



Understanding Identity

We all know growing up can be a source of stress. It's normal to struggle with getting to know *who you* are. Getting to know what makes you “*you*” can help you deal with stress that can come with identity formation. This activity will help you name your unique personal and social identities. Once you have completed the activity, answer the reflection questions at the end of this worksheet.

Personal Identity

Your personal identity is made up of many individual traits. Your identity can include your hobbies, interests, experiences and personal choices.

In the wheel below, a circle is divided into three rings- an inner, middle, and outer ring. In the middle ring is a list of personal identity characteristics. Look at each characteristic. Either in the inner ring or the outer ring, write down how you identify (see *definitions and examples* below). In the inner ring, write down the identities most important to you or that you think about most often. In the outer ring, write down the identities less important to you or that you think about less often.

For example, if you feel a strong sense of connection to your community, you might put down the name of your neighborhood or city in the inner circle under ‘community/city.’ If your community doesn’t feel important to your identity, put it in the outer circle around ‘community/city.’

Definitions and examples

Personality traits. These are the parts of your identity you show to the world. They can be things you know and like about yourself. They can be qualities others say they see in you. Some words you might use to describe your personality are: funny, quiet, shy, honest, trustworthy, respectful and charismatic.

Talents, skills, abilities. The things you do well, that you take pride in, or that set you apart from others. Some examples include singing, dancing, playing an instrument, cooking, painting or gardening.

Favorites. This can include your favorite films, books, music, foods or other things you enjoy.

Hobbies. These are the things you like to do for fun such as sports, art, music, baking or gaming.

Education. Your grade level and school life.

Clubs/Organizations. This refers to any clubs or organizations to which you belong. Some examples include scouts, 4-H, youth groups or honor society.

Job(s) or volunteer role(s). Activities you do outside of school that are paid or unpaid. These experiences help shape who you are and what you believe.

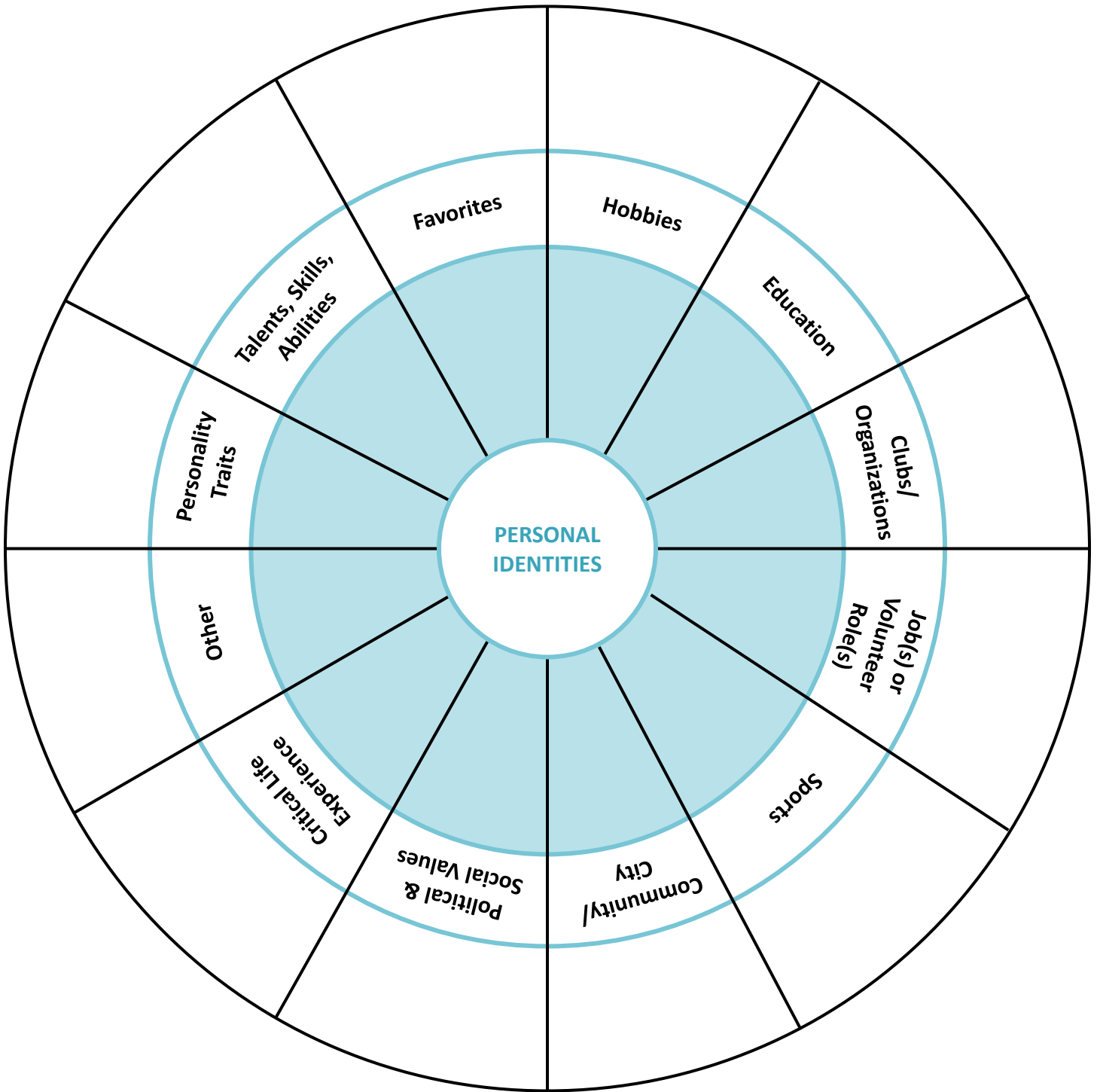
Sports teams. This can include sports teams you belong to or cheer for.

