



Module: Connecting Personal and Social Qualities

This module covers exploring and understanding identity, including how various aspects of identity interact and shape perspectives and experiences.

About CanWork BC

CanWork BC aims to make it easier for youth with disabilities ages to 15 to 30 years old to find and keep employment. There are a series of tools and resources for youth, employers, service providers, educators, and caregivers.

CanAssist at the University of Victoria, with the support of the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, wrote the Provincial Employment Strategy for Youth with Disabilities (ESYD). This strategy informed the tools and resources.

The Youth Tool

The CanWork BC youth tool is available as an interactive online platform at portal.canworkbc.ca and through PDF workbooks such as this one. There are five dimensions of content available.

For the full PDF workbook content and accompanying facilitator guides, as well as other CanWork BC tools and resources, go to canworkbc.ca.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build your understanding of self exploration. You'll explore:

- Evaluating your inner identity and their impact on self-awareness.
- Seeing how external factors shape your identity within social groups.
- Understanding intersectionality and how different identity aspects shape your experiences.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect self exploration to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Exploring Inner Identity

Knowing your **inner identity** means understanding the internal factors that make you who you are and how you move through the world. By exploring the internal factors that shape your self-awareness, you can better understand yourself.

In this section, we'll cover:

- The different aspects of your inner identity that shape who you are.
- Ways to reflect on these inner aspects to learn more about yourself.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of the personal factors that influence your self-awareness.

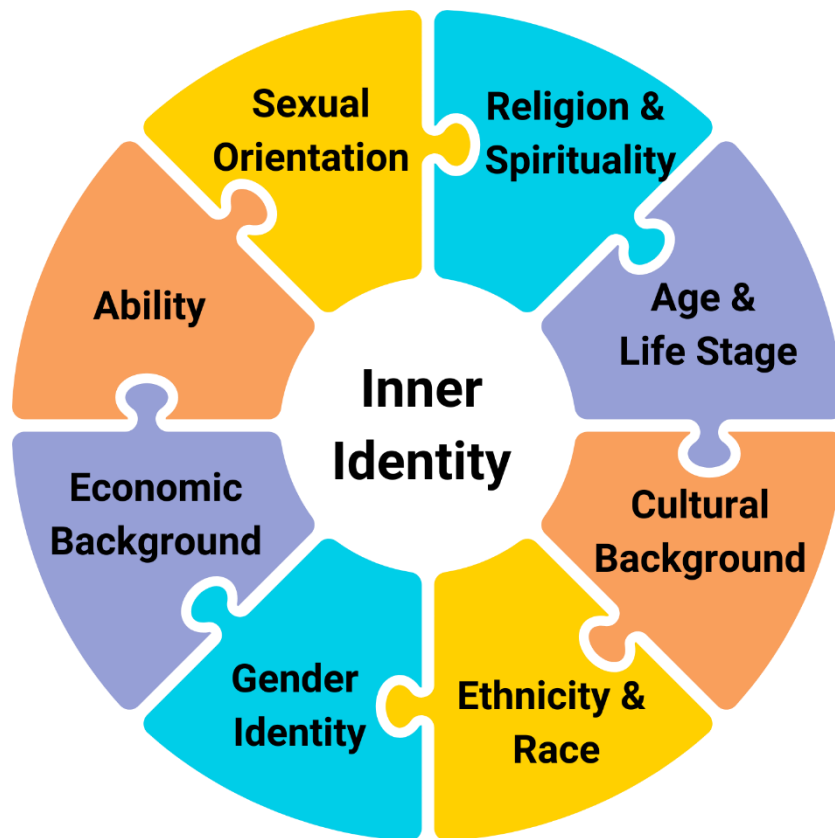
Engage and Explore

Understanding Inner Identity

Your identity includes the qualities, traits, and experiences that shape who you are and how you connect with the world. Inner identity refers to the deeper, personal aspects of yourself that influence your self-awareness and shape your sense of who you are.

The Inner Identity wheel¹ is a helpful tool to explore these inner aspects, giving you a better understanding of yourself and how you experience life.

Here are some key parts of your inner identity:



- **Ability**

Ability includes the skills and knowledge you have, whether you were born with them or learned them over time. This includes physical, mental, and emotional abilities. For example, being able-bodied, being neurodiverse, or having emotional resilience.

- **Age and life stage**

Age is how many years you have been alive, and life stage refers to the phase of life you are in, like adolescence or adulthood. For example, a teenager might be beginning to

think about their future, while a young adult might be focused on career or higher education.

