



15+



20 min



1+



You need

1

I am...



The purpose of this exercise is to encourage participants to reflect on the various social identities they hold, why certain identities are more prominent to them than others, and whether some are imposed by society.



This exercise is designed to make people reflect about our social identities, the different traits or categories we use to describe ourselves, and how others might see us. Identities like gender, ethnicity, abilities, and interests can be shaped by our own experiences and what society expects from us.

An individual's identity is socially constructed from early childhood. People often define themselves by what sets them apart from what is seen as "normal." When being a white European man is highlighted as normal, people from minority backgrounds will identify themselves with what makes them different.



*Some identities may feel really important to who we are, while others might be less central or even feel like they have been imposed on us by others. It is important to create a respectful and supportive space for this activity, as some students may reflect on sensitive or personal aspects of themselves. **Let students know they do not have to share anything they are not comfortable with, and give them time to reflect privately if needed.***



Civil Connections
Building robust communities



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Participants are given 2 minutes to write as many sentences as they can starting with "I am...". They should write whatever comes to mind, reflecting any aspect of their identity. Encourage participants not to overthink or filter their responses - just write what naturally comes up.



After the writing session, ask participants to take a few moments to reflect on what they wrote. You can ask the participants the following questions:

- Raise your hand if you wrote down your gender within the first three sentences
- Raise your hand if you wrote your religion within the first three sentences
- Raise your hand if you wrote down nationality
- Raise your hand if you wrote down ethnicity
- Do you see any patterns
- Which were the first descriptions that came to your mind? Which categories do they belong to (e.g., gender, family status, job, hobbies, ethnicity, etc.)?
- In what order did you list them, and why?
- Why do certain identities feel more 'visible' than others in different contexts?
- Why did certain identities come up first?
- Do you change the identities you highlight depending on where you are or who you're with?
- Are there aspects of yourself you didn't think about at all? Why might that be?
- Did you write something down that you don't strongly identify with?
- Did you write anything only because others often describe you that way?

After the question ask participant to circle the three most meaningful, the three that the participants see themselves as or that is most valuable for them



Ask the participants how it was to do this exercise? What did they learn?

Some participants may feel vulnerable about sharing their identities, particularly if they wrote about aspects of themselves they are still exploring or that are less accepted by society. Respect participants' boundaries and allow them the option to keep their reflections private. You may also consider modifying the exercise based on the group's comfort level.

