

# I AM Poem

**CASEL Core Competencies:** self-awareness, self-management, social awareness

**State Health Standards:** Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

**Learner/Participant Objectives:** To positively improve self-image

**Content Warnings:** Self-image

**Facilitator Tips:** Expand the exercise! Have Participants switch partners and repeat the activity. Participants may be uncomfortable at first, but after practicing a few times with different people their confidence begins to show.

**Key Terms:** Self-identity, self-esteem

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Materials needed:** Paper, writing utensils, crayons or markers, stickers or other decorative craft supplies, glue, wooden popsicle sticks, mirrors

**Background:** Self-image and positive self-esteem empower youth to make safe and healthy decisions. Actively practicing self-affirmations can improve youth self-identity.

## Discussion Questions

- How do you identify yourself?
- How does the way you identify yourself affect your life?
- How can you see yourself in a more positive light?

## Procedure

- Prepare appropriate size paper to fit inside of wooden popsicle squares. Set up craft supply stations to be shared between 3-4 Participants. (If wooden popsicle sticks are unavailable, participants can use construction paper).
- Ask Participants to quietly reflect upon some of their positive qualities and inform them that they will be using these qualities to create an "I am poem."
- Explain that with this poem, Participants will have the opportunity to share how they feel, how they see themselves, what they like to do, what they are good at, and/or what they hope for.
- The poems should be about 10 lines and each stanza will begin or end with "I am [Participant's name]"

Give an example of your own "I am..." poem.

*I am a teacher. I am a man/woman.  
I am a dancer.  
I am Gabriel/a.*

*I am a child of divorce.  
I am worried sometimes.  
I am happy when I am cooking.  
I am Gabriel/a.*

*I am a volunteer.  
I am hopeful.  
I am grateful for my friends.  
I am Gabriel/a.*

- Give each Participant paper and writing utensils. Direct them to write 10 to 15 "I am..." statements on their paper. If they need help thinking of statements, provide them with suggestions of adjectives, feelings, or descriptions of themselves based on what you know about them. Give Participants 10 to 15 minutes to write their poems.
- When each Participant has written 10 to 15 "I am..." statements, have them get into pairs. Have Participants choose which partner will go first to share their "I am..." poem.
- Pass out a mirror to each pair.
- Have one partner be the listener and hold up the mirror so that the one who is reading can see themselves. When you say to begin, have all the readers read their poems aloud while looking directly at themselves in the mirror.
- When everyone is finished, have them read their poem again, this time looking directly at their partner, not at themselves in the mirror. Remind Participants who are listening that it is ok to look into someone's eyes; it shows that you are interested in what they are saying, even if it feels a little uncomfortable. Now switch roles and repeat the same step.
- When all Participants have read their poems aloud, collect the mirrors.
- Ask Participants to share:
  - How did it feel to read your poem while looking at yourself in the mirror?
  - How did it feel to read it while looking at your partner?
- Direct Participants to choose their favorite "I am..." statements to include in their finished "I am..." poem. They can choose them all or only a few.

- Give Participants time to write out a final copy of their poem on paper that will fit into the frames. Allow them ample time to decorate.
- Display the “I am...” Poems throughout the ROOTS space. Have Participants walk around to look at each other’s poems and creativity or give time to do this another day. Allow Participants to take their poems home at the end of the ROOTS session.