

## Activity 1: The Public Profile of Stem Cell Research

### Assignment 1: Personal Reflection

Scientific discoveries are made when scientists ask questions, seek answers, and establish collaborations with other scientists and non-scientists. Science is also often an incremental process that can be influenced by a number of societal factors. The articles below trace how the interplay among individuals from such diverse fields as law, business, human rights, basic science, and medicine has shaped the course of stem cell use and the direction of scientific research in the public and private sectors. This activity hopes to spark your interest in scientific inquiry by exploring the vast diversity of contexts in which scientific questions arise and encourages you to develop a set of questions for further investigation.

### Instructions

1. Read the essay "**Stem Cell Research: Cell Plasticity or Political Rigidity?**" by **Katayoun Chamany**. The essay reviews the direction of ongoing stem cell and cloning research, both public and private. The essay contains few details and is missing much vital information.
2. Take a few minutes to reflect on the essay. Write down any questions or comments that you have about this passage. Consider specifically the following questions:
  - Which aspects of stem cell research stimulate political debate?
  - How might the source of stem cells stimulate ethical debate?
  - Which societal implications do you find most promising? Which do you find most disturbing?
  - What are some potential therapeutic applications of this research, and what are their limitations?
  - What aspect of the biology do you find puzzling?
  - What do you most want to learn about stem cell research and cloning?
  - What do you find most ambiguous or unclear about stem cell research?
3. Your instructor may ask you to share your thoughts in class or ask you to submit written answers for review.

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