

Overview:

This activity asks participants to consider the concept of intersectionality and apply it to a podcast episode. According to the Oxford Dictionary, intersectionality is “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise.” The term was first coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a law professor and social theorist, in her paper, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: The Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” Participants will first read about the history of the theory. Then, they will listen to an episode of the podcast *Gravy* and analyze it using an intersectional lens and explore how different identities become more salient under different circumstances.

Objectives:

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

1. Define intersectionality and recognize why it's an important concept to understand.
2. Discuss how intersecting or overlapping identities can lead to internal and/or familial conflict as well as discrimination and disadvantage.
3. Recognize the role of context and circumstances in construction and enactment of their own identities.
4. Articulate the ways in which identity shifts and is perceived across contexts.

Time:

1 hour.

Group Size:

Entire group.

Materials:

A computer/tablet and speakers, paper and pens/pencils, intersectionality reading, podcast episode, and social identity wheel (all in [Links](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

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).

Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks:

- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.

Other Skills:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Activity Instructions:

1. Assign participants to read "[What is intersectionality and why is it important?](#)" before beginning the activity.
 2. Ask participants the following questions:
 - What is intersectionality?
 - Where does the term intersectionality come from?
 - Why is intersectionality an important term to understand?
 - The reading directly mentions race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and nationality as identity/social markers. Are there any others that you can think of?
 3. Play the "[Coming Out Meatless](#)" podcast episode for participants. Ask them to take notes about issues related to the interviewee's identity as they listen.
 4. Referencing the Links available in the HubICL, instruct participants to fill out a Social Identity Wheel for Choya Webb Jr. Specifically, they should indicate Choya's different identities as per the wheel categories, as well as the contexts and circumstances in which these identities are more or less salient (i.e., his identity as a pastor's son, his sexuality, and his dietary choices when he is with his family, when he is in Ann Arbor with friends, etc.).
1. Engage participants in a debrief discussing the following questions:
 - What were Choya's various identities that he discussed in the episode?
 - How do some of those identities intersect?
 - What are some of the conflicts he identifies that result from these intersections of identities?
 - How do these overlapping identities result in discrimination or disadvantage for Choya?
 - How does Choya negotiate and navigate his various identities, particularly in terms of his relationships with family members?

- Why is vegetarianism so controversial within his family? How does vegetarianism relate to other aspects of culture?
 - Which contexts and circumstances inform the saliency of Choya's different identities? In which contexts are his identities more and less salient?
 - What role does self-perception play in the intersection of context and identity for Choya?
 - What role does audience (how others perceive us) play in the intersection of context and identity for Choya?
 - How did you feel as you were listening to Choya's story? Was there anything about it that surprised you? Anything that you could relate to?
5. Ask participants to fill out a Social Identity Wheel for themselves. Challenge them to consider each of their identities in various contexts.
6. Engage participants in a debrief discussing the following questions:
- How did you feel as you filled out your own Social Identity Wheel and the contexts in which your identities are more and less salient?
 - Which identities did you identify for yourself?
 - Which contexts and circumstances inform these identities?
 - What role does your own self-perception play in the intersection of context and identity?
 - What role does your audience (how others perceive you) play in the intersection of context and identity?
 - How can becoming aware of the intersections of your personal and social identities and the contexts and circumstances you find yourself in throughout your life help you personally?