

Exploring Complex Identities within a Social Justice Framework

The grid below is used to help us think about the complexities of our social identities and how they impact our daily experiences. One important thing to understand is that these categories are based on systems of privilege and oppression, not on individual experiences, meaning we may have pride in marginalized identities, but they are still subject to marginalization within a U.S. context because laws, policies, media, resource distribution, social norms, and other determinants of safety and power are generally set by those who have the most privileged identities.

Please read over the list below and circle identities you hold, noting which groups are privileged or marginalized within each of the 15 categories. Once you have completed the table below, please answer the reflection questions on the following page.

	<u>GROUPS THAT EXPERIENCE PRIVILEGE IN A U.S. CONTEXT</u>	<u>GROUPS THAT ARE MARGINALIZED OR OPPRESSED IN A U.S. CONTEXT</u>
1. GENDER	MEN	WOMEN; TRANS; GENDERQUEER; INTERSEX
2. GENDER IDENTITY	CISGENDER/NON-TRANS	TRANSGENDER; GENDERQUEER; GENDER NON-CONFORMING
3. RACE	WHITE PEOPLE	PEOPLE OF COLOR
4. SEXUAL ORIENTATION	HETEROSEXUAL	GAY; LESBIAN; BISEXUAL; QUEER; QUESTIONING
5. AGE	30S TO EARLY 50S	YOUNGER AND OLDER
6. CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS; OWNING CLASS	WORKING POOR; WORKING CLASS
7. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	COLLEGE GRADUATE	HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS
8. RELIGION/SPIRIT UALITY	CHRISTIAN: PROTESTANT OR CATHOLIC	MUSLIM; JEWISH; BUDDHIST; HINDU; LDS; SIKH; PAGAN; AGNOSTIC; ATHEIST; ETC.
9. CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY	U.S.-BORN; BORN AS U.S. CITIZEN	BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S.; IMMIGRANT TO U.S.
10. CHILDHOOD FAMILY STRUCTURE	RAISED BY BIOLOGICAL OR ADOPTIVE FAMILY IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FELT SAFE AND WITHOUT ABUSE	RAISED IN THE FOSTER SYSTEM; RAISED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WITH DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE IN THE HOME, AND/OR OTHER HOME EXPERIENCES THAT FELT UNSAFE AND LACKED STABILITY
11. ABILITY/DISABILIT Y	TEMPORARILY ABLE-BODIED	PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, OR LEARNING DISABILITY
12. ETHNICITY/CULTU RE	WESTERN EUROPEAN	PUERTO RICAN, DINÉ, MEXICAN, NIGERIAN, JEWISH, RUSSIAN, CHINESE, IRANIAN, ETC.
13. SIZE/APPEARANC E	SLENDER; PERCEIVED AS ATTRACTIVE; HANDSOME; BEAUTIFUL; ETC.	OF SIZE; PARTICULARLY TALL OR SHORT; PERCEIVED AS UNATTRACTIVE; ETC.
14. USE OF ENGLISH	“PROPER” ENGLISH	ACCENTED ENGLISH; ANOTHER PRIMARY LANGUAGE
15. MARITAL/PAREN TAL STATUS	MARRIED IN A HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN	DIVORCED; LGBTQ PARENT; DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP; SINGLE PARENT; SINGLE

Self-Reflection Questions

Take a few minutes to complete the statements below, using the identities you circled on the previous page. You may find that you are a member of the privileged or oppressed/marginalized group in the majority or all of the categories. If so, pay attention to your feelings and reactions in noticing that pattern.

1. I am most aware of my membership in the _____ privileged group.
2. I am least aware of my membership in the _____ privileged group.
3. I am most aware of my membership in the _____ oppressed/marginalized group.
4. I am least aware of my membership in the _____ oppressed/marginalized group.
5. Which of your identities do you spend the most time thinking about?
6. What are the most recent memories of noticing your racial identity?
7. What are the earliest memories of noticing your most salient identity (if different from #6)?
8. Which of your identities have the most influence on your own decision making?
9. Which of your identities do you suspect will become more salient as you embark on your college experience at Seattle University? Why?
10. What emotions were present as you circled identities in the privileged column?
11. What emotions were present as you circled identities in the marginalized column?