

Instructions for the Social Identity Grid

Module 4: Working Effectively in an Intercultural Environment

Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self-claimed and frequently ascribed by others. For example, racial groupings are often ascribed as well as self-claimed. Government, schools, and employers often ask an individual to claim a racial identity group or simply ascribe one to an individual based on visual perception. Other social identities are personally claimed but not often announced or easily visually ascribed such as sexual orientation, religion, or disability status.

For the purpose of this self-examination, please identify the memberships you claim or those ascribed to you. Below are examples of social identity groupings. Feel free to use your own language for your identities.

Examples of Social Identity Groups

Gender - Woman, Man, Transgender, Post-Gender

Sex - Intersex, Female, Male

Race - Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Latin@, Black, White, Bi/Multiracial

Ethnicity - Irish, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Italian, Mohawk, Jewish, Guatemalan, Lebanese, European-American

Sexual Orientation/Attractionality - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pan-Attractional, Heterosexual, Queer, Questioning

Religion/Spirituality/Faith/Meaning - Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, Agnostic, Atheist, Secular Humanist

Social Class - Poor, Working Class, Lower-Middle Class, Upper-Middle Class, Owning Class, Ruling Class

Age - Child, Young Adult, Middle-Age Adult, Elderly

(Dis)Ability - People with disabilities (cognitive, physical, emotional, etc.), Temporarily able-bodied, Temporarily disabled

Nation(s) of Origin and/or Citizenship - United States, Nigeria, Korea, Turkey, Argentina

Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation - Mohawk, Aboriginal, Navajo, Santal

Body Size/Type - Overweight, Person of Size, Thin

Caretaker - Parent, child, relative, friend

Instructions for Social Identity Grid

1. First, choose 5 social identities which are most important to you.
2. Use your own language to describe your identity in each group.
3. Categorize each social identity group as target or agent. Target groups are more likely to be oppressed, marginalized, and/or have less access to resources in society. Agent groups are more likely to hold earned or unearned privilege in society, have access to resources, and/or shape dominant culture.
4. For each social identity group, consider which ones you are most aware of, think about the least, have the greatest impact on how you see yourself, and impact your decision making.

Adapted from the Program on Intergroup Relations at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor.