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**Handouts &
Exercises**

**Identity &
Context**

#defyhatenow | 7 HANDOUTS & EXERCISES

IDENTITY & CONTEXT

- We All Belong to Many Groups
- Pyramid of Hate: Messages about Gender
- Cycle of Socialization: River of Life

WE ALL BELONG TO MANY GROUPS

Purpose

We all have multiple identities that we reveal in different contexts. For most, identity is complex. For some, identity is a source of conflict. Many individuals who belong to groups that are not part of mainstream society encounter identity-based conflict on a regular basis.

This exercise invites participants to consider the many aspects of their identity, including aspects that are not so obvious. The activity promotes self-awareness, which helps individuals understand how they see the world. Each person's identity shapes the filter through which he or she sees the world.

Objectives

- To examine our multiple identities
- To identify similarities and differences in the group.
- To build trust and empathy by sharing personal experiences.

Materials: We All Belong to Many Groups Worksheet

Time: 90 minutes

Procedure

1. Explain the purpose of the activity. Tell participants that they will complete a worksheet by selecting five groups with which they identify.

Groups can include age, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic class, political belief, neighborhood, etc.... In this activity groups should not include personal characteristics, such as "adventurous" or "friendly". Explain that identities are not static; they change over time. One's primary identity today might be different one month from now. As an example, the trainer should share his or her identities.

2. Give participants the worksheet, have them put their name in the center circle and write five groups with which they identify in the five outside circles. Allow two to three minutes to complete the worksheet. When they are finished, have them select the primary group with which they identify and circle it. Their primary group is the group that feels the most significant right now.

3. Tell participants that in the next part of the exercise, they will share experiences they have had in one of their identities, in response to the statements at the bottom of the worksheet. They will share a time when it was difficult or challenging to be a member of your primary group. Demonstrate this for the group by sharing stories about your primary group. Try to demonstrate that are taking a risk and that you trust the group by sharing something significant. Your example will set the tone for the experiences participants share. If you have more than one trainer, each of you should share your identities and your experiences.
4. Divide participants into groups of four or five to share their identities. In their working groups, have participants share why they selected their identity groups. Then have participants respond to the statements on the bottom of their worksheet.
5. After participants have finished sharing, collect the worksheets from the group. Tell them that you are going to call out certain groups one at a time and those who identify with each group should stand and look around at the others who are standing with them. They should stand even if they did not include the group you call out on their worksheet. Remind people that this is a self-identity activity and it is not appropriate to tell someone else they should or should not stand when a specific group is called.
6. Call out some of the identities listed on the We Belong to Many Groups Worksheet that you have collected. Be sure not to call out the name of the person connected to any of the identities you call out. Try to include a mix of identities. The number of identities you call out will depend on how much time you have, but 10 is usually a good number.
7. Lead a whole group discussion using some or all of the questions that follow.

Procedures

- What was it like to fill out the worksheet? Was it easy, hard? Why?
- What patterns did you notice during the standups?
- How did it feel to stand when you were a part of a larger group?
- How did it feel to stand when you were alone or almost alone?
- Can you think of situations at our school or society when participants might feel that they are
- “Standing alone?”
- What might a person do to help someone in that situation feel that they are not alone?
- What is the role of identity in addressing prejudice?

Note: Remind participants that some people who stand alone feel pride and confidence while others may feel insecure or frightened. Why might someone feel frightened? How can they support those people who stand alone and feel insecure?