- **Cultural background**

Your cultural background includes the traditions, values, beliefs, and customs that come from your community and family. For example, someone from India might celebrate Diwali, follow traditional family roles, or speak multiple languages such as Hindi and English.

- **Economic background**

This is about the resources available to you, like your income or family's financial status. For example, a person from a middle-class family might have easier access to a higher level of education and resources, while someone from a lower-income family might face challenges and must work harder to achieve their goals.

- **Ethnicity and race**

Your ethnicity relates to shared cultural traits, like language or traditions, while race refers to physical features and cultural identity. For example, someone with African heritage may celebrate certain cultural festivals, speak a particular language, and identify with a specific racial group.

- **Gender identity**

Gender identity is how you see yourself in terms of gender. It may or may not align with the sex you were assigned at birth. For example, you might identify as male, female, or non-

binary, which means you don't strictly fit into the male or female categories.

- **Religion and spirituality**

This relates to your beliefs and practices about life's purpose, values, and connection to a higher power or force. For example, someone might be a Muslim, follow Buddhist practices, or consider themselves spiritual without following a specific religion.

- **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation is who you're attracted to, whether emotionally, romantically, or sexually. For example, you might identify as straight, gay, bisexual, or pansexual, depending on who you're attracted to.

Exploring Your Inner Identity

Identity is a lifelong journey that changes as you grow. Different parts of your identity might feel more important at different stages of life.

For example, your cultural background might be a key part of your identity when you're young, while your gender identity or sexual orientation might play a bigger role as you grow older.

Here are some helpful tips to help you explore your identity:

Reflect on your experiences

Take time to think about moments when you felt truly yourself. Consider how your gender, culture, or other parts of your identity influenced your actions and interactions with others. This can help you understand which aspects of your identity are most important to you.

Learn from different viewpoints

Reading books, watching documentaries, or talking to people from different backgrounds can offer new insights into your identity. Understanding how others see themselves can help you learn more about yourself.

Practice self-compassion

Recognize that discovering your identity is a process that may take time. Be patient with yourself and accept that things might not always be clear right away.

Be open to change

Your identity doesn't have to fit into just one category. It can change over time. Be open to personal growth and allow yourself the freedom to change as you gather new experiences and insights.

Exploring your identity helps you make choices that reflect who you truly are in your career, relationships, and personal growth.

Make it Personal

Reflect on Your Inner Identity

Now it's time to apply this to your life. Inner identity includes the deeper aspects of who you are that shape your self-awareness and how you connect with the world.

In the table below you'll find a list of key parts of your inner identity. Read the instructions to get started and reflect on each part as you go.

Instructions:

- Read the reflective question for each part of your inner identity.

- Take a moment to think about your answer before moving to the next one.
- Use the space to write down any thoughts or insights as you reflect on your inner identity.

Ability	<i>How do your abilities influence your confidence and daily choices?</i>
Age and life stage	<i>How does this phase of your life shape your inner identity?</i>
Cultural background	<i>How does your culture influence your sense of self and worldview?</i>

Economic background	<i>How has your access to resources influenced your outlook on life and future plans?</i>
Ethnicity and race	<i>How do your ethnicity and race shape your experiences and identity?</i>
Gender identity	<i>How does your gender identity shape your inner sense of self?</i>

Religion and spirituality	<i>How do your beliefs or spiritual practices shape your values and inner identity?</i>
Sexual orientation	<i>How has your sexual orientation influenced your relationships and sense of self?</i>

Explore and Reflect

After reflecting on each part of your inner identity, consider how these pieces come together to create your unique sense of self.

Which aspects feel most central to your inner identity right now, and how do they influence your thoughts, actions, and workplace relationships?

Section 2: Exploring Outer Identity

Knowing your outer identity means understanding the external factors that shape how you present yourself to the world and how others see you. By exploring these external aspects, you can better understand how they influence your interactions and how you connect with different groups.

In this section, we'll cover:

- The external aspects of identity that shape how others see you.
- Ways to reflect on how these external factors impact your place within different groups and communities.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of how your outer identity affects your interactions and how you fit into the world around you.

Engage and Explore

Understanding Outer Identity

Your outer identity is made up of the external factors that shape how others see you and how you fit into different groups. These aspects of your identity may change over time, but they can still impact how you interact with the world.

Here are some important external factors to consider:



- **Appearance**

This refers to your physical traits, such as your height, body type, and facial features. While appearance can change over time, it often influences how people perceive you at first. For example, changing your hairstyle or the clothes you wear can change how others see you.

