

Activity 4.1 Awareness of Social Identity¹

Description

This activity will help participants become more aware of their own identities and worldview. They will examine how aspects of culture and other social, political, economic, and spiritual elements of their worldview affect their beliefs, values, behaviors, and sense of self.

Learning Goals

- Develop better understanding of identities, as well as dominant and non-dominant norms or beliefs of culture(s)
- Begin to uncover visible and invisible aspects of identity
- Better understand how we show up to discussions (visible and invisible)

Practice (55 minutes)

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| Step One | Personal free write: What are your social or cultural identities? Take a few moments to write down important aspects of your sense of self. What makes up “you”? | 5 min |
| Step Two | Write down 5 to 10 characteristics of your identity/identities. You could begin by returning to what you wrote in response to the free-write prompt at the top of this page. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on the meanings of each dimension of your identity/identities, life experiences that have shaped who you are, and the role and importance that each aspect plays in your life.• Provide examples of visible and invisible aspects of culture and identity.• Designate each contribution as a slice of pie. Draw your pie. Larger slices of the pie represent more dominant aspects of your identity/identities. <p>Tip: It is not necessary that you use the pie as a metaphor for your drawing. You could choose another metaphor that visually illustrates your identity, or simply draw the things that you feel compose your</p> | 10 min |

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Richard Kiely (2023). Practicing Cultural Humility. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-4-culturally-responsive-collaboration>

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| | cultural identity. Whatever visual you choose should show which elements of your identity have greater or lesser significance. | |
| Step Three | <p>Share with a partner or in small groups. Note: There is always the option not to share or share only certain items that you are comfortable sharing.</p> <p>Partner with another person who has completed the identity exercise and share with each other the meanings you attach to 3 of the elements you drew. Hold your drawings up to your cameras and share them as you describe them if you're doing this online. Take turns listening to each other and be sure to ask questions to probe more deeply into the meanings of each identity element, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does this element play in your life? • What similarities or differences exist in the ways you describe and experience your identities in different contexts? • What surprised you about what you wrote about your own identity/identities? What surprised you about your understanding of your partner's identity/identities? <p>When you join a group debrief, you may want to share from your conversation with your partner, so ask your partner if that is okay.</p> | 10 min |
| Step Five | <p>Group Debrief. When you come back together for a group conversation with your cohort, it will begin by asking you to share something you learned through listening to your partner's explanation. This could include things you realize you left off your identity pie or things you thought your partner articulated particularly well. Questions that the group might explore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can being aware of your own identity and viewpoint (and open to learning about others) impact how we work together? • How does this examination of identity lead to action? For example, how might critical self-reflection challenge power imbalances in groups and advance accountability? <p>Tip: This activity can be repeated over time and in different contexts with different collaborators, often yielding different insights.</p> | 30 min |

Reflection Assignment

- What did you learn through listening to others' description of self? This could include things you realize you left off your identity pie that they included. What does the absence or inclusion of certain identity dimensions suggest to you? How might it relate to power, privilege, awareness?
- What did you realize about people's different lenses from listening?

Practice Journal

This week, continue thinking about your own worldview and cultural identity. Now that you have heard from others and thought about it deeper, how would you modify your cultural pie? What would you borrow from other cultural pies, if you could?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- Jack Byrd, “Cultural Identities” (Forthcoming)
- [Cultural Humility People, Principles and Practices](#): 7-minute video describes the three core commitments of cultural humility: 1) Lifelong learning and critical self-reflection, 2) Recognizing and challenging power imbalances for successful partnerships, and 3) Institutional accountability.
- Kiely, R., Zukerman, S., & Hartman, S. (2020). How can you strengthen your knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors to enact cultural humility in diverse contexts? In E. Hartman (Ed.). *Interdependence: Global Solidarity and Local Actions*. The Community-based Global Learning Collaborative. Retrieved from <http://globalsolidaritylocalaction.sites.haverford.edu/cultural-humility/>