
Intersectionality: Understanding Identities Beyond Labels (BE Aware)

Social Identities vs. Personal Identities

Religion	Sex	Ability	Ethnicity	Profession	Familial Role	Subculture
Socioeconomic Class	Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation	National Origin and Citizenship	Sexual Orientation	Political Affiliation	Personality Traits	Personal Style
Body Size/Type	Race	Age	Gender	Hobbies	Musical Interests	Philosophy

Social identities are a reflection of how we see ourselves and how others see us. These identities can be salient (visible) or not salient (invisible).

Personal identities are what we ascribe to. These can change over time and are a culmination of our habits, experiences, etc..

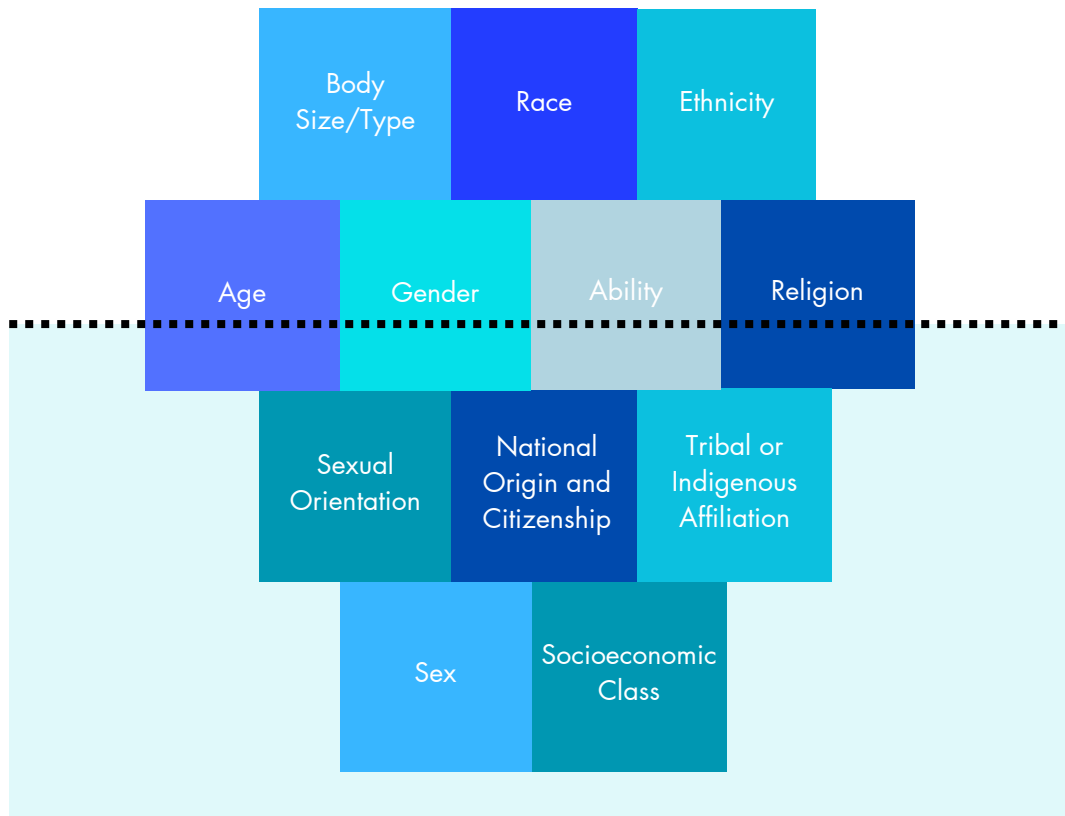
Self-reflection

- How do you perceive your social identity in your profession and/or workplace?

- In what ways do societal norms or cultural expectations influence your professional identity?

- How do various aspects of your social and personal identities intersect and influence each other?

Visible vs. Invisible Identities



Adapted from Edward T. Hall's Cultural Iceberg Theory.

Discussing Identities in the Workplace

BE Aware of implicit biases:

Although discussing identities is important, it's even more important for there to be a clear understanding of implicit biases and microaggressions. This can help mitigate potential, unintentional harm during these discussions.

Guidelines, Ground Rules and Goals:

When having open discussions about identities in the workplace, have clear rules and expectations, such as be respectful, give everyone the opportunity to speak, etc.

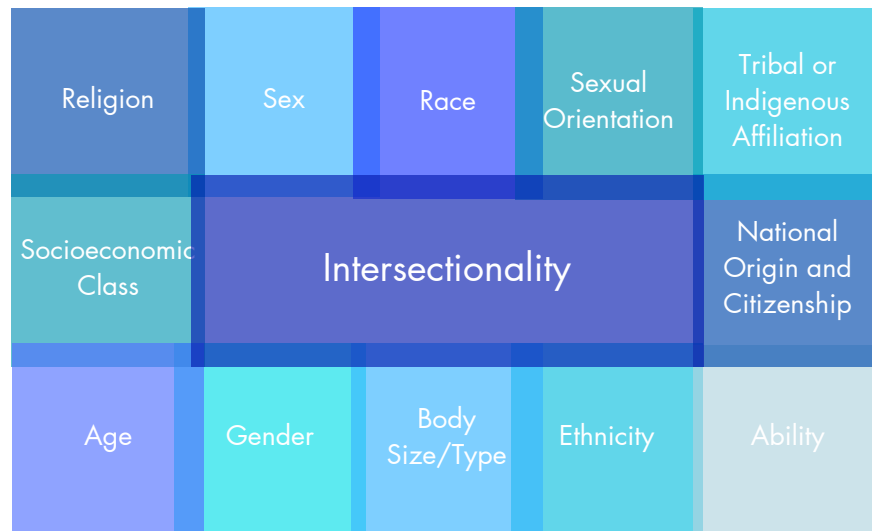
In-office education and training:

Offer in-office workshops or trainings for staff about various identities. This can help increase awareness and sensitivity about this topic. Various offices on campus, including the Division of Inclusive Excellence, offers workshops for faculty and staff. Find out more [here](#).

Consider privilege and power dynamics:

Making space for dialogue about identities can help cultivate a sense of belonging, however, there can be power imbalances. Ensure that marginalized voices are uplifted and listened to in these discussions.

Reflection



- What steps can your office take to ensure that interactions and decision-making are inclusive of individuals with intersectional identities?
- How can you leverage your power and privilege to advocate for equity and inclusion for colleagues from marginalized groups?
- How can developing an awareness of intersectionality enhance your ability to empathize with colleagues from diverse backgrounds?

Additional Resources

- [Team Activity-Intersectionality](#)
- [Intersectionality Checklist Activity](#)



For more information, visit <https://www.elon.edu/u/oieed/>.