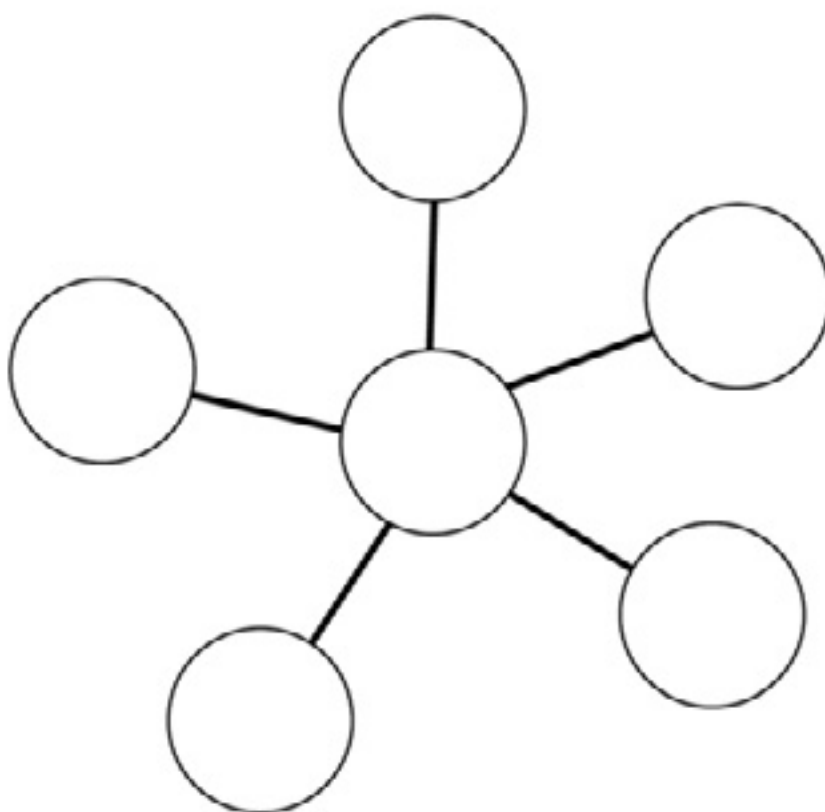
HANDOUT

WE ALL BELONG TO MANY GROUPS

This exercise highlights the multiple dimensions of our identity. It addresses the importance of defining what is important about ourselves as well as the importance of challenging stereotypes.

Directions Part 1:

Place your name in the center below. In each of the outer circles, write a group with which you identify. This can include anything: Asian, female, sister, athlete, participant, Muslim, musician, or any group with which you identify. Try to avoid using personal characteristics, such as “adventurous” or “creative.”

**Directions Part 2:**

Draw a circle around the group that you feel is your primary group and share responses to the following questions.

- Share a story about a time when it felt good to be a member of your primary group.
- Share a story about a time when it was challenging or difficult to be a member of your primary group.

PYRAMID OF HATE

Messages about Gender

Purpose

Discussion around identity are often theoretical. Giving participants the opportunity to reflect on experiences in their own gender allows them to apply concrete realities to theoretical frameworks. In this exercise participants are asked to think about themselves in terms of their gender and to listen to the stories of their peers. In reflecting on how they were raised in terms of their gender, students are asked to think about the hidden messages that shape how they perceive of others.

Objectives

- 1.To reflect on experiences around gender that shape students' assumptions of others and their world view.
- 2.To examine the range of experiences and perspectives around gender.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: List of questions for facilitator to read during exercise

Procedures

Option 1 (For groups that have built some trust)

1. Explain the purpose/rationale of the activity.
2. Divide students into concentric circles. Have them count off 1, 2, 1, 2...Have the 1's stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle facing each other. Ask them to turn around so they are facing the rest of the students. Have each 2 stand up and face a 1. To make sure everyone has a partner, have the 1's acknowledge their partner by raising their hand (they can shake hands with their partner, if culturally appropriate). If you have an odd number of students, you can have the extra students observe the activity and share what they observe at the end of the activity.
3. Explain that you will read a statement and either the 1's (inside circle) or the 2's (outside circle) will respond. The person speaking will have one minute to respond. The person listening should not talk. They should use body language to show they are engaged, but they should remain silent, allowing the speaker the full minute to respond.
4. After one minute, have the pairs switch roles, so the person speaking is now listening, and the listener is now responding the statement.
5. At the end of one minute, have the outer circle rotate one person to the right, so everyone has a new partner. Read the next statement, following steps 3 and 4 above. This time however, the person who responded second to the previous statement should now respond first. After both pairs have responded, have the inside circle move one person to the right.
- 6.Continue through the statements, alternating who speaks first after each statement and alternating the order in which the circles rotate on person to the right.
- 7.After you have read the statements, lead a discussion using some or all the following questions.

Option 2 (For groups that don't know each other well)

Distribute the list of statements to each participants and ask them time reflect on their responses, taking notes on the paper, if they'd like. Give them 5-10 minutes for this.

Continue with the stages in Option 1. Divide students into concentric circles and select 5 of the statements on the list for them to share in pairs.

After you have read the 5 statements, lead a discussion using some or all the following questions.

Discussion

- How did feel to share personal information about yourself with different partners
- Which questions were more difficult to answer? Why?
- What did you learn about yourself in this activity? What did you learn about others, both your peers of the same gender and peers of a different gender?
- Where do the messages we receive about identities come from?
- How do these messages shape our perceptions of others, as well as our expectations of others?
- How can our perceptions of other identities lead to conflict?

