

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social identities reflect how we see ourselves and how others see us with respect to major social categories. Their meanings are not fixed but take shape in particular social contexts. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self claimed and frequently ascribed by others. For example, gender and racial groupings are often ascribed as well as self-claimed. Government, schools, and employers often ask an individual to claim a racial identity group or gender, or they ascribe one based on visual perception. Other social identities—such as sexual orientation, religion, class, or disability status—might be personally claimed but may or may not be announced or easily visually ascribed. Some identities are fluid and change over time.

How we see ourselves (and how others see us) can vary depending on particular contexts and who the others are in a given situation. Even with such contingencies and contexts, we nonetheless can have a general sense about our identities. For the purpose of this exercise, please identify the memberships you claim or those that are ascribed to you in this general sense. Some examples of social identities include:

Below are social categories that have widespread salience and a few examples of ways people identify within them. It's NOT a full list. Please use your own language to describe how you identify.

Gender	Woman, Man, Transgender, Boi, Boy, Girl, Femme, Genderqueer
Sex	Intersex, Female, Male
Race	Asian/Pacific American, Native American, Arab American, Latin@, Black, White, Bi/Multiracial
Ethnicity	Irish, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Italian, Mohawk, Jewish, Guatemalan, Lebanese, European-American
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual, Queer, Pansexual, Asexual
Religion	Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, Agnostic, Atheist, Secular Humanist
Socioeconomic Class	Poor, Working Class, Lower-Middle Class, Upper-Middle Class, Owning Class, Ruling Class, Newly Independent
Age	Child, Young Adult, Middle-Age Adult, Elderly
Ability	People with disabilities (cognitive, physical, emotional, etc.), Temporarily able-bodied, Temporarily Disabled
National Origin and Citizenship	United States, Nigeria, Korea, Turkey, Argentina, etc.
Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation	Mohawk, Aboriginal, Navajo, Santal
Body Size/ Type	Fat, Person of Size, Naturally Thin
What else?	What other social identities are important in your communities?