



# Supporting Inclusive Communities

## MODULE 2: SELF-REFLECTION



So, you're interested in developing your inclusive practise, but where do you begin? Many people are already engaged in justice and inclusion work, so fortunately there are a lot of great strategies and resources out there to consider! We encourage you to explore things for yourself -- community conversations, books, articles, social media posts, podcasts, art, talking with people who are willing to share, etc. Essentially, we encourage you to seek out opportunities to listen.

If you are someone who has more knowledge and experience with in/justice, what do you wish that more people in the community would do? Where do you turn to for hope, enrichment, and to take action?

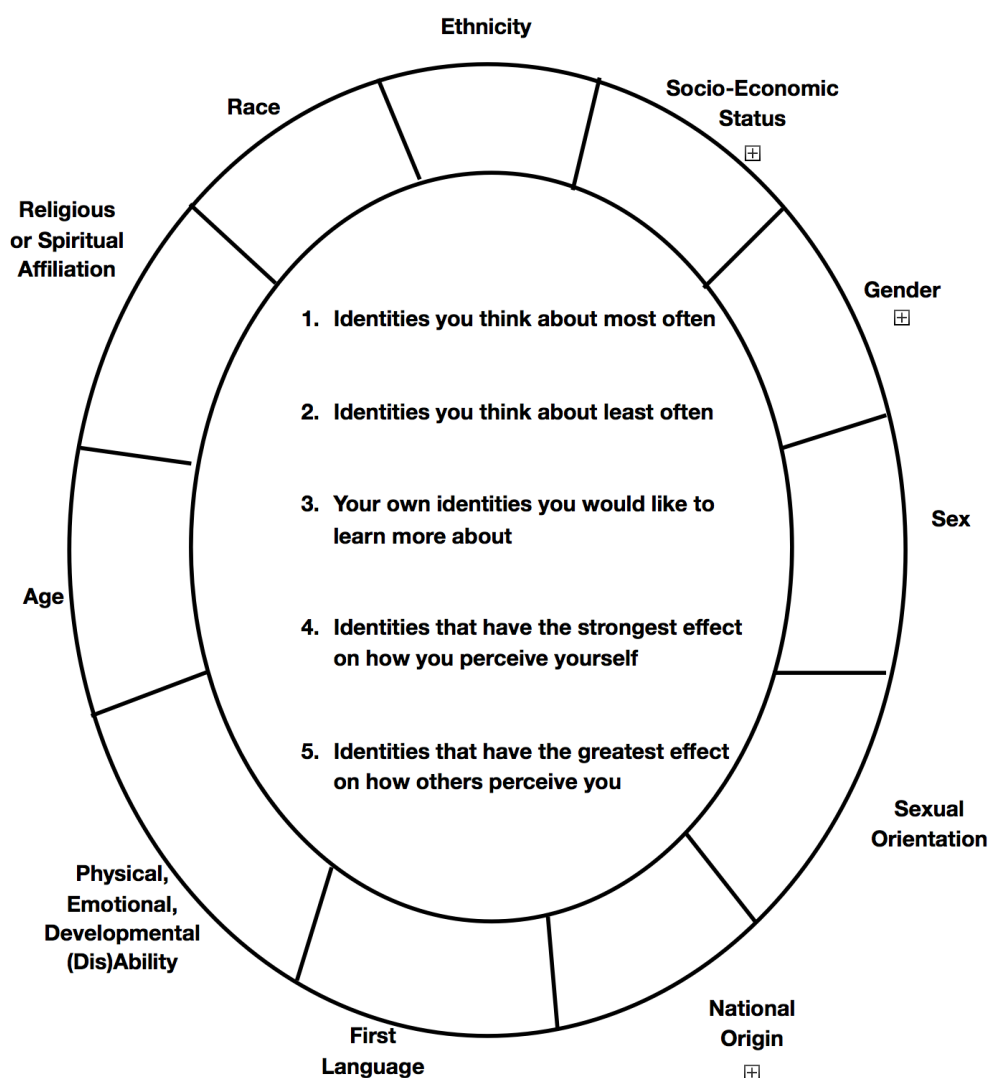
For people that are newer to this type of work, it can be overwhelming and requires difficult introspection. We encourage you to embrace opportunities to learn and grow because it makes you uneasy or challenges you, and to be patient with yourself and the process as you find your way. Often there are unclear or conflicting "solutions" and navigating those is part of this ongoing process.



The first step in this journey is reflection. Through our lived experiences, we all develop a lens through which we see the world. Reflection allows us to examine this lens, uncovering our blind spots or areas where our perceptions may not match the lived realities of others in our communities. Hence, in the next part of this module, we will be walking through some reflective exercises to help you examine your lens.

## MODULE 2: ACTIVITY

Let's take a step back and do some individual reflection. Each of us is a complex person, with a variety of important elements that contribute to who we are, how we see the world, and how others see us. We invite you to take a moment to fill out the "Social Identity Wheel," (adapted from the [University of Michigan LSA Inclusive Teaching](#)). First, fill out each identity box with the terms that best describe your own identity (find the [LSA Social Identity Profile worksheet here](#) if you need more help). Once you've gone around the entire wheel, then go through the reflection questions at the centre of the image:



("Social Identity Wheel," 2017)

Having completed this activity, did anything surprise you? What insights did you gain about how you may perceive others and about how others may perceive you when meeting for the first time? Who do you see and not see participating in the neighbourhood and community activities that you participate in? Do you feel that others perceive you completely and treat you fairly?

Typically if you haven't had to worry or think much about how others and society may treat you, you may be someone with more advantages (or maybe even think of it as "less disadvantages you" - i.e. you may struggle on a daily basis but being X is not one of the things that is contributing to your struggle). In contrast, facing multiple disadvantages is known as "intersectionality" and you can watch a short video on that here (["Intersectionality 101"](#)).

People's lived experiences can also play a role in how much one has previously thought about certain concepts (like "privilege" and "oppression" - [find out more about those in this article by Sian Ferguson](#)), so not only are these topics complex and challenging, but people don't start or end at the same place or viewpoint.

If you are not someone who has typically given this much thought, it will be very important for you to listen intently and to keep an open mind as you learn from others who have done so, or who live a daily struggle that is much different from the Edmonton that you experience. Being open to this learning and being willing to act in ways that help and centre others, means that you are ready to explore your own assumptions and gaps in knowledge.

Probably a good next step is to explore the important distinctions between sympathy and empathy. We invite you to watch the short video "[Brené Brown on Empathy](#)" and then consider these reflection questions:



- Who do you typically treat with empathy in your life?
- What are ways that you can develop your empathy?
- How could you approach others who are meaning well but causing harm?

Developing your inclusive practise is not just about individually treating one another justly, but how we can work to support diversity and inclusion in our workplaces, organizations, institutions, households, and neighbourhoods.

More on that next week!

