able to see it. If you have to do something to get their attention, do a show of hands. Then let's get to the processing the process as soon as possible.]*

*[I prefer to talk about the different types of processes making sure that I touch on what the groups in the room did. I always ask at the end if any group came up with a new solution. Almost always, a group says their process which matches one I mentioned, but they needed to say it. Just say, "Right, that sounds like [insert title here] process. Good Job!" You can also have each group describe their process, but this usually takes a while.]*

To talk about process I first want to mention that I never said anyone was going to die. I never described tsunami like waves rushing down [insert name of local major street here]. Every time I do this activity it always becomes a life or death event. What happens if everyone in the boat is electrocuted by a down wire or that a helicopter lands on the roof shortly after the boats leaves? Some people would be VERY upset. I also think it is interesting that the vast majority of the time





that I do this activity, the Mayor's Council, yes, I'm talking about you, NEVER save themselves; and what about me, the Mayor? Do you think I am sticking around for the storm? If the boat holds ten people and you put ten people on the boat, are you hanging out on the roof with the rejects? I highly doubt that was part of your plan. This was a dilemma for those people on the roof and you tend to not include yourself in those people's problems especially if you have to decide a solution and have resources they don't. Furthermore, you made these decisions on almost no information. How did we do this? How do we do this everyday?

The process in which these decisions were made are almost always the same. I find that most groups' make decisions based on one or more of the following processes. *[As you go through the different processes, validate groups that did each type.]*

#### Good/Bad Person

This is where members of the group decide who is morally good or bad. The group may also decide who has lived a full life or has a lot of life yet to live. *[Do we really have enough information to determine this? A person can die at any time, guilty vs. innocent, what about missing information?]*

#### Health/Strength/Medical Attention

This is where members of the group decide who is healthy, unhealthy, strong, weak, and in need of medical attention. *[Do we really have enough information to determine this? We don't have medical records for everyone. What if they are in good health, but are taking care of someone else who is ill and dependent on them for care?]*

#### Age/Gender

This is where members of the group decide who gets on the boat based on the youngest, oldest, women, children, etc. *[Do we really have enough information to determine this?]*

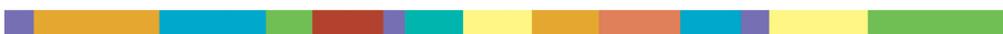
#### Semi-Blind Selection

This is where members of the group decide by flipping of the sheets, after reading them all, and randomly selecting either ten for the boat or four for the roof. When the results are decided, this group may switch someone out for the Pregnant Black Woman if she doesn't make it to safety. *[Do we really have enough information to determine this? This is almost a blind decision, but usually at least one of the other processes will come up in order to switch out the Pregnant Black Woman. If she was randomly selected, what would you have done if she wasn't?]*

#### Total Blind Selection

This is where members of the group decide four for the roof or ten for the boat without any prescreening and no switching out of people. *[Do we really have enough information to determine this? Why would choosing 4 vs. 10 or vice versa be better? Is this up to fate?]*

#### Beauty Pageant Interview





This is where members of the group decide to let the people on the roof decide who does what. They put all of the responsibility on the individuals on the roof. Sometimes elaborate interview questions are developed to determine who should be left on the roof or placed on the boat. *[Do we really have enough information to determine this? In the time of crisis (that you created) do you want to take the time to interview people? How would you do this so that power dynamics and personalities didn't weigh in on the decision?]*

### Thinking Outside of the Box

This is where members of the group decide to make up new information, ignore the directions, etc. Maybe the boat comes back more than once, they overlook the 10 person limit, have people swimming off the side of the boat, invent helicopters, jump to other roofs, etc. *[Great job! Rarely do groups think creatively. No one has ever impeached the Mayor or actively bent the rules. Be careful though and notice all the stories you wrote for people too while you were saving everyone.]*

Did any group come up with something entirely different you want to share? *[Give people a chance to share. 99% of the time they want to share their idea to see if they were right. Their idea usually fits one of these categories. Just say, "Right, that sounds like [insert title here] process. Good Job!"]*

Ok, so we made our decisions, but did any of us actually make the best decision? Probably not. We just didn't have enough information. We actively make decisions and judgment without information. I would argue that it is impossible to NOT make assumptions. It is more authentic to know what your assumptions are and how they inform your decisions. Making assumptions isn't wrong – we just do it badly most of the time.

*[A reminder – if you aren't comfortable saying worse things than your participants, this activity is not for you. I am a believer that if this activity isn't not processed correctly, you can actually do harm.]*

It is important to mention at this time a little something about intention. Several of you, just like all the other participants I have done this activity have said some pretty awful stuff. You may not have intended to say something that hurts someone else, but we did and we do. If I step on your foot *[really step on the ground hard here for demonstration]* how does it feel to you? It hurts right? If I say, "Oh, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to do that." How does your foot feel? It hurts still right? Same thing with what we say. It hurts whether you mean it to or not.

So, to do the rest of this activity, I am going to talk for a while. This is actually my favorite part. I am not going to call anyone out. I will let you do that for yourself. This is not a time of judgment or finger pointing, but I want you to really listen to what I have heard folks say when I do this activity. When I facilitate this activity, it is important for me to remember that it isn't





anyone's fault this crap is in our heads, but it is our responsibility to deal with it and do something about the crap in our heads.

This is where I flip each person inside out. As I go through each person, think about the back story you wrote; what about information you added that isn't on the slip of paper. *[At some point, someone will say that this is pointless. Agree with them. "Yes, it is pointless as far as the answer; it is in the process that I have a point."]*

Pregnant Black Woman – always gets saved. Not because she needs medical attention, but because it is two for one (could be more than one baby too). What if she isn't pregnant but a larger person or if she was on the way to get an abortion? What if it is her partner that is pregnant? Would that change your decision?

