

WORKSHOP 5

WHERE IT ALL CONNECTS

Objectives

Following this workshop, the youth will be able to:

- Identify **positionality** to understand how social categorizations come together to inform our identity.
- Explain how social identities relate to mental health inequities.
- Describe the difference between equality and equity.
- Recognize aspects of their own social identity.

Overview

Social factors and identities, and the ways that they intersect with power structures and community resources, play a significant role in shaping who has good mental health and who does not. Societies organized to provide basic and equitable access to civil, political, economic and cultural opportunities contribute to their citizens' mental health.

Total time

2 hours

Facilitator Prep

- Review and summarize AWE evaluation results to share using a modality of your choice.

Welcome

Ask each member of the group to share a story about their name (given or surname). Ask how their name relates to their social identity, if at all.

Connect & Open

Review AWE survey summary and anonymous compliments from last session.

Look Back

1. Review that last session the group discussed the social determinants of mental health, which are a key area of focus within mental health promotion.
2. Ask the group if they have any further thoughts about how the social determinants affect them or their communities. Offer a personal example: "I noticed that my community benefits from (or lacks) a particular service or opportunity (e.g., connection, employment, resource), which affects mental health in the following ways..."

3. Invite the youth to recall the key concepts and approaches that they have been exploring and to indicate which ones they would like to know more about.
 - a. Mental health promotion
 - b. Upstream approaches
 - c. Social determinants of mental health
4. While reviewing, comment on the relationships between the different concepts and how they can inform policy change targets. Provide an opportunity for the youth to share how they define or understand the concepts.

Look Forward

1. Inform the group that today they will explore an activity focused on youth resilience.
2. They will also investigate the many facets of social identity — public and private, visible and invisible — through an overview of positionality. Share that an awareness of positionality can be helpful in recognizing mental health inequities (injustices) and understanding how they come to be.
3. Remind the youth of the Community Agreement, including maintaining confidentiality. Learning about positionality means understanding and respecting diverse lived experiences.

Gauging Knowledge

1. Introduce the term “positionality,” having the youth use a scale of 1–3 to indicate their familiarity with the term:
 - a. 1 indicates no understanding of the term
 - b. 2 indicates an understanding of the term when it is used in conversation
 - c. 3 indicates an understanding of the term and ability to define it for others
2. Invite those who have indicated “3” to share their definition or understanding of the term “positionality” with the group. Review that positionality refers to how your personal values and views, where you live (e.g., country, neighbourhood, society), and the time period (e.g., century, decade) influence your experiences of the world. Positionality builds on the idea of **intersectionality** — an understanding that our different social identities interact to shape our opportunities, including for mental health and wellbeing — or conversely to limit them.

Frame

Play the workshop theme video, *An Intersectional Lens*. Share that this video introduces the concepts of intersectionality and equity. Intersectionality is a theory that describes the interactions between social categories that form the components of our social identities, such as race, class and gender. It brings understanding to how these contribute to or limit opportunities, including for mental health.

Invite the youth to share their reaction to the video. Prompt conversation by asking why they chose their response.

Ask the youth to share any images, words, or concepts that stuck out for them from the video, or that they would like clarified.

Invite the group to discuss how equity was defined in the video.

Review that equity is not the same as equality. Unlike equality, creating conditions that are equitable is not about ensuring that everyone has the same amount or type of resources. Instead, equity involves addressing differences in opportunities and resources, according to relative need, to “level the playing field.”

Note additional concepts that the group may be interested in exploring further in future workshops.



Activity 1: Exploring Resilience (20 minutes)

Aim

This activity involves exploring how resilience is strengthened by supportive relationships and community resources.

Steps

1. In the groups, ask: What does resilience mean to you? Have each group identify a volunteer to report back.

2. Share the “Resilience” slide and offer the points:

- Resilience involves a process through which positive outcomes are achieved despite adversity.
- Resilience can be thought of as having a sense of competence in times of stress.
- Resilience supports growth in individuals and among communities. Importantly, having resilience does not mean handling stressors independently. It is strengthened through a person’s relationships and access to resources in their broader context.



3. Prepare the youth to go into groups of two to four people. Before sending them into their groups, provide the youth with the following questions to discuss in their groups. Send the groups out and allow for a 20-minute discussion. Check in to determine if more time is needed:
 - a. What community resources are available to youth in your community? How do you feel when you use these resources? If needed, the following prompts may be helpful: Who are your supports and role models? Where do you go to connect with others?
 - b. What skills or strengths do you aspire to build? Think about your skills and strengths and how you use them to cope with challenging experiences.
4. Return to Circle for larger group discussion.

