

Activity: Socialization Map



TIME ESTIMATE
30-45 minutes



MATERIALS
Sheets of paper and writing materials for all participants

PURPOSE

To become aware that our privilege, position in society, and life experiences deeply impact how we see and experience the world.

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, participants will explore their own social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, and class. Participants will come to understand how their identities are constructed and reinforced throughout their lives by mapping a timeline of when, how, and by whom lessons about their identity were taught. Reflection and discussion will bring attention to how messaging and policing of certain identities differs depending on which groups participants belong to (for example, whiteness is often normalized and represented in society and the media).

This activity is adapted from the [University of Michigan Program on Intergroup Relations and College of Literature, Language, and the Arts](#).

STEPS

- 1 Ask participants to select a social identity (such as race, gender, sexuality, class, etc.) that they feel comfortable reflecting on.
- 2 Ask participants to begin a 'Socialization Map' by writing the identity being mapped at the top of the paper. Next, encourage participants to make a timeline of their choosing (either horizontal line or a different configuration of their choosing). Have them mark moments of significant learning or sections of age or schooling on this timeline.
 - Example: "0-5; 6-10; 11-15; 16-present" or "preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school and post secondary education"
- 3 Have participants indicate where on the timeline they learned lessons about their social identities using the following questions:
 - What messages did you hear/learn about being ____?
 - Where did the messages come from and how were they delivered? (Family members, friends, religious organizations, schools, teachers, media (social media, television, advertisements, newspapers, etc.), other institutions, etc.)
 - Why do you think the message was delivered? Were there any underlying connotations, negative or positive?
 - Does your social identity match the dominant, normalized social identity of the society you live in? How is that identity represented in society?
 - What behaviors and aspects of your identity were encouraged, rewarded, and supported? How?
 - What behaviors and aspects of your identity were discouraged, unsupported, and punished? How?

- 4 Encourage participants to add any additional details to their maps - including feelings, questions, uncertainties, etc. Participants should also be encouraged to make this as creative as they would like - for example, adding illustrations.
- 5 Debrief the class using the following discussion questions (in pairs or small groups):
 - When did you first become aware that you were a member of the social identity you selected? How did you feel? When were you first aware of people from other groups in this category?
 - Have you been treated differently (either positively or negatively) because of your membership in this group? When and how? Consider the different types of power defined in this module - how has power, privilege, or discrimination shaped how members of your social identity group are treated?
 - Have you witnessed someone else being treated differently because of their membership in another group? When and how?

ASSESSMENT

Write a ~3 paragraph reflection on the experience, using the “What? So What? Now What?” Model, reflective model was researched and [developed by Rolfe et al. in 2001](#) and has also been attributed to Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless, the creators of [Liberating Structures](#).

[This post](#) by Gustavo Razzetti, of the Liberationist, provides a good overview of the reflection format:

- What: Understanding the event
- So What: Make sense of the facts and their implications
- Now What: Identify course of action or new solutions based on the reflection

These reflections can be picked up at the end of the class as an ‘exit ticket’, where learners submit their short reflection before leaving the class or workshop.

NOTES: