

# Exploring Social Identity and Moving Towards Action

Workshop facilitated by Caitlyn LoMonte, Program Director, Social Justice Education

## Terminology

Social justice is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of agency as well as a sense of responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which we live. Social justice requires action.

Social Identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not, often self claimed and frequently ascribed by others.

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Class/Socioeconomic Status
- Religious or Spiritual Affiliation
- Ability
- Citizenship/Nation of Origin/Tribal Affiliation
- Age
- Body Size/Shape

Marginalized Group: a social identity group that is disenfranchised, exploited, and oppressed in a variety of ways, including being subject to containment, having restricted movement and choices, being treated as expendable and replaceable, and lacking individual identities apart from the group. Also referred to as a subordinated group.

Dominant Group: a social identity group whose members are privileged by birth or acquisition who knowingly or unknowingly exploit and benefit from unfair advantage over members of marginalized groups. Also referred to as the privileged group.

Privilege: Unearned or earned advantages, rights, freedoms, or benefits given to a group of people based on group membership.

- privileged groups are considered to be the normative groups, everyone else minoritized and othered
- privileged group membership is not a choice and individuals often are not aware of how these advantages benefit them

Power: the ability to decide who will have access to resources; the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others, oneself, and/or the course of events.

### **Identity Reflection Activity**

Think of 3 identities that you are most aware of/think about the most. Consider these questions:

- What memories or experiences do you have of these identities?
- How do these identities show up or influence how you navigate your role on campus?
- What is a resource or tool you have or want that would help you to feel validated in those identities on campus?

### **How do you experience power and privilege?**

As a \_\_\_\_\_ I can \_\_\_\_\_

As a \_\_\_\_\_ I can \_\_\_\_\_

As a \_\_\_\_\_ I can \_\_\_\_\_

### **Moving Towards Action**

What stops you from taking action for social justice?

What barriers or challenges have you encountered in doing social justice work?

What makes incorporating social justice into your professional life and work difficult?

### **Reflection Questions**

What is in your sphere of influence?

Where can you have the most direct impact?

How does this apply to your work and role with Diverse OT?

### **Creating Sustainable Action for Social Change**

Engaging in social justice and creating inclusive communities is a lifelong commitment to doing work that can be hard, uncomfortable, and challenging. This work is also necessary, rewarding, and empowering.

I am committed to and will be accountable for:

- Interrogating my identities and relationship to power and privilege
- Challenging practices, policies, and beliefs that uphold and perpetuate systems of oppression
- Creating and maintaining social change within myself and my communities

### **Developing your Social Justice Action Plan**

What resources do you need to be more inclusive? To be actively anti-racist?

What areas of growth are emerging for you?

What topics are you uncomfortable with and/or need more education about?

What is stopping you (barriers, fears, doubts, concerns) from taking action for justice?

**Social Justice Action Plan**

Complete the table to identify learning goals, new practices, and other accountability measures for development as a social justice advocate.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Action</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What are you going to do? What new behaviors are you going to learn and practice? What behaviors or thoughts are you going to unlearn and change?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Plan</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What resources do you need? How will you check in about your progress? At what point will you reflect on the work being done and your growth?</p>

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**UW-Madison Resources**

Office of Inclusion Education <https://inclusioneducation.wisc.edu>

Multicultural Student Center <https://msc.wisc.edu>

Gender and Sexuality Campus Center <https://lgbt.wisc.edu>

McBurney Disability Resource Center <https://mcburney.wisc.edu>

International Student Services <https://iss.wisc.edu>

Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement <https://diversity.wisc.edu>