NINE
DOTS

Purpose

• To help participants gain insight on limitations they place on themselves and on solutions for diversity issues.
• To emphasize to participants the importance of seeking creative and innovative solutions to diversity challenges.

Special Note

This brief activity works well when conducted spontaneously—particularly when participants resist making changes—with Activities 2 (Applying Flex-Management), 6 (Change Strategies: Organizational and Individual), 7 (Changing Management Mindset), 8 (Clay People), 12 (Diversity Award), 15 (Diversity Issues), 20 (Factors Influencing Change), and 24 (From Paper to Practice).

When to Use

• Spontaneously in a program, particularly when participants—during discussions about how existing policies and practices seem to limit options for handling situations—show frustration over the difficulty of making changes in policies and practices.
• To close a training session.

Group Size

Unlimited.
Time Required

Five to ten minutes.

Materials

- Paper and pencils.
- Prepared chart (see Instruction 2).

Physical Setting

A room in which participants can comfortably be seated at tables and view the chart.

Handouts

None.

Instructions

1. Announce the purpose and give a brief overview of the activity. Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each participant.

2. Show a chart on which you have drawn nine dots lined up like this:

3. Instruct participants to draw the nine dots in this configuration on the sheet of paper and tell them, "Your task is to connect the nine dots by using four straight lines without raising your pencil from the paper. If you have already seen this done, please do not disclose the solution. You have three minutes."
4. Ask someone who has discovered the solution to volunteer to demonstrate it on the chart. The solution:

![Diagram of nine dots connected by lines](image)

5. Lead a discussion by asking, "How can we apply this concept when working with issues related to diversity?"

Make these key points:
- We need to go beyond the perceived limits and parameters we set for ourselves.
- Creative, unusual solutions need to be found.
- What we perceive to be impossible or too difficult sometimes has a relatively easy solution.
- We need many viewpoints to solve problems.
- The fact that an individual does not see an immediate solution does not mean none exists.

6. Close by reviewing the major learnings.