- **Citizenship**

This refers to your legal status in a country. This can affect your rights and opportunities, like healthcare or employment.

For example, someone born in one country but later becoming a citizen elsewhere may have access to different rights.

- **Economic status**

This refers to your financial situation, including how much you earn and what resources you have. Economic status can impact opportunities but doesn't define your identity entirely. For example, a person with a low income might still be highly valued by their community for their skills and talents regardless of their financial resources.

- **Education**

This refers to the level of schooling you've completed and the qualifications you've earned. This can influence career options and how others view your knowledge and skills. For example, someone with a college or university degree or certification may have access to different job opportunities than someone with a high school diploma.

- **Interests and hobbies**

This refers to the activities you enjoy, such as painting, hiking, or playing sports. These hobbies can shape your social life and how you connect with people with similar interests.

- **Life experiences**

This refers to the important moments, successes, and challenges you've faced. For example, someone who has overcome big challenges may feel stronger and more resilient. These experiences can also influence how you deal with

problems in the future.

- **Location**

This refers to where you live, which can impact your experiences and opportunities. For example, if you live in a larger diverse city, you might be exposed to a variety of cultures, while living in a rural area might shape your lifestyle in different ways.

- **Occupation and role**

This refers to the kind of work you do or a particular role. For instance, a teacher may be seen as a mentor or leader, while a student might be seen as someone who is still learning.

- **Relationships**

This refers to your relationships with family, friends, and coworkers and how they can influence your sense of identity. For example, a close friend or supportive family member might make you feel confident and valued, while difficult relationships might challenge your sense of self.

Exploring Your Outer Identity

While these aspects are important in shaping your outer identity, they don't define you completely. They interact with your inner identity, which is harder to change.

For example, a person's appearance can reflect their gender identity. A transgender person may express their true gender

through their choice of clothing, hairstyle, or makeup. These aspects of their appearance align with their internal sense of self.

To better understand how these external factors influence your identity, try exploring them in different ways:

Self-reflection	Take some time to think about each aspect and how it affects your life. How does your appearance influence your confidence? How has your education shaped your career goals?
Discussions	Talk with friends or family about how they see these aspects of your life. You might gain new insights into how others perceive your outer identity.
Journaling	Write about your experiences and thoughts regarding each aspect of your outer identity. How have things like your job, location, or relationships impacted you?

Understanding your outer identity is a key part of knowing yourself. Let's move on to the next activity and start exploring how these external aspects shape who you are!

Make it Personal

Reflect on Your Outer Identity

Now that you've explored outer identity, let's reflect on how external factors shape your identity. Your outer identity includes aspects of your life that influence how others perceive you and how you fit into different social groups.

In the table below, you'll find key parts of your outer identity. Read the instructions to get started and reflect on each part as you go.

Instructions:

- Read the reflective question for each part of your outer identity.
- Take a moment to think about your answer before moving to the next one.
- Use the space below to write down any thoughts or insights as you reflect on your outer identity.

Appearance: *How does your appearance influence how others see you? Have you ever changed your appearance and noticed how people reacted?*

Citizenship: *How does your citizenship status impact the rights and opportunities available to you?*

Economic status: *How does your financial situation influence your choices and opportunities? Do you think people perceive you differently because of your economic status?*

Education: *How has your level of education influenced your career or the way people see your knowledge and abilities?*

Interests and hobbies: *How do your hobbies shape your social life? Have you ever connected with someone because of a shared interest or hobby?*

Life experiences: *How have important events or challenges in your life shaped how you view the world? How do these experiences affect how you interact with others?*

Location: *How does where you live influence your lifestyle and opportunities?*

Occupation and role: *How does your job or role influence how others see you?*

Relationships: *How do your relationships with family and friends impact your sense of identity?*

Explore and Reflect

After reflecting on each part of your outer identity, consider how these pieces come together to shape how you are seen by others.

Which aspects of your outer identity feel most important to you right now, and how do they influence your daily interactions and relationships with others?

Section 3: Understanding Intersectional Identity

Knowing your intersectional identity means understanding how different parts of who you are work together to shape your experiences. By exploring how these aspects overlap, you can better understand how they impact the way you navigate the world and interact with others.

In this section, we'll cover:

- The concept of intersectionality and how different parts of your identity interact.
- How different aspects of identity affect your experiences in the workplace and beyond.

By the end of this section, you'll have a deeper understanding of how your intersectional identity influences your experiences.

