

## Overview:

This lesson plan will challenge participants to reflect on their relationships and consider how they might improve their diversity. They will chart/map their personal and social networks and reflect on how they might fill in any gaps in those networks.

## Background and Information:

Before facilitating this activity, you should become familiar with types of relationships that people have with each other. You can use [this article](#) by Blaz Kos as a basis for your explanation/discussion. According to the article, anthropologist Robin Dunbar states that we have a “biological limit of maintaining 150 social interactions at the same time.” There are six kinds of relationships: primary family, secondary family, friends, superiors, coworkers, and mentors.

You may also want to read *The Atlantic* article, [“These are the Americans Who Live in a Bubble.”](#) The article states that geography, education, age, and class make a difference in how people think about and prioritize difference and sameness. This information will be important as the participants analyze the diversity in their zones.

## Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Examine their personal and social networks.
2. Reflect on their relationships in their lives, gaps in these relationships, and their diversity.
3. Brainstorm ways to fill their relationship gaps and improve their diversity.
4. Analyze their own self-awareness of relationships and diversity.

## Time:

1 hour

## Group Size:

Small group

## Materials:

Instructions (see below), the three articles ([Links](#)), paper, pens/pencils, copies of the worksheet and charts for participants ([Downloads](#))

## Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization

## **AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:**

### Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

### **Other Skills:**

Friendship

### **Facilitator activity instructions:**

1. Participants will begin by working individually. At the start of the activity, explain the groups to the participants. We suggest combining some of these groups to simplify the activity. Explain that the groups/circle zones are based on feelings of intimacy: how close they feel to the people in the zones. Our groups are:
  - a. Personal relationships (may include family, relationship partner, and close friends)
  - b. Social relationships (such as co-workers, casual friends, members of an organization to which you belong)
  - c. Public: Acquaintances or people you would say hi to on the street (people you know from living in your community, who work at your job, students you see at your college)
  - d. *Note:* You should also explain that relationships will vary from individual to individual. For example, family may be a “social relationship” for some participants because their feelings of closeness will vary. They may feel closer to friends, roommates, etc. They may also choose to spend more time with certain people and put more effort into those relationships. You may also use Kos’ descriptions of intimacy/friendship, participation, and exchange to help clarify these zones/feelings of closeness.
2. Ask the group to fill out the worksheet, listing names of people for each group/zone. Explain that the chart represents all their networks, with each zone representing a type of group (personal relationship, social relationship, or public). Emphasize that it is okay to have more names in one section than another and there are no required minimums/maximums. You may also want to walk around during this time to see if any participants are struggling or only have a few names on their charts.
3. Ask students to discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups:
  - Ask each participant to look over their charts and take stock of how many people are in each group. Where are the gaps?
  - Then, especially if you noticed charts with few names, ask the group to brainstorm how to draw people into their circles. How can they make an effort to move people from the exterior to the interior? Or, if they are lacking in the outer circles, how can they gain in those areas? Think about their interests, where they usually study, organizations they may want to join or become more involved in, etc.
  - Ask the group to share strategies for how they gained members in their zones. Any tips they can offer?
  - Reflect on how they can improve their interpersonal relationships instead of relying on online interactions.

- Use the reflection questions to ask the participants to perform a deeper analysis of their chart. Ask participants to write their answers on their worksheets. When they are finished, ask the group to share and discuss some of what they wrote down in their answers.
4. Now that they have a chart about their networks, ask participants to work through the following reflection questions with a partner (sharing only what they are comfortable disclosing). Then, they will share with the whole group:
- What patterns do you notice in your map?
  - Is there potential for deeper relationships across difference in other contexts in your life?
  - How motivated are you to change your chart?
  - What strategies are you willing to invest to make these changes? Who can help you?

### **Related Tools:**

*Tools to use before this lesson:*

- [Living in a Bubble](#)

*Similar tools:*

- [Scenery, Machinery, People](#)