

### Social Identity Awareness Exercise

Option 1: Students stand in a straight line (quite close together) and hold hands with the person on either side of them for as long as possible and refrain from speaking during the exercise.

Option 2: Same process but no hand-holding. A chair is placed across the room. The goal is to get to the chair.

Option 3: Students stand in a wide circle moving in and out.

Option 4: Students move tokens on a game board to respond to statements.

1. If there were more than 50 books in your house when you grew up, take one step forward.
2. If you have ever tried to change your appearance or behavior to avoid being negatively judged or ridiculed, take one step back.
3. If during your childhood you were told regularly that you were attractive, capable, and bright by adults, take one step forward.
4. If you can remember going hungry during your childhood because there was not enough money to buy food or your family relied on social services for meals, take one step back.
5. If you were positively influenced by one or more important adults in your life, other than your parents, who actively supported and encouraged you to strive for your goals, take one step forward.
6. If your ancestors were forced to come to the USA for any reason, take one step back.
7. If you studied the culture of your ancestors in school, take one step forward.
8. If you have ever been called names because of your physical appearance or lack of ability, take one step back.
9. If you were frequently brought to museums, art galleries or theatre productions by your family, take one step forward.
10. If you were raised in a dangerous neighborhood, take one step back.
11. If you were born a U.S. citizen, take one step forward.
12. If your parents are in a profession that required years of special training, take one step forward.
13. If you and/or your parents were unable to speak fluent English while you were growing up, take one step back.
14. If your family owns and does not rent their home, take one step forward.
15. If one of your parents were ever unemployed or laid off, take one step back.
16. If you ever went away to a camp, take one step forward.
17. If you were raised in a neighborhood located close to an industrial complex that affected the quality of air or water, take one step back.
18. If during your childhood you received new clothes or shoes frequently and not just as gifts for holidays or special occasions, take one step forward.
19. If your family ever had to move because they could not afford their mortgage or rent payments, take one step back.
20. If you attended preschool, take one step forward.

21. If you were ever discouraged from applying for a job by someone concerned you wouldn't "fit in," take one step back.
22. If you were encouraged to continue your education after high school by your parents, take one step forward.
23. If one of your parents did not complete high school, take one step back.
24. If during your childhood you went on vacation out of the country, take one step forward.
25. If you can name many television shows in which your race or ethnic group is portrayed regularly in degrading roles, take one step back.
26. If you can name many television shows in which your race or ethnic group is portrayed regularly in admirable roles, take one step forward.
27. If you ever had to rely primarily on public transportation for several weeks or more, take one step back.
28. If you were ever offered a job because of your association with a friend or family member and not just based on your abilities, take one step forward.
29. If you were ever in a situation when you were afraid of emotional or physical violence because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or age, take one step back.
30. If you or your family ever inherited money or property, take a step forward.
31. If you suspect you have been stopped or questioned by the law enforcement because of your race, ethnicity, or gender, or age, take one step back.
32. If you have been able to avoid places that are dangerous most of your life, take one step forward.
33. If you ever felt uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or lack of ability take one step back.

Ask participants to remain where they are and look at their position in the room or space in relation to the positions of the other participants. Ask participants to pair up with someone who is in an alternative place with which to process the exercise.

Processing Questions: Take about 15 minutes for the pairs to process and then have them report back to the group as a whole. Provide each pair with a list of the questions to help them recall their reactions to this activity.

- Which questions made you feel good about yourself?
- Which questions made you feel uncomfortable?
- Which questions generated movement that surprised you?
- What specific categories of your social identity were touched on during this exercise?
- What specific categories of your social identity were not considered during this exercise?
- Identify additional questions you would add to this exercise that reflect the social advantages and disadvantages of specific aspects of social identity.
- What were some of your other thoughts and feelings during this exercise?