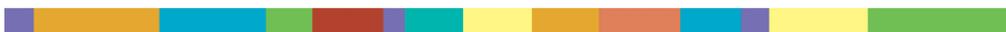
300 lb. person – most people picture a white man who is obese – something like Fat Bastard. What if this is an athlete or a pregnant person? Some folks say this person will take up too much space, steady the boat due to waves I guess, or maybe they can float.

Illegal alien - First, this is pejorative language. We should delete this term and use undocumented person. Illegal is in reference to not following rules that are written by people that are not affected by them and alien – well I picture ET. This person almost never makes it in the boat because – well – because they can swim. *[Everyone laughs here and then feels awkward – let that sit for a moment.]* We all have the image in our heads of Mexicans swimming their way into the US. First, there is a lot of desert – not water. Secondly, there are more documented people in this country from Canada than Mexico, but for some reason Canadians just aren't that threatening to us. If you remove North America from the equation, there are more undocumented people from other countries than from Mexico.

15 year old, committed twice for robbery – Is this person a man or a woman? White or a person of color? Guilty or innocent? Buying Sudafed for her ill grandmother whose Medi-Caid check hasn't arrived or to make Meth? What about a CEO who steals, would you save them? Would that change your decision?

Welfare recipient for 15 years – Most people picture a “drain on the government,” but how do you know this person isn't 15 years old? It is illegal to work at age 15. There are more people on welfare in the US who are employed full-time than unemployed. The drain of the government, in my opinion, are the corporations, like Wal-Mart, banking on state and federal assistance instead of paying their employees a livable wage.

Feminist – Most folks feel pressured to put this person on the boat because they think I will attack them if they don't. Not all feminists are women, or man hating lesbians with hairy arm pits. In fact, historically, to make social change it takes the dominant group members to make the change, so men would have to be feminists to end patriarchy.





Drag Queen – Rarely gets saved as a person. Usually there is conversation about the group in the boat and those on the roof and who needs entertainment.

Epileptic – I have actually been asked if this means that a person is gay. People may not even know what that word means, but they don't have a hard time deciding if they die or not. Maybe they fall under your "needs medical attention" category? A friend of mine is epileptic, so I asked her what would be best. She clarified that not all epileptics actively have seizures, but if they would a huge storm with lots of lightening would be hard for her to be in regardless of whether she was on a boat or the roof.

Jehovah's Witness - & Hasidic Jew – I pair these together, because I have found that folks don't really know anything about these communities. Jehovah's Witnesses get confused with Hara Krishnas and Hasidic Jew is just reduced to Jew. Usually, folks think that these two would only argue, so they get left on the roof. Maybe the Feminist is left on the roof to mediate and share her pot luck dish. Might as well leave the Drag Queen to spice things up.

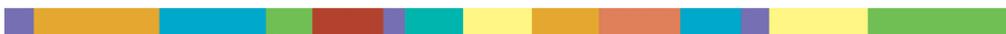
Korean market owner – Is this a person that is Korean and runs a store or someone that owns a store that sells Korean stuff? Does it matter?

Person carrying life savings – Is this person carrying a large bag of money? Are they greedy? Did you save this person so there is money to start society over with? What if this person was opening a new bank account? Or closing their account before they committed suicide? What if they are like me and their life savings is \$5.00?

Person disfigured by fire – Is this a scar or a new injury? Do they need medical attention? Most people picture a scar but put them with folks needing medical attention. What if they are a veteran or were burnt rescuing a puppy from a burning house? What if their crack pipe exploded in their face or they were doing something from the Jackass movies?

HIV+ person that continues to have sex – This person never gets saved. Even though they may need medical attention, they don't get saved because most people picture a nymphomaniac gay man intentionally killing other people. Even nymphomaniacs need to take a break every once in a while – you gotta have a sandwich you know. HIV is stigmatized as a gay man disease, but people born in the eighties are the first generation that could be born HIV+. Lastly, what do we mean by sex? Consensual? Safer or protected sex? Sex with another HIV+ person? Sex with a committed partner? Masturbation? Then people tell me, well they are going to die anyway. So is everyone else including us.

Again, the point here is that we in fact do make assumptions. These assumptions are based on limited to no information. Our judgments are based on our limited experiences, exposure, and messages learned. We could do this better by first recognizing that we do it.





Usually, I find that folks don't feel bad that they made the assumptions or judgments. They feel bad, if ever, if someone heard them. They didn't mean to hurt someone and they regret saying "it" if someone got hurt. The key here is that they regret the result of pain but not the cause of the assumptions. The point here is to find out what information is in your head and how that is currently informing your decisions, actions, behaviors, and assumptions.

*[Folks usually ask questions through the list of identities. It is up to you to take them or to hold them to the end. I do everything I can to not call participants out or give them space to be defensive or feel personalized in my listing of possibilities. If I see folks getting upset, I will own the assumptions to put them in the room, but not to point fingers. Usually, there are LOTS of comments and questions and some frustration that there isn't a correct answer. I trust that the frustration is about their own recognition that they in fact did make some harsh assumptions. I would plan on sticking around the room until everyone clears out. Remember that harsh things get said in the small groups and you MUST process through it all before folks leave.]*

*[If you did the chart, go around the room and pick up the ones left in the space. This is a great way to read the "notes" section to see how the participants reacted to the identity list.]*

Before we get into Question, Answers, and Comments, can the secretaries please bring me my boats and the fourteen slips of paper. Thank you again for volunteering. Thank you for playing along with my activity. Who would like to start the questions? I warned you in the beginning that I may make you uncomfortable. Welcome to the team! Now that we all know we make assumptions and judgments based on little to no information, we can really get started making change and having authentic conversations with each other. Thank you for that.

