



## Overview

<b>THEME</b>  SELF	<b>TIME</b> 45+ MINUTES	<b>MATERIALS</b>  HANDOUT	<b>SETUP</b>  CIRCLE OF CHAIRS
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**Topic:** Each individual's multiple identities and how they experience those identities. Inclusive spaces.

**Audience:** Individuals, adolescent through adult.

**Conceptual Objective:** Participants will understand that each person has many intersecting identities, conferring different degrees of privilege and oppression in different social contexts. Because of this, individuals often share, emphasize or deemphasize certain identities in different spaces. This can perpetuate pain, isolation, and oppression. It can also prevent organizations, institutions, and communities from benefitting from the full engagement of members. Inclusive spaces are those where individuals feel more able to bring their whole selves.

**Experiential Objective:** Participants will name and explore their own social identities and the spaces where they are/are not able to express those identities. Participants will reflect on how they can help create spaces where people can bring their whole selves.

**Facilitator Prep:** Review the handout, perform the exercise yourself, and assess your own comfort talking about your own identities with participants. Consider a co-facilitator to expand the scope of identities depicted by facilitators. Consider what you should be prepared for in your context when you facilitate this. What are the foreseeable challenges, and how do you think you could address them?

**Related Content:** This exercise is best when included as part of a broader training on teamwork, group development, interpersonal growth, etc.

## Procedure

### INTRODUCTIONS (3 MIN)

- Facilitators introduce selves to full group, participants introduce self to neighbor.
- Facilitators explain that the upcoming exercise is personal, and all should be honored and respected for choosing to share or not to share.

### OPENING (2 MIN)

- Invite the group to suggest agreements to create a safe discussion environment. They may include:
  - Stay engaged (Remove distractions.)
  - Speak your truth (Talk about your own self, life, and story, rather than those of others.)
  - Experience discomfort (Stay in the conversation, even when you are uncomfortable.)
  - Expect/accept non-closure (Some things will remain unclear.)
  - Ouch! (We may feel hurt by what we hear – please speak up when this happens.)

### OPENING (2 MIN)

- Set the stage, introduce the topic

Each person has many intersecting identities, such as their roles in family (sibling, parent), religion, ethnicity, nationality, age, ability, gender, and level of education. Each of us have identities that are marginalized and identities that grant us privilege, depending on where we are and what we're doing. Often, we experience both at the same time.

Individuals may share, emphasize or deemphasize certain identities in different spaces, depending on what is accepted or valued there—and what they have previously experienced. The following exercise invites you to consider your many identities and how they do or don't show up in different roles and social spaces.

## CIRCLES OF MY MULTICULTURAL SELVES (30 MIN)

- Distribute diagrams
- Ask participants to spend the next 3 – 5 minutes completing their sheet. Remind them that examples are on the back.
- After participants have completed their sheets, ask them to make the following additions:
  - A. Write a phrase or sentence that will help you remember two situations on the connecting lines between 'you' and your identity bubbles:  
One in which this identity was appreciated and honored (above the line, for example); and  
One in which this identity was ignored or demeaned (below the line).

Mark the following:

W+ = if you're able to express/be/acknowledge this identity freely at work/where you study or serve, paid or unpaid

W- = if you're unable to express/be/acknowledge this identity freely at work/where you study or serve, paid or unpaid

F+ = if you're able to express/be/acknowledge this identity freely in your family

F- = if you're unable to express/be/acknowledge this identity freely in your family

C+ = if you're able to express/be/acknowledge this identity freely in your community

C- = if you're unable to express/be/acknowledge this identity freely in your community

LB = the identities that you feel you're told to Leave Behind or ignore for safety or success

Discuss

(Consider having this discussion in pairs or small groups.)

- A. How does your particular diagram impact your effectiveness or ability to achieve collaborative goals?
  - B. Can you identify relationships that have been harmed/diminished because of a particular identity? What about relationships that have been improved because of a particular identity?
  - C. What are the obvious or subtle ways you are made aware of an identity being welcome or not?
- Ask participants next to:  
write a - next to the identities they believe are marginalized/oppresed in our broader society; and  
write a + next to the identities they believe are dominant/privileged in our broader society.

## DEBRIEF IN PAIRS (5 MIN)

- Have participants turn to one another and discuss, to the extent they're comfortable:
  - A. What is your initial reaction to this exercise?
  - B. What are some challenges you would face in your environment if you were to advocate for people bringing their whole selves?
  - C. What role can you play in creating a space for people to bring their whole selves?

## CLOSING (5 MIN)

- Going around circle, ask each participant to share one word reflecting how they are feeling now.

Circles of My Multicultural Selves is adapted by Minnesota Campus Compact staff based on workshops developed by Nickyia Cogshell, Christine DeLarbre, and Brandyn Woodard, adapted from resources developed by EdChange, a project by Paul C. Gorski. The agreements in this workshop have been adapted from Glen Singleton's Courageous Conversations.

We welcome your suggestions for improving this guide further for future trainings. We also welcome you to use it and adapt it for your own trainings, subject to the terms below.

