

Essential Activity: A Personal Reflection

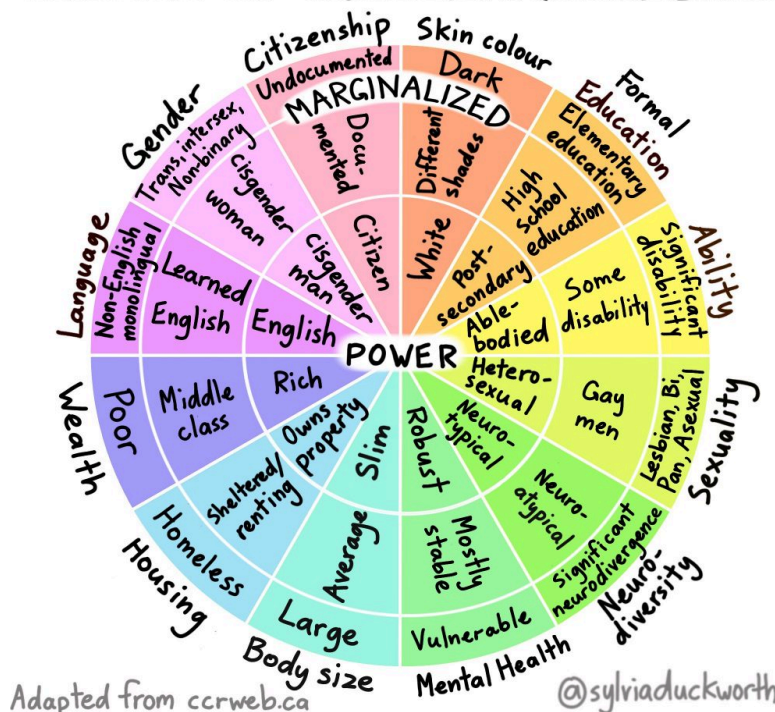
What is my own positionality or social identity?

One tool to support and deepen your understanding of your positionality, is *social identity mapping*. To begin, it is important to differentiate between your social identities and your personal identities:

Definitions!	
<p>Social identity - Refers to the set of characteristics by which a person is definitively recognizable or known by the society in which they live. These are characteristics that are attributed to the individual by society. These characteristics serve as markers that indicate what that person is, in the eyes of others (their society). At the same time, this means that these characteristics put that person in the same group as other individuals who share the same attributes. E.g. race, religion, parent, doctor, tall person.</p>	<p>Personal identity - While social identities group together individuals with the same characteristics, and therefore point out ways in which individuals are the same as others, self-identity sets us apart as distinct individuals. Self-identity defines our unique sense of ourselves and our relationship to the outside world. Dictionaries define self-identity as the conscious recognition of the self as having a unique identity. It is an awareness of and identification with oneself as a separate individual. E.g. based on experiences, interests, complex personality characteristics.</p>

Social Identities are often the story your society or communities (others) have about you, while **Self Identity** can look similar or different, and is the story you have of yourself. Here are some example of current structures of Social Identities at work today:

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



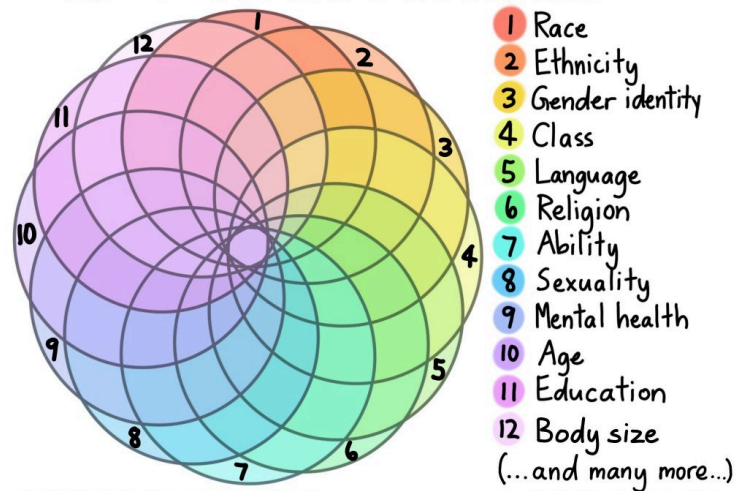
Exploration: Matrix of Oppression and Social Identity Profile

This reflection will take you through three reflection activities.

- 1) Take some time to explore these social identity categories. Where do you find yourself, or how does your society refer to you?

Social Identity Categories	Privileged Social Groups	Border Social Groups	Targeted Social Groups	Form of Oppression (Ism)
Race	White	Biracial	People of Color (Native, Black, Asian, Latino, Pacific Islander)	Racism or White Supremacy
Sex	Male	Female	Female, Transsexual, Intersex People	Sexism or Patriarchy
Gender	Cis (male and female)	Gender Ambiguous	Transgender, Genderqueer, Gender Non-Conforming, Gender Fluid	Cissexism or Transgender Oppression
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	Bisexual	Lesbian, Gay, Pansexual, Asexual, Queer	Heterosexism / Homophobia
Class	Rich, Upper Class People	Middle Class People	Working Class, Economically Poor People	Classism/ Elitism
Ability/ Disability	Temporarily Abled-Bodied People	People with Temporary Disabilities	People with Disabilities	Ableism
Age	Adults	Young Adults	Elders, Young People	Ageism/ Adultism
Religion	Protestants	Roman Catholic (Historically)	Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Taoists, Sikhs, Indigenous Religions, Agnostics, Atheists, ...	Religious Oppression

INTERSECTIONALITY



Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

@sylviaaducworth

2) Now, take some time to explore these social identity categories, and how they overlap in your life. What are your social identities, what status do they currently hold, and how do they overlap or impact each other?

Social Identities	My Social Identities	Status for My Identity	Experiences, Examples	Intersections/ Overlapping Impacts
Racial or Ethnic Identity				
Sex				
Gender				
Sexual Orientation				
Class				
Ability/Disability				
Religion				
Age				
Others? (Language, Citizenship, and More!)				

3) Finally, take some time to feel into what all this really means for you, your experience of the world, and how your social identities might impact your community engagement.

1. How did I feel mapping out my identities on paper? Did I learn anything new about myself and how identities influence my life and experience the world?
2. What part of my identity informs my values/beliefs/practices the most?
3. What identity do I think is the first thing people notice about me?
4. What part of my identity do I think about the most?
5. What part of my identity do I think about the least?
6. What part of my identity do I struggle with the most?
7. Which of my identities provides me the most privilege, freedom, or power?
8. Which of my identities feels like it creates the most barriers for me?
9. This is the part of my identity that I am most proud of.
10. How do you imagine your social identities, and your understanding of positionality and intersectionality will impact your experience doing community engagement? How can your identities possibly support your engagement or may create meaningful challenges?