Messages about Gender: Option 1

- Share with your partner the messages you received when you were younger about male and gender female gender roles.
- Share with your partner how you were taught to interact with people who are of a different gender.
- Share with your partner the people of your gender that you were encouraged to hold as role models.
- Share with your partner the people of another gender that you were encouraged to hold as role models.
- Share with your partner something you were discouraged from doing because of your gender.
- Share with your partner a stereotype about your gender that bothers you.
- Share with your partner a stereotype that you have about another gender.
- Share with your partner the ways in which you do not fit the gender roles assigned to you by society.
- Share with your partner how gender differences affect you on a daily basis.
- Share a time when you were aware of your gender in the workplace.

Messages about Gender: Option 2

- Take a few minutes to reflect on each of the following prompts:
- Things I was encouraged to believe about people of my gender.
- Things I was discouraged from believing about people of my gender.
- Ways I was taught (instructed, shown, saw) that people of my gender dealt with strong feelings, such as affection and anger.
- Ways I was taught people of my gender behaved regarding school/work/career.
- Values stressed to me about how a “good” person of my gender behaves/appears.
- Ways I was taught to interact with people of a different gender.
- Things I was taught (instructed, shown, experienced) about people of other genders.
- Ways I was taught people of other genders behave reading/work/career.
- People of my gender and other genders that I was encouraged to hold as role models.
- Which of the above messages had the most lasting effect on you?
- Which of the above messages had the most negative effect on you?

CYCLE OF SOCIALIZATION

River of Life

Purpose

The purpose of the River of Life is to provide an opportunity for participants to understand moments in their life journey that they can reflect on, pull into their narrative, and create a process for them to orient moments in their life.

Objectives

- To reflect on one's life journey
- To share personal experiences and begin to think about how to speak about it publicly in creating their public leadership narrative

Materials

Chart paper and markers

Time: 1 hour

- 25 minutes to individually work on their River of Life
- 20 minutes for participants to present to their partner (10 min each)
- 15 minutes for closing discussion

Preparation

1. Create Your River of Life and be prepared to present it
2. Prepare flipcharts

Flipchart 1

The types of things that go on the river below:

- The river represents their life, from the beginning until today. In the river, draw and label "islands" that represent the important places in their life, starting (for example) with where they were born.
- They can draw "life-preservers" representing the people at those moments in their life that were/are important.
- On the right side of the river, draw and label "tributaries" representing the highlights or moments of great joy, accomplishment, or celebration.
- On the left side of the river, draw and label "tributaries" representing the challenging, hard, difficult, or tragic moments of their life.

Flipchart 2: Sharing Your River

Participation A will share one or two affirming and one or two challenging experiences and what he/she learned from each experience. Looking back over your river:

- What patterns do you see?
- Life learnings?
- What are you most proud of?

Participant B responds:

- What moved, touched, surprised or intrigued me was....

- What I heard as your strength and values were...
- What I heard that might relate to your leadership/communication style was...

Procedures

Explain and model the River of Life

- Draw your own river prior to the session
- Use your river to explain a River of Life. Demonstrate how you've captured the places you have lived, the important people in your life, the difficulties you have faced, and the opportunities you have received.

Provide materials and instructions to participants

- Distribute a sheet of blank paper (any size, poster/flip chart works well, but you can also use a standard printer paper).
- Using markers, crayons, or a pen pencil, participants will draw a simple river a few inches wide flowing from one upper corner of the paper, to the opposite lower corner of the paper.

Using the flip chart paper, explain what they will add to their paper

- The river
- The "islands"
- "Life-preservers"
- Symbols that represent things they might not share
- "Tributaries" representing the highlights or moments of great joy, accomplishment, or celebration (right) and the challenging, hard, difficult, or tragic moments of their life (left)

Give participants 35 minutes to construct their individual River of Life

- It does not have to be a river, it can be a different type of moving body of water or another structure.
- This is not an exercise that requires any artistic talent; it only requires participants to put their life story on paper in a visual format.
- Participants should mark the moments and people in their past that have influenced where they are today.

Explain that they will share their river of life with a partner

- Participants can discuss different parts of the river or the entire river.
- Invite each person to walk the other person through their River of Life. The partner is there to listen and to ask clarifying questions –but not to bring it back to them or their river. They should get as much information about your partner as possible.

Ask participants to break into pairs.

Participant A gives participant B a brief guided tour of their river. Use the flipchart to explain that each participant will share one or two affirming and one or two challenging experiences and what they learned from each experience.

Switch Roles and do the exercise again.

Discussion

- 1.What did you learn about yourself?
- 2.What did you learn about your partner?
- 3.What moments stand out for you?
- 4.What is the overall story of your river?