



MEMBER SAFETY PROGRAMMING

UNDERSTANDING IDENTITIES AND THEIR IMPACT

MATERIALS NEEDED

- DEI PowerPoint Presentation
- This discussion guide is also needed and is beneficial to read through ahead of the program.

TIMEFRAME

- This program should run around 30-40 minutes.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Understand social identities.
- Identify personal social identities.
- Discuss power and privilege associated with certain identity groups.
- Learn about ring theory.
- Apply ring theory to social identities and power and privilege.
- List ways to support others with identities that carry less privilege.

FACILITATOR NOTES

This session is designed to understand identities, the power and privilege they may hold, and support those who have identities that don't have privilege associated with them. These conversations can be difficult for some participants, or they could be ones that participants have had many times before. It's important to acknowledge that everyone is coming from a different place. **It may be useful to set some ground rules before beginning:**

- There are generally no right or wrong answers during this discussion, as it can be a very personal topic. However, the facilitator should make a point to correct misinformation as they are able to and call out inappropriate behavior or mentalities. This includes statements that are sexist, homophobic, racist, etc., or statements that promote or excuse behaviors that are biased, or otherwise harm an individual.
- Members are encouraged to talk openly about the topic, but should also consider:
 - Using 'I' statements when discussing their personal beliefs.
 - Avoid naming specific people they are discussing.
 - Use the language that they are comfortable using.
 - Ask questions if they need clarification or additional insight to a topic.
 - Give others grace as we learn more about these topics together.

Facilitation tips:

- This discussion guide is outlined by slide, coinciding with the PowerPoint presentation linked above. It is most effective if you use the PowerPoint along with this guide.
- If you have a large group, try using small groups, pair sharing, collecting responses on notecards, and tools like Poll Everywhere or Zoom polling to encourage participation.
- If doing this session virtually:

- Try using break out rooms and polls to help keep members engaged and thinking.
- Use a virtual white board, message board, or Google Doc that members can add their thoughts and questions during the session.
- When posing a question, give them a little extra time to think about their answer and either come off mute or type it in the chat box.
- Look for other *facilitator tips* throughout the document, as shown in red italics.

PRESENTATION NOTES

Slide 2: Welcome

- *Welcome everyone to the session and thank them for their engagement in this discussion.*
- *Share the learning outcomes on the slide.*
- *Share:*
 - Today we're going to discuss our identities and the privileges that are associated with them.
 - This may be a difficult conversation for some of us, and others may have had conversations similar to these multiple times.
 - We're all coming to this conversation with different experiences and it's okay if you make a mistake or aren't sure how to feel about something.

Slide 3: Ground Rules

- *Share the ground rules on the slide.*
- *Facilitator tip:* *Ask participants to share any ground rules they'd like to add or change on the slide. Make sure the participants understand these rules apply to this discussion, but also are good rules of thumb for any difficult conversation around these and other topics.*
- *Ask participants to agree to these ground rules.*

Slide 4 Defining Identity

- *Discuss:*
 - What does the word "identity" mean to you?
 - What about social identity?
- *Share the definition (click the PowerPoint) after each question, as that definition will pop up.*
- *Facilitator tip:* *You may need to explain the point of "Saliency may depend on context" statement after social identity. This means that how much an identity means to someone may depend on their environment. For example, a person of color who grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood, is likely very aware of the color of the skin. Someone who works multiple jobs and took out a lot of student loans to go to school may be very aware of their socioeconomic status compared to their peers whose parents are able to fully pay their school expenses. When you are with Fraternity brothers, you may not think about your gender like you do when you are at sorority events.*
- *Ask for the group to provide examples of a social identity they hold.*
- *If the group is struggling to come up with answers, provide these examples:*

- Social identities can be race, sexual orientation, gender, immigrant status, age, ability, faith/religion, body size/type, etc.
- *Share:*
 - In short, social identities are the story that others say about you and are things you may or may not be able to change. Social identities also influence the amount of power/privilege someone may have. We will discuss power and privilege more in a little bit.
- *Facilitator tip:* Ensure participants understand these definitions before moving on to the activity. Make sure to let discussion flow and allow everyone to get their questions answered.

Slide 5: Identity Exploration

- *Share instructions:*
 - Look at this list of identity categories, and jot down how you identify within each category.
 - It's best if you jot this down on your Notes app on your phone, or a piece of paper. There are a lot of them, and you may forget if you just think about it in your head.
 - You may have done an activity like this before, however, your identities, or the words you use to describe yourself, may change over time and you may have not thought about all of these before.
- *After about five to seven minutes (give participants plenty of time to get through all of them), move to the next slide and use breakout rooms or small groups to have them discuss this activity.*

Slide 6: Processing Questions

- *Put participants into small groups or breakout rooms and ask them to debrief these questions with each other.*
- *Allow discussion to run for about five to seven minutes, and then bring them back to the large group or main room.*
Once everyone returns, ask if anyone had any takeaways in their small group they'd like to share with the large group.