Engage and Explore

Understanding Intersectional Identity

Intersectional identity refers to how different parts of who we are interact and come together to shape our unique experiences. These aspects of identity don't exist separately; they connect with each other, influencing how others see us, how we see ourselves, and how we experience the world. It's important to recognize that no

part of your identity is more important than another, but each part can bring its opportunities or challenges.

For example, a person with a disability and from a minority group may face unique barriers through their employment journey, such as accessibility issues or biases related to both their disability and ethnicity, compared to others from different backgrounds.

These intersectional identities work together with society to create unique experiences. These experiences can sometimes provide certain privileges or present challenges depending on how society views or treats these identities.

Privilege and Power

Understanding privilege and power is important when exploring intersectionality. These concepts help explain how some parts of our identity can make life easier, while others can make it harder.

Privilege	Power
Privilege refers to the advantages certain groups experience simply because of parts of their identity. For example, being born into a wealthy family can provide advantages like access to	Power refers to the influence or control people have over different aspects of society, such as work, education, or the law. For instance, a manager has power in the

better education or healthcare.	workplace because they make decisions that affect others.
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It's important to note that no part of your identity is “better” or “worse” than another. Privilege and power are not about being superior, but recognizing that some people face fewer barriers, while others face more.

It's also important to recognize that broader societal systems shape these outcomes, and we are discussing this within the Canadian context. By understanding privilege and power, we can better navigate our lives and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of others.

Impact of Intersectionality in the Workplace

Intersectional identity can influence how individuals experience their job, career growth, and workplace relationships. For example, someone who is both a parent and a person with a disability might have a unique experience balancing work and family responsibilities and may need different types of support or flexibility.

Similarly, someone who has pursued higher education and comes from a specific cultural background might have a different perspective on teamwork and communication. Recognizing these intersections helps employers and coworkers understand and address everyone's diverse needs and experiences, ensuring a supportive and inclusive work environment for all.

Equity and Equality

When discussing intersectionality, it's also important to understand the difference between equity and equality, especially in the workplace.

- **Equality**

Equality means giving everyone the same resources or treatment. However, this doesn't always lead to fairness, as not everyone starts from the same place. For example, giving all students the same exam time may seem fair, but some students may need extra time due to learning differences.

- **Equity**

Equity means giving people the support they need based on their unique challenges. For example, an employee with a disability facing discrimination may need specific accommodations to succeed, unlike someone without those challenges.

Recognizing intersectionality allows you to navigate the world more thoughtfully, acknowledging both your own experiences and the experiences of others. It helps us all work toward a more inclusive, supportive environment where everyone's unique identities are respected and valued.

Make it Personal

Exploring Your Intersectional Identity

Explore the different aspects of your identity and how they shape your experiences using the Wheel of Power and Privilege¹. This tool helps you recognize both advantages and barriers in life, supporting your journey toward creating a more inclusive environment for yourself and others.

Instructions:

- Follow the three steps below to guide your reflection.

In this activity, you'll reflect on how power and privilege influence your life and the lives of others.