Activity 2: Social Identity Mapping (20 minutes)

Aim

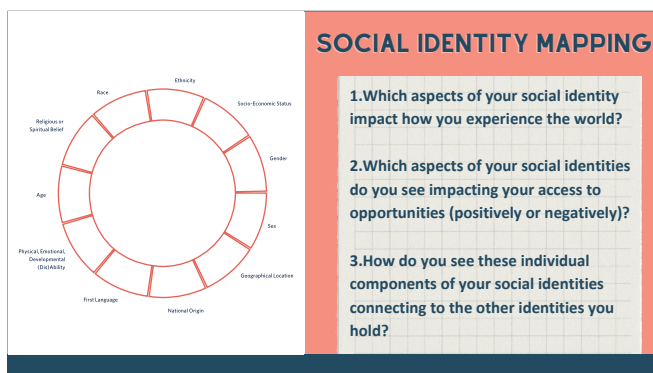
This exercise helps the youth to identify aspects of their social identities, and prompts reflection on how these identities are influenced by our broader environments. It also supports an understanding of how our social identities can change, depending on time and context, influencing how we experience and interpret the world at different points in our lives.

Steps

1. Introduce the activity by letting the youth know they are going to map their own social identities. Aspects of our social identities — such as age, gender and ability status — position us in relation to others in our social context and contribute to how we experience and view the world, both individually and collectively. Importantly, our social identities can contribute to feelings of connectedness and belonging (great for mental health!), or, conversely, to a sense of being different or “othered.” Our social identities can also be fluid, meaning they are experienced differently in different contexts (e.g., home vs school), and in relation to social norms and power structures.
2. Provide the following example:
 - a. A youth who speaks English at home and who lives in an English-speaking country may not consider their language to be a central aspect of their social identity. Yet, for a youth who does not speak English at home but is living in an English-speaking country, language may be one of the aspects of their social identity that they are most keenly aware of, particularly when in a social or school setting.
3. Check in with the group about their impressions of this example of social identity and see if they have any questions or need further clarification.
4. Let the youth know that they have been assigned to groups.

5. Share the Social Identity Wheel worksheet (page 45). Have each person complete the Social Identity Wheel and engage in guided small-group discussions. Share the following questions:

- Which identities do you think about or feel most often? Least often?
- Which parts of your identity are you most proud of?
- Which identities have the strongest influence on how you define yourself?
- Which identities have the strongest impact on how you think others define you?



6. Return to Circle. Invite the youth to share anything that they found interesting or unexpected.
7. Ask the youth to think about a place or setting that is relevant to the entire group, such as a shared school, club or community. Encourage discussion about how the youth experience their social identities in this context. Explain that power and privilege normalize some social identity categorizations over others. This contributes to inequities between groups, as illustrated in this week's video featuring Bob the Triangle. Fortunately, the conditions that lead to inequities can be challenged. Working together allows us to harness our personal and collective power for change.

Facilitator Tips

- Youth may not feel comfortable sharing certain aspects of their identity. Remind the group that this activity is a voluntary exploration of identity, and that sharing is optional. Re-affirm this when the youth go into groups and when completing the Social Identity Wheel.
- Avoid direct requests to youth to provide examples of their personal identities. Instead, if comfortable, facilitators can offer their own examples to generate discussion.

Connect & Close (10 minutes)

- Share with the group that working together is a skill that we all must learn, and is one they are all practicing through their contributions in Agenda Gap.
- Play one of the videos showcasing teamwork resulting in success. Offer a choice between:
 - Penguins of Madagascar*
 - Building a Human Tower*
 - A fun video of your choice that relates to teamwork

3. Following the video, ask the youth to reflect on how watching these demonstrations of effective teamwork made them feel. Remind them to approach the activity with curiosity and openness. Ask them to think of a time when they worked as a member of a team to achieve a common goal.
4. Wrap up the session by noting that working together on a shared project or toward a collective goal can feel more achievable and inspiring than doing so in isolation. Invite the youth to share their reflections on the following questions:
 - a. How does working as a member of a team energize you?
 - b. When might it be helpful to work as a team? (e.g., big or complex projects, activities that require multiple skillsets or perspectives)
5. Ask the youth to share their feedback about what is going well in the Agenda Gap group. Ask for their recommendations to improve their experience going forward.
6. Distribute the AWE survey and allow a few minutes for everyone to complete. If any youth doesn't want to do so immediately, ask that they complete it before the next meeting.
7. After the workshop closes, send a link to the AWE survey by email for those who did not complete it during the session.