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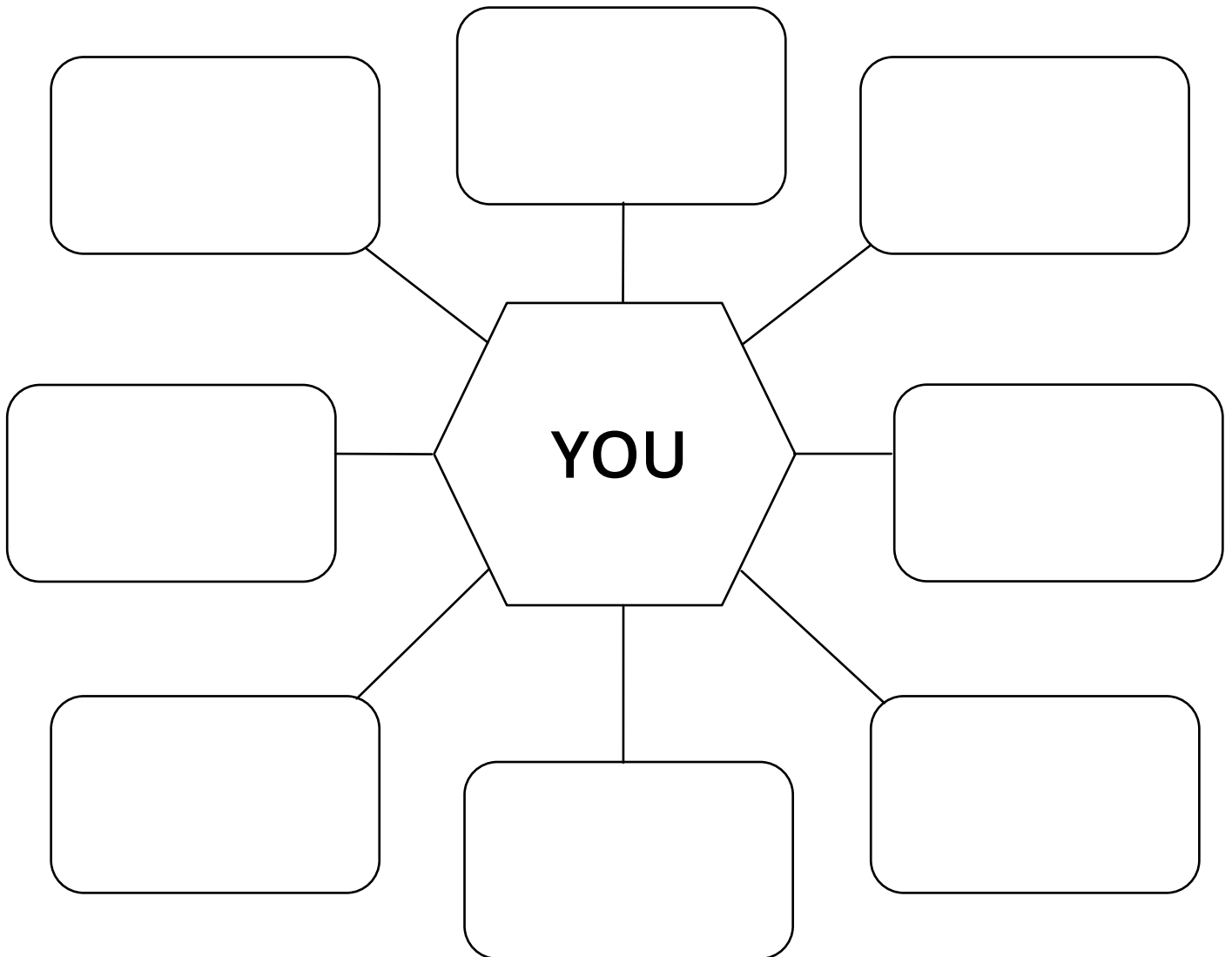
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# Circles of My Multicultural Selves

**Directions:** Take a few minutes to complete this diagram. In as many circles as you can, write a word you feel describes you, is a significant part of who you are, or a way you choose to identify yourself to others (e.g. sister, student, African-American, Christian, Democrat, partner, etc.).



# THE MANY-LAYERED MULTICULTURAL SELF

Layers of your cultural identity may include:

- **NATIONALITY**
  - Japanese, Mexican, U.S. American, French, etc.
- **ETHNICITY**
  - Pan-national: Arab, Roma (Gypsy), Zulu, etc.  
Intra-national: African American, European American, Malay, etc.
- **REGIONAL**
  - West Coast and East Coast of the U.S., Northern and Southern Germany, North and South Uman Island, etc.
- **GENDER**
  - Patterns of culture based on gender roles in every ethnic group
  - Woman, gender non-conforming, man, trans\*, gender queer, agender, etc.
- **SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS**
  - Rich and poor, high and low status, middle income
- **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**
  - High school, AA, BA, Ph.D., etc.
- **RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY**
  - Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Atheist, etc.
- **AGE**
  - Different generations in most national and ethnic groups
- **PHYSICAL ABILITY**
  - People who are deaf, blind, wheelchair users, able-bodied, etc.
- **SEXUAL EXPRESSION**
  - People who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, etc.
- **OTHER**
  - Could be: political/social ideology or affiliation, body shape/size, employment status, family makeup or background, type of pet owner, etc.





# Survey for "Circles of My Multicultural Selves" Workshop

Thank you for taking time to attend this Civic Agency workshop. We are very interested in receiving your feedback. (Alternatively, you may also complete this survey online at [http://augsburg.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_06aoPbGJyJ7I7oF](http://augsburg.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_06aoPbGJyJ7I7oF) if you have participants complete evaluations on paper, please scan them and send them to [info@mncampuscompact.org](mailto:info@mncampuscompact.org)

**Your information:**

**Primary Role:** Student, Faculty, Staff, Administrator, Community Organization Staff, AmeriCorps/VISTA **Institution** (College, University, Organization):

**Date:**

<b>Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following about your experience with the Civic Agency workshop you participated in</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt welcomed and included.					
I learned about one or more leadership tools or resources.					
The tools and exercises I learned about are valuable.					
I feel capable of using the tools and exercises I learned about.					
I intend to use at least one thing I learned here.					
Other participants in the workshop helped me see things from a different perspective.					
I developed new or deeper connections with others.					

Is there anything you would like to tell us about your experience with the workshop?

