

The Influence of Social Identity on Evaluation Practice

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In this mini workshop you will learn:

- The influence of social identity on evaluation practice
- To apply a technique for exploring aspects of social identity
- Ways to increase cultural adaptability in order to improve evaluation practice



Social Identity (SI)

“The individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership.”

Henri Tajfel 1972

- Personal Identity: Who am I?
- Social Identity: Who are we?



Social Identity

Social identity involves three internal processes:

- Categorization
- Identification
- Comparison

It is helpful to articulate, discuss, and reflect upon these processes.



The Challenge and Promise of SI

Our Social Identity, and that of others, has the power to ***bind*** or to ***blind*** us.



SI Basics

- We all have multiple identities
- It's human nature to want to “fit in” as well as to be unique
- Some identities are visible, others are less apparent
- Some identities are accepted, some are taboo
- Aspects of your social identity may be connected with images of evaluation of which you are unaware
- You continually gain, lose, or change certain aspects of your identity, while others are fixed



Conversations about SI can be Difficult

- Identity Threat
- Intergroup Anxiety



Individual Activity

- Select 5 or 6 categories that represent aspects of yourself that best define who you are. These should be categories that are salient to you.
- If there is a category important to you, but no card for it –write the category down.
- Reflect on why you selected these categories. If it would be helpful – journal, draw, etc.



Social Identity Categories

- Where you were born
- Your physical characteristics
- Your family role
- Your religious or spiritual affiliation
- Your health status or history
- Your occupation, profession, or career
- Your hobbies
- Your current employment status
- Your age or the generation you belong to
- Your political affiliation
- Your ethnicity or race
- Your vocation
- Your tenure in your organization
- Your socioeconomic status or class
- Your educational experience
- Your Gender
- Your educational level or degrees/certifications you have
- Your marital status
- Your level in your organization
- Your role in your community
- Your family, ancestry, or tribe
- Your place of residence
- Specific life experiences
- Your national culture
- Your beliefs about social issues



Individual Reflections

- What aspects of your social identity are salient for you?
- Why are those categories important to you?
- What are your early experiences becoming aware of those aspects of your identity?



Given or Chosen?

Given identity.

These are the attributes or conditions that you have no choice about. Categories of your given identity may include your birth-place, age, gender, birth order, physical characteristics, certain family roles, and possibly religion.

Chosen identity.

These are the characteristics that you choose. Categories of your chosen identity may include your occupation, political affiliation, place of residence, family roles, and possibly religion.



Visible/Invisible and Public/Private SI

- Which categories are visible? Which are not?
- Which do you openly share? Which do you want to keep somewhat private?
- What “identity symbols” are important to you?



Group Activity

- How do aspects of your identity help you build connections with other people?
- How do aspects of your identity create barriers between you and other people?
- What aspects of your identity do you think contribute to you being, or being seen as, an effective evaluator?
- What aspects of you identity do you think get in the way of being, or being seen as, an effective evaluator?



Developing SI Awareness

- Role reversal
- Journaling
- Mentoring or Coaching
- Case Methodologies



Applying SI to Evaluation Practice

Your SI

- How aligned is your SI with other stakeholder groups?
- How might your SI influence your role in data collection, interpretation, and communication approaches?
- What strategies can you use to compensate?

The SI Context

- What SI dynamics are among stakeholder groups?
- What impact might SI may have on data collection, interpretation, and communication approaches?

