

SOCIAL LOCATION DEFINITION

Social location is the combination of the groups that a person belongs to because of their identity. Everyone has a social location. There are many factors that go into the complex ways that social location plays out, but the main areas that have exceeding social impact in the US are gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and nation of origin. The combination of these identities determines ones social location.

- Other factors such as skin color, hair texture, accents, body type, come in to play, but are often contained within the larger concepts already mentioned.
- A person's identity, and social location is influenced by history and other social factors.

SOCIAL LOCATION AND FACILITATION

With any work towards equity and social justice, it is necessary to take time to think about how your identity and social location shapes who you are as a facilitator or any role that you take on. Even though we are focusing on facilitation skills around issues of equity, we see the role of facilitation as being central to decision-making, art making, managing conflict, communicating, leadership, and much, much, more.

Having said that, it is particularly important to understand your social location and the role your social location plays *during* facilitation. Understanding your social location is key to being an effective facilitator and to having the ability to facilitate across differences.

- It's important to recognize that you can only support a person's learning to the extent that you have done your own. Your analysis building in the area of diversity and inclusion will be ongoing.
- It is most important to understand where you have privilege, and how you can use your voice strategically as a facilitator and as an ally.
- A critical aspect of facilitating issues of inclusion and equity is clarity of your identity and social location.

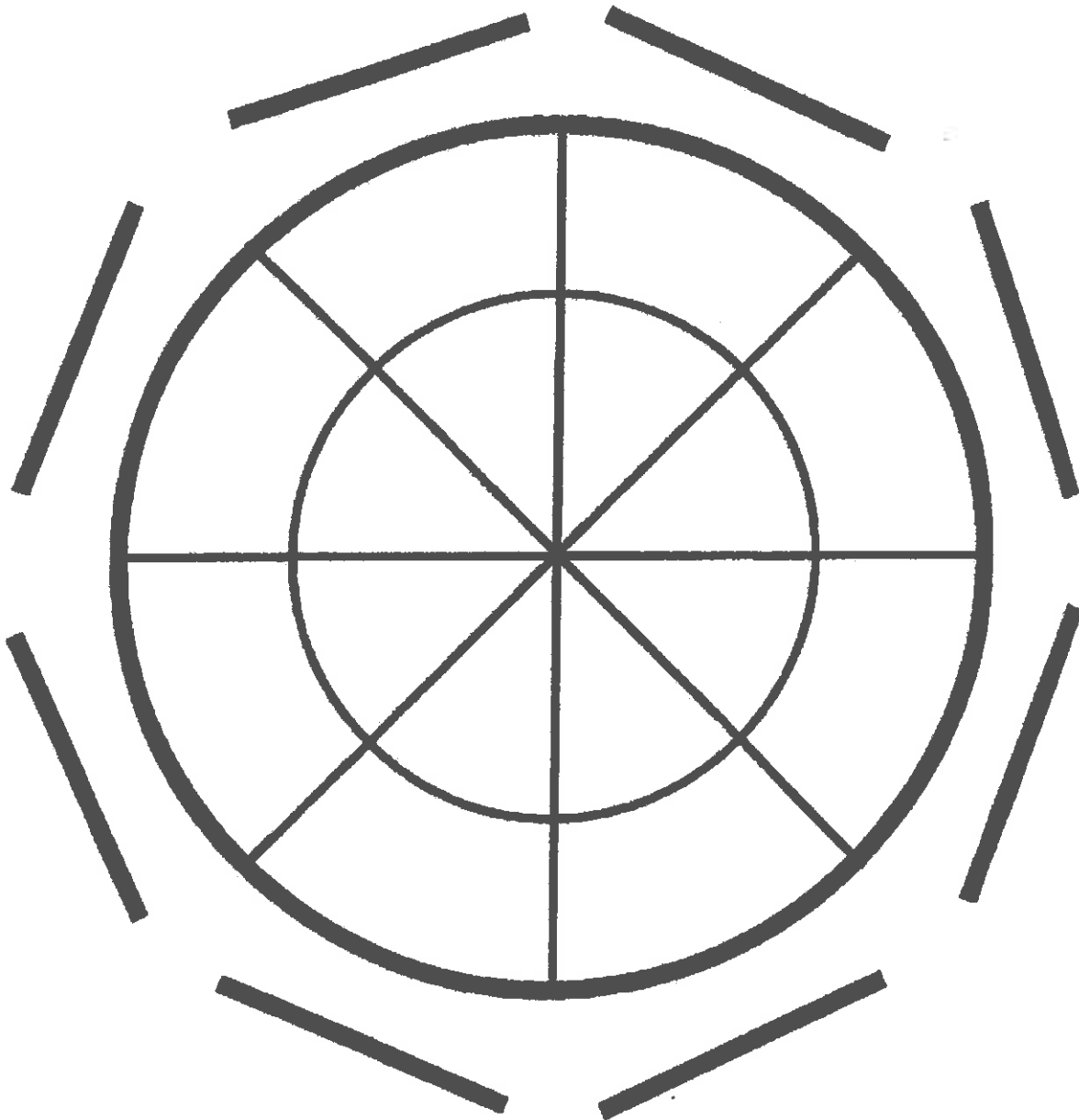
IDENTITY AND SOCIAL LOCATION

DIRECTIONS:

In small groups,

- a. Identify the dominant culture/(in terms of historical access, resources, and political and structural power.) Who benefits from the rules? Name this group in society and write that in the centermost circle.
- b. Brainstorm some of the privileges that come with being a member of that historically dominant group.
- c. Brainstorm some ways to interrupt and equalize power.

IDENTITY AND SOCIAL LOCATION GRID



IDENTITY AND SOCIAL LOCATION DEFINITIONS

Religion

An institutionalized or personal system of beliefs and practices relating to the divine. **Faith** is a system of religious or spiritual beliefs. **Spirituality** is an individual's belief and commitment to matters that are considered to be sacred to that individual

Race

A social and artificial construct with exceeding social, economic, and political significance. Race is often associated with physical characteristics, e.g., skin color, hair types, eye shape, eye color, lip shape, etc.

Ethnicity

Refers to a group or people of the same nationality or land of origin who share a distinct and/or common culture

Sexual Orientation

An individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to another individual. A person's sexual orientation is sometimes distinct from a person's gender identity and expression.

Class

A relative social ranking or category based on income, financial resources, education, status, and/or power. Class categories are usually associated with levels of access to resources such as money, contacts, education. Our perceptions of class identity are often tied to culture, food, clothing, language, cars, entertainment, work, and more.

Gender

Refers to socially constructed roles, behavior, activities, and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender is also an individual's self-conception, as distinguished from biological sex. Gender identities include, but are not limited to "transgender," "woman," and "man." "Transgender" is the state of one's gender identity not matching one's 'assigned sex,' while "cisgender" is to have a gender identity that does match one's assigned sex. "Gender nonconforming" is another identifier, used to indicate that one doesn't adhere to stereotypical understandings of gender expression and roles.

Ability

Possession of the capacity (especially physical, mental and psychological capabilities) required to do something or get something done. Ability is informed by the construction of a societies' physical, social, cultural, and technological spaces, customs, and institutions, which often privilege those who are considered to be "fully able."

Age

Refers to how long a person has been alive.

Nation of Citizenship and Immigration Status

Nation of citizenship refers to where one holds citizenship status. Immigrant status refers to the status of a person's residency—in this context, in the United States. Citizenship and certain immigration statuses bring with them a host of protections and privileges.