

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee’s Icebreakers and Learning Activities

Updated June 2024

The following exercises have been collected by various contributors with connection to TRO’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee. Some of these exercises have been suggested based on the experiences of the contributor, as a participant or facilitator of the activity. While several activities have been collected with a link or reference for more information, it is possible that several similar activities or resources exist. The authors believe that it is up to the reader to determine how to best implement the activity with most relevance to their own life or area of practice, while giving their best effort to maintain the essence of the activity in the spirit of fostering awareness of all issues related to DEIB.

TRO’s DEIB Committee