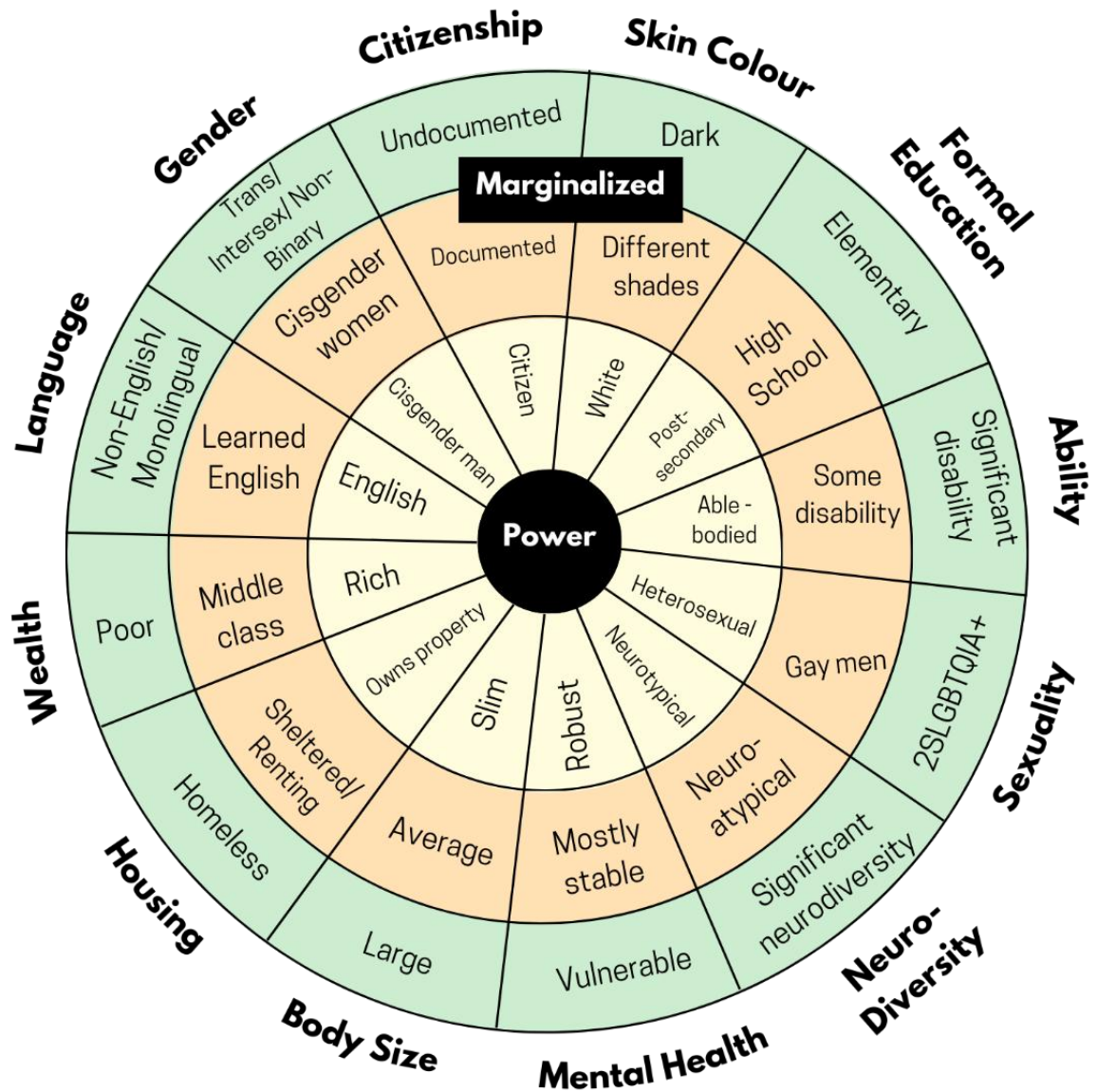
Step 1: Reflect on the power and privilege wheel

Look at the Power and Privilege Wheel below. The closer you are to the centre, the more privilege you may have in that area.

The goal is to understand that not everyone has the same access to power, not to take away anyone's power. Being closer to the centre doesn't mean you haven't faced challenges. It just means some challenges might not have been as noticeable to you.

¹ The Wheel of Power and Privilege is based on Sylvia Duckworth's 2020 illustration, "Wheel of Power/Privilege". It uses Canadian examples to show how intersectionality supports power and privilege. You can view the image here:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sylviaduckworth/50500299716/>

Example of a Power and Privilege Wheel:



Step 2: Create your own wheel

Now, create your own Power and Privilege Wheel by thinking about how your identity fits into the wheel. Where do you think you fall in different areas? You can write your responses on paper, in a notes app, or in another digital format that works for you.

As you fill out your wheel, think about how your identity might give you privileges or create barriers. For example:

- **Privilege:** Being a native English speaker might make it easier to navigate systems where English is the primary language.
- **Barrier:** Having a disability might create physical or social barriers in environments that aren't accessible.

Step 3: Reflect on the following questions

Once you've created your wheel, take some time to answer these reflective questions:

Which aspects of your identity do you now see as privileges that you may not have considered before?



Are there aspects of your identity that create challenges for you? How do these barriers affect your opportunities or experiences?

How might your privileges and barriers change in different contexts, such as at work, at school, or in social situations?

How can understanding your intersectional identity help you better understand others who face different challenges?

How might your privileges or barriers affect how you are treated at work or interact with others in the workplace?

Reflect and Connect

Well done! In this module, we've covered a lot, including:

- Exploring different aspects of your inner identity.
- Understanding how your outer identity shapes your experiences.
- Reflecting on intersectionality and how different aspects of your identity interact.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

What is one part of your inner identity (e.g., gender, culture, abilities) that has influenced a key decision or experience in your life?



How do factors like appearance, education, or location affect your experiences and how others see you?

How do your inner and outer identities interact to affect your experiences, especially at work?

Keep Going

There is so much more to learn! Access the full CanWork BC content and learn more about the program at **canworkbc.ca**.

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