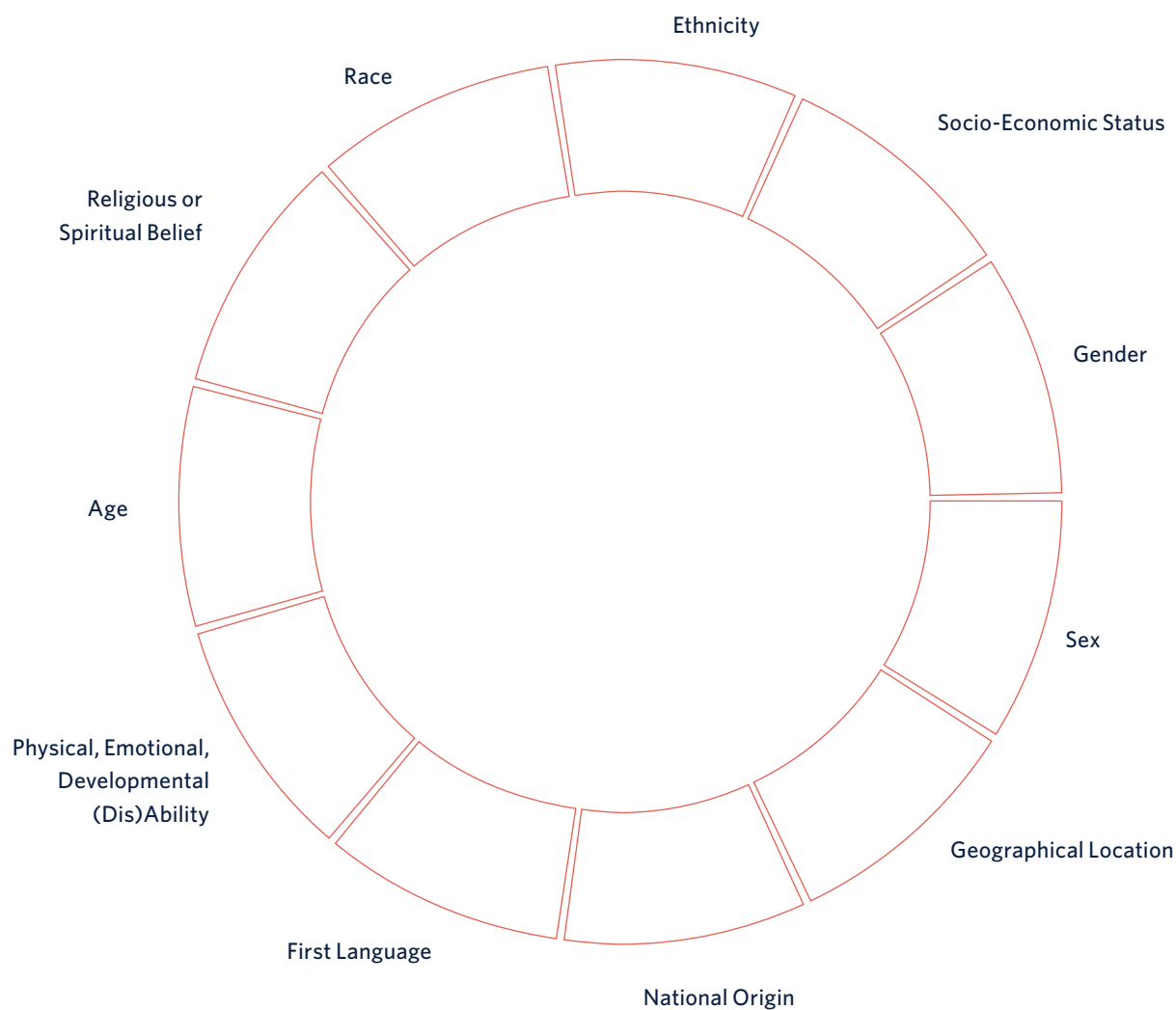




Workshop 5 Resource: Social Identity Wheel

Write the corresponding number to each statement in the section you most agree with.

- 1 Identities you think about most often
- 2 Identities you think about least often
- 3 Your own identities you would like to learn more about
- 4 Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
- 5 Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you



Adapted for use by the Agenda Gap Project/University of British Columbia. Resource hosted by LSA Inclusive Teaching Initiative.
University of Michigan. www.sites.isa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/