

Office of Healthcare Equity

Foundational EDI Course: Identity, Privilege, and Intersectionality

Discussion Guide (for use after completing the course)

Community Agreements:

If using this discussion guide with a group, it is helpful to start with community agreements. Consider these from OHCE.

- **Accept discomfort as part of this discussion; expect non-closure**
- **Allow strong opinions from others with lived experiences.** All are welcome in this discussion, and we ask for compassion for those with lived and painful experiences.
- **Tell only your own story.** Don't speak for others, and don't lecture.
- **What's shared here stays here, what's learned here can and should be passed along.** Please respect the privacy of what other's share. You can share the lessons, but not the stories or names.
- **Lean towards grace, compassion, and forgiveness to others and yourself.**

Ask participants if there is anything anyone would like to add? Ask for a thumbs up or nod etc to indicate agreement to these guidelines as a learning community?

Discussion Prompts:

1. What answers immediately come to mind when you're asked the question, "Who are you?" Provide four responses:

I am _____

I am _____

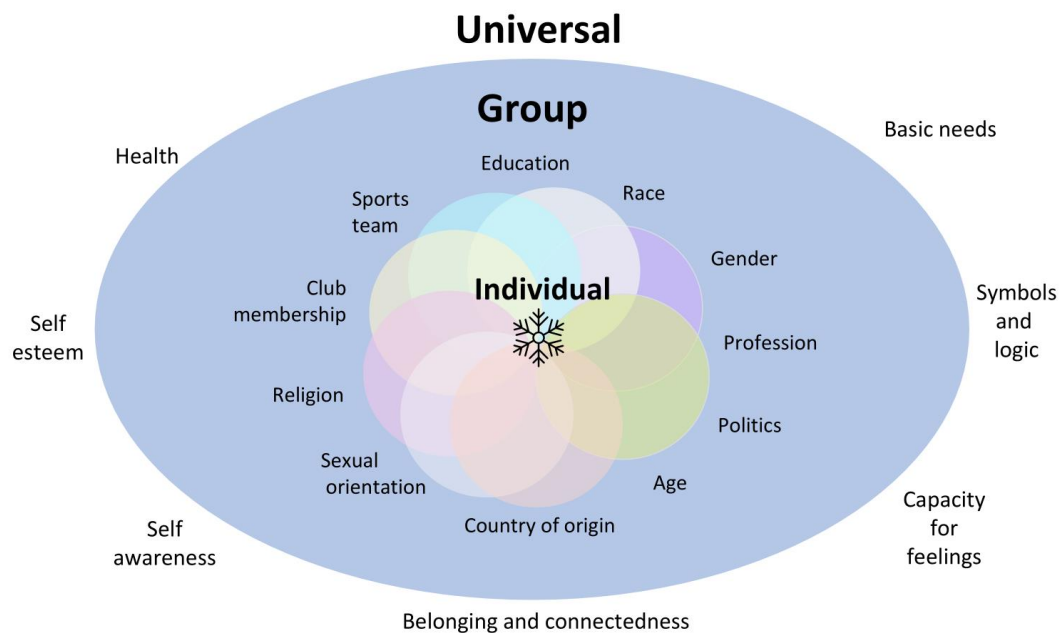
I am _____

I am _____

2. Consider this quote, from psychologist Derald Wing Sue: "All individuals are like no other individuals, like some individuals, and like all other individuals."

This suggests we can think about our identity at the individual level ("like no others"), group level ("like some others"), and universal level ("like all others").

Which of your “I am...” responses are individual, group, or universal? Consider this image for guidance if helpful (not all ways of understanding identity are depicted):



3. In these trainings, we focus on group identities because that is where bias, discrimination, and equity problems occur. Sometimes our group identities are chosen, sometimes we are born into them, and sometimes they are imposed. What are your group identities like?
4. Make a list of people in your life who have an influence on you – family, friends, mentors, etc.
 - a. How many of them share identities with you?
 - b. How have these relationships shaped your worldview?
5. Think about people in your professional environment – your colleagues, people you supervise, your supervisor, your patients, etc.
 - a. How many share identities with you?
 - b. Which identities are represented, and which identities are not?
 - c. How do these identities and their intersections shape the culture of your professional environment?
6. You are seated in a chair in the University’s library and witness this interaction: A Black trans woman student walks into the library and is looking for a particular book on transgender experiences. The librarian is a cis Black man. The woman asks the librarian for help. The librarian recommends two books, both of which are about the white transgender experience. The woman responds, “Do you

Questions about this guide:
hcesched@uw.edu

have anything specific for Black folks?” The librarian says “I’m sorry, I thought you wanted a book on transgender experiences.” The Black trans woman leaves with a frustrated look on her face.

- a. How do you think this interaction impacted the woman? What do you think she feels/thinks?
 - b. The librarian looks confused as to why the woman was upset and turns to you. How would you explain/educate the librarian?
 - c. Does your answer change if your identities were more similar to or different from that of the woman or the librarian? How so?
 - d. The woman seems upset by the interaction. What could you say to her to offer understanding and support?
7. Now that you have reflected on these questions -
- a. How do you plan on using this information personally and professionally?
 - b. More specifically, what will be your first goal? If using the SMART goals framework, what resources, collaborations, and support do you need?
-

Additional scenario that can be discussed:

Consider this interaction between Dr. Lucas Alvarez and his student, Megan Acker. Dr. Alvarez is a new, 40-year-old Bioengineering faculty researcher from Colombia. He is new at teaching and feels a lot of pressure to do well. Megan is a White 25-year-old first year graduate student in his class. She is one of two women in her Bioengineering class and feels a lot of pressure to do well. Megan has a hard time understanding his fast-paced lectures and receives a C on her first exam. She emails him expressing concern about her grade, and writes, “sometimes I have a hard time understanding your lectures given their speed and (to be honest) your accent. I also admit I have been feeling nervous and I’m not sure what to do.”

- Can you describe the intersectional identities of Dr. Alvarez and Megan? Can you understand how both of them are privileged in some ways and marginalized in others?
- A colleague reads this scenario and criticizes Dr. Alvarez. They say, “He is a powerful male professor and he needs to address the needs of his vulnerable student.” Another colleague criticizes Megan: “She is an entitled student who is ignoring the vulnerabilities of a new professor from a different background.” How would you help these two colleagues understand each other?
- If you were Dr. Alvarez, how would you respond to Megan’s email?