Slide 7: Dominant vs Subordinate Identities

- *Discuss:*
 - Each of these identity categories have identities within them that have more or less privilege in our society.
 - Which identities within each category do you feel holds more privilege in our society?
 - *If participants struggle to answer this, share the following examples:*
 - Men typically have more privilege than women and are considered the dominant identity.
 - Gender conforming and cisgender individuals are the dominant identity, whereas transgender or gender non-conforming individuals tend to be discriminated against.

- Those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are considered the subordinate identity. People who identify as heterosexual or straight are the dominant identity.
- What other examples can you share of discrimination or bias against specific identities?
- Do you agree with all the subordinate and/or dominant identities within each category? Why or why not?
- *After discussion, share these sentiments:*
 - Even if on an individual level, you do not experience oppression because of an identity you hold, or you have not seen it occur to others, it doesn't mean it doesn't exist.
 - People of color, those of a lower socioeconomic status, immigrants, people who don't speak the dominant language, and those with mental and physical disabilities, face discrimination in many ways that we may not be aware of.
 - Even if you are in one of these subordinate groups, you may or may not have personally faced discrimination, but society likely has created barriers that don't exist for those who identify with the dominant identity. For example, women may not feel discrimination in their workplace, but as a whole, women still make \$0.82 to the \$1.00 that men make in their careers.

Slide 8: Ring Theory: The Rules

- *Share:*
 - Now we are going to apply what we have discussed with identities to ring theory and supporting those who have been discriminated against and/or harmed because of an identity they hold.
 - These are the rules for ring theory, and it will make more sense when we see the diagram on the next slide.

Slide 9: Ring Theory

- *Share:*
 - According to ring theory, the aggrieved individual is in the center of the ring.
 - People who are close to the aggrieved including family, close friends, or a mentor who are affected by the incident, are in the center rings.
 - Colleagues, classmates, or other closer acquaintances are in the middle rings.
 - The outer rings are friends and family of the inner ring individuals, or looser acquaintances of the aggrieved.
- *Share this example of ring theory, then discuss:*
 - Your friend's mother has cancer. She's in the middle and can say and feel anything she wants to about her situation, no matter what. Your friend is upset because their mom is being difficult about treatment. They vent to you and it makes you feel uncomfortable. Your friend is an inner ring, and you are on the outer ring. Your role is to be nothing but supportive to your friend, no matter how you feel or what you think about the situation. Their role is to be supportive of their mother, no matter what your friend thinks about the situation.

- *Discuss:*
 - Can you think of an example of how you have seen ring theory play out?
 - How does this relate to what we have been discussing?
- *Share:*
 - Those who have subordinate identities are in the center, especially when they are discriminated against or experience bias.
 - Those with more privilege identities are in the outer rings, and it is our job to support those who are in the center.

Slide 10: Three Immediate Needs

- *Share:*
 - How can we support those in the center?
 - If you know someone who has been impacted by bias, has been discriminated against, or is a victim of a hate crime, we can put them in the center of the ring and follow the associated rules to be supportive.
 - They may also have different immediate needs we can support them with:
 - **The need to feel safe.**
 - Let them know you are there to support them however they need.
 - **The need to be heard.**
 - Allow them to talk it out. What made them feel hurt? What are they angry about? What are they sad about?
 - **The need to know what happens next.**
 - What do they need from you? Do they want to report this to anyone? Do they just need space?

Slide 11: Wrap Up

- *Discuss:*
 - Why do you think this is included in Member Safety Programming?
- *Share:*
 - Phi Sigma Kappa believes in the inclusion of all members, as well as a more inclusive society for all people.
 - Discrimination and bias can make people feel not welcomed, and not safe.
 - This is why these topics are important to make sure all brothers feel heard, safe, and included in all aspects of the Fraternity.
- If you want to discuss any of this further, feel free to visit an Executive Board meeting, talk with our Chapter Adviser, or visit the campus fraternity and sorority life office.
 - *Facilitator tip:* Share the name and contact information for your Chapter Adviser, any Alumni Advisory Board (AAB) members, or the campus fraternity and sorority life office location and contact name.
- Be sure and thank participants for engaging in the conversation.

References:

Ring Theory: Amanda Goodenough, Director of Campus Climate at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; <https://www.uwlax.edu/profile/agoodenough/>
Identity Definitions: Tara Fuller, CAMPUSPEAK; <https://campuspeak.com/speaker/tara-fuller/>