

### **(3D) ACTIVITY: MATRIX OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL STATUSES (ADAPTED FROM TDSJ2, CD APPENDIX 3C)**

#### **Preparatory Discussions**

This activity is designed to accompany Chapter 1: Conceptual Frameworks reading selections #1 Tatum “The complexity of identity: ‘Who am I?’”, #2 Kirk and Okazawa-Rey “Identities and social locations”, and/or #4 “Theoretical/Conceptual Foundations” where social identities and social locations, positions, and statuses are discussed.

Facilitators will need to help participant students understand the social construct of “social group identity” and the ways in which everyone’s multiple social identities intersect in everyday life (for example, racial identity with class identity, religious identity with racial identity, sexual identity with gender identity, age identity with ability, etc.). As students grasp the intersections between at least 2 identities, facilitators might want to add a third (for example, racial identity with religious and class identities) and then a fourth (compounded by gender identity) and a fifth (sexual orientation).

It is helpful to note during these discussions that “disadvantaged” identities are usually more noticeable to people than “privileged” identities, since “privilege” is often accepted as the norm. This discussion provides a transition to the next step, which involves social location, position, status. Facilitators will need to provide numerous examples (based on the readings in this chapter) to explore social location, position, status, noting that these are relatively (not absolutely) privileged or disadvantaged. (Selections #3 Johnson “The social construction of difference” and #5 Young “Five faces of oppression” may be especially helpful in clarifying social location, position, status, although there are multiple examples in #1 and #2 as well.) The chart below suggests that this is a continuum and that some people see themselves in a “middle position.”

#### **THE MATRIX OF OPPRESSION**

Facilitators can use this chart to help participants locate their social identities and their relative locations or positions, as advantaged or privileged, or as disadvantaged or targeted.

## Matrix of Oppression

Social Identity Categories	Privileged Social Groups	Border Social Groups ↔	Targeted Social Groups	Ism
Race	White People	Biracial People (White/Latino, Black, Asian)	Asian, Black, Latino, Native People	Racism
Sex	Bio Men	Transsexual, Intersex People	Bio Women	Sexism
Gender	Gender Conforming Bio Men And Women	Gender Ambiguous Bio Men and Women	Transgender, Genderqueer, Intersex People	Transgender Oppression
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual People	Bisexual People	Lesbians, Gay Men	Heterosexism
Class	Rich, Upper Class People	Middle Class People	Working Class, Poor People	Classism
Ability/Disability	Temporarily Abled-Bodied People	People with Temporary Disabilities	People with Disabilities	Ableism
Religion	Protestants	Roman Catholic (historically)	Jews, Muslims, Hindus	Religious Oppression
Age	Adults	Young Adults	Elders, Young People	Ageism/Adultism

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### MY SOCIAL IDENTITY PROFILE: PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Participants are asked to work along, using the following Worksheet to figure out their social group identities and their statuses, with examples. The “prompts” are in the left-hand column, with a column marked “other” so that this remains an open, not a closed, discussion.

**Facilitation notes:** Discussions about ethnicity or national origins can be tied back to the social construction of race, whereby Irish-Americans are seen as White, Afro-Caribbeans or Latinos/as are seen as people of color, and most (Ashkenazy) Jews are White in the US (but were people of color in 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century Europe). Multiracial or bi-racial participants may be asked to consider whether multiraciality is experienced by them as a “middle position” or as an advantaged or disadvantaged identity—or whether that differs in context. It is important that participants understand the fluidity of some identities, depending on visibility and on context.

The Worksheet also asks them to provide examples of ways in which social identities may intersect in specific context—and whether those intersections involved different statuses as well—as well as add comments.

<b>List of social group identities</b>	<b>My social identities</b>	<b>Social status for this identity</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Intersections, comments</b>
Racial identity				
Sex				
Gender				
Sexual orientation				
Class				
Ability/disability				
Religion				
Age				
Other?				