Community/city. This can be the name of your neighborhood, the city or state in which you live.

Political and social values. This includes the political party you identify with or the issues in society important to you. Examples include education, climate, diversity, health and justice.

Critical life experience. This can refer to things that impact your life such as the size of your family, having divorced parents, a single parent, having an incarcerated family member, being in foster care, or you or a family member experiencing homelessness or addiction.

Other. Any other aspect of your personal identity that's important to you. This space is optional. Creativity is encouraged!



Adapted from Arizona State University

Social Identity

There are many parts of who we are that we're born with. Some of those things stay the same and some of them change over time. They also impact how you see yourself and how others view you. Social identities include race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and much more.

In the wheel below, fill in how you identify for each of the categories. In the inner circle, write down the identities most important to you or you think about most often. In the outer circle, write down the identities less important to you or you think about less often.

For example, if you feel a strong sense of connection to your culture and heritage, you might write down your ethnicity in the inner circle. If you don't know much about or connect with your culture, you might write down your ethnicity in the outer circle.

Definitions and examples

*Feel free to use these words or your own language to describe how you identify.

Race. Usually associated with biology and physical characteristics such as hair texture or skin color. Some examples include African, American Indian or Native American, Asian, Black or African American, Latinx, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White or Caucasian, Mixed race or Multiracial.

Religion/spirituality. Beliefs, attitudes and practices guide how you find or express meaning and purpose in your life. It includes a sense of connection to others, to nature, and to what you consider sacred.

Sexuality/sexual orientation. Identifies who you are sexually attracted to. Everyone has a sexuality or sexual orientation. This can change as you grow and learn more about yourself. Some examples include asexual, bisexual, demisexual, gay, heterosexual, lesbian, pansexual, queer or questioning. Check out [this resource](#) to learn more about sexuality.

Ability & health. Refers to physical and intellectual ability, or chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma or cancer. List one of these here if it affects your life.

Age. Refers to how old you are. You could list pre-teen, teen, young adult, or your actual age.

Class/socioeconomic status. As a teen, your "class" or socioeconomic status is usually based on your parents' or guardians' income and wealth. Some examples include upper middle class or working class.

Ethnicity. Groups people based on cultural expression and identification. Ethnicity is broader than race. Some examples include Chinese, Ethiopian, German, Hispanic, Hmong, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Lebanese, Laotian, Somali, Thai and Vietnamese.

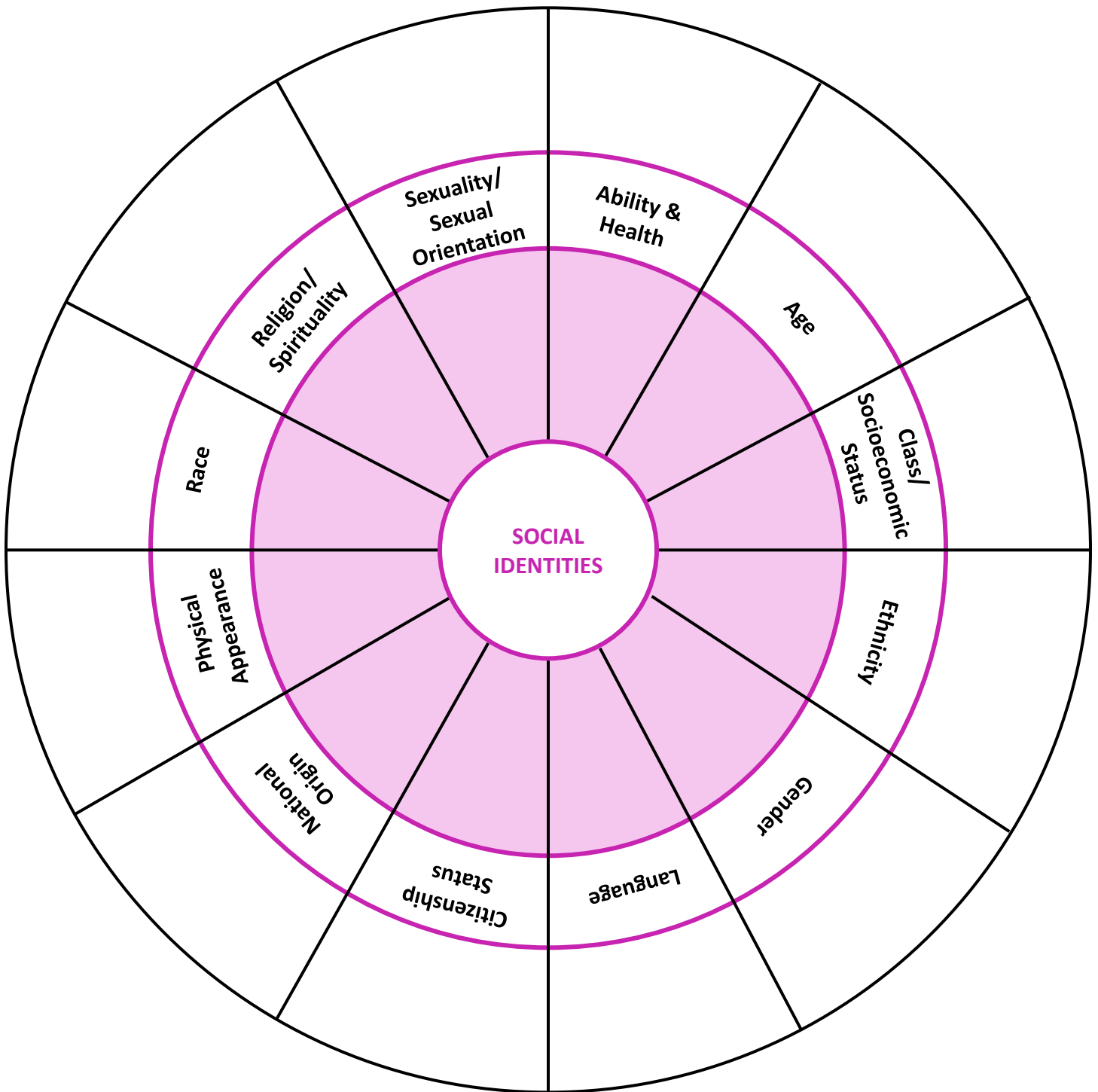
Gender. Gender is how you express yourself to the world. People express their gender in many different ways- more than just “woman or man.” Some examples include girl, boy, non-binary or gender nonconforming, and transgender. Note that gender is different from sex, which refers to your physical anatomy and also how you present to the world. Sex and gender are different but they are related. Sex may be the sex you were assigned at birth (female, male, intersex) or the sex you have transitioned to with the help of hormones, treatments, or affirming surgeries (transgender female, transgender male). Check out [this resource](#) to learn more about gender and sex.

Language. Include the language you feel most comfortable speaking and the main language used in your home. It can also include other languages you understand, speak, read or write.

Citizenship status. Your right to live somewhere without fear of deportation. Citizenship status comes with certain rights and benefits. It can include the right to vote, and access to social security or health insurance. If you prefer not to answer or do not know your status feel free to leave this blank.

National origin. The state, country or nation in which you were born.

Physical appearance. May include physical traits such as height, weight, hair color or texture, skin color, and eye color or shape. All of these impact how others see you.



Adapted from Arizona State University



Reflection

Use these questions to reflect on your personal and social identities. You can answer these questions for yourself or discuss them with others.

- 1. What surprised you about this activity? How do you feel after completing it?

- 2. What have you learned about yourself through this activity?

- a. Which aspects of your identities feel most important to you and why?

- b. Which aspects of your identities feel less important to you and why?

- c. What aspects of your identities had you not thought about before completing this activity? Why do you think that is?

- d. Why do you think more about some parts of your identity than others?

- 3. How do your identities impact how you view yourself? How do your identities impact how others see you?



4. Do you have other people in your life who share your identities? How does that make you feel?

5. What more do you want to learn or celebrate about your identities?

Remember that some aspects of your identities will change as you learn and grow. Some will remain the same. Reflecting on your identities, and the privileges or disadvantages you face because of them, can help you locate where some of your stress comes from. Reflecting can also help you empathize with others, whether or not they share your identities.