

IDENTITY

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Main objectives:

- Reflecting on the concept of identity

During the workshops participants will (specific objectives):

- Reflect on groups they identify with.
- Define identity and its influence on our life.
- Get to know the concept of primary and secondary identity.
- Discuss how identifying as a woman influences our life and choices.

Time:

1,5h

Place:

indoor or outdoor

Materials:

Stationary: pens, paper (recycled if possible)

Note: The whole scenario is based on materials published in Pakiet edukacyjny.
Dyskryminacja (<http://bc.ore.edu.pl/Content/190/antydiskryminacja.pdf>).



Course:

1. Introduction

Invite participants to share the story of their name. Do they know where it comes from? Who gave them this name? What is the meaning of it? Do they like it? Would they like to be called differently? After everybody shared, discuss for a few minutes: how the name is connected to the topic of today's workshop - identity?

2. Parts of my identity

Source: <http://bc.ore.edu.pl/Content/190/antydiskryminacja.pdf>, pages 49-52

Explain that this exercise is about different groups participants identify with. They won't have to share the results of this exercise if they don't wish so.

a) Individual work

Ask participants to draw the circle and divide it into 5 equal parts. Invite them to write down their names in the middle of the circle and then fill the five empty parts by writing down the names of the groups they identify themselves with, they feel they belong to. One group in one part. Ask participants to do this exercise spontaneously, without thinking. They can always change their mind later. At the end of this part ask participants to underline one from the five groups which they feel is the most important for them at the moment.

b) Small group work

Divide participants into small groups of 2-3 people and give them time to share the results of their work (if they wish so). Summarise by asking of any thoughts, surprise or conclusions participants would like to share with others.



c) Whole group work

Explain to the participants this part of the exercise. In a moment you will start to read the names of certain categories. If the name of a category corresponds to one of the groups written down by participants in their circle, they are asked to stand up. This part of exercise should be done in silence, with no comments. After a few seconds you ask participants for whom this particular group is the most important to keep standing and the rest to sit down. After a few seconds, ask everybody to sit down and continue to the next category. Before starting, ensure participants that they don't have to stand up if they don't want to, even when the category corresponds to what they wrote.

Make sure everybody understands the exercise and if so, start to read the first category. Give it time. Even if nobody stands up, don't rush to the next category. If any questions or comments appear, ask gently to keep silent and ensure that after the exercise there will be time to share the questions, doubts and comments.

Proposed categories:

- religion
- origin
- sex
- sexual orientation
- profession
- age
- social status
- hobby, free time
- family
- friends
- school, university



- sport
- charity activities
- political orientation
- neighbourhood
- music and art
- eating habits (e.g. vegetarianism)

You don't have to read all categories, you can adjust them to the group. At the end you can also ask if there is anybody who would like to propose their own category.

d) Summary

Discuss the exercise with participants and ask about their impressions.

Suggested questions:

- Which part of the exercise was the most difficult for you and why?
- How did you feel when you were standing alone, and how when almost everyone was standing?
- How did you feel when you were sitting alone (or almost alone) while others were standing?
- Did you learn something new about other people in the group? Did you learn something new about yourself?
- Are there any groups that are more difficult to stand or sit with?
- During the exercise, you didn't have a chance to explain why you stood up. Was it uncomfortable for you? Why?
- What did you learn through this exercise?
- What is identity? How would you define it? How does it influence our life?

After the exercise tell participants about the concept of primary and secondary identity, also sometimes called Primary and Secondary Characteristics of Diversity:



“Primary characteristics of diversity are usually the most visible; for example, gender, race, sexual orientation, and age, although often these may not be apparent. The visibility of primary characteristics is critical to the assumptions made by the majority society about the presumed worth of minority group members. The values and judgements assigned to these attributes by the majority group may determine whether minority group members are accepted as full participants.

Secondary characteristics are defined by way of experience. Secondary characteristics, such as family status, education, income, and communication style are vital in shaping one's educational and career trajectories. Secondary characteristics account for human agency and choice, so the influence of secondary characteristics is more variable and presumably less defining, although not always, than primary characteristics.”

Source: https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/what_diversity.html

Discrimination is usually connected to our primary characteristics, so those we are not really in power to change.

3. Summary

Summarising, bring it back to the topic of identifying as a woman in today's society. What does it mean for participants? How identifying as a woman influences their life? How many of them actually put women as one of the categories? What do they think - do men put gender as frequently in categories as women do? Probably not, as the majority category tends to be invisible. Probably participants themselves didn't put race in their categories (as most non-white people would do) or sexual orientation (as most homosexual will do). You can continue this topic by proposing the workshop about Discrimination. At the end ask participants to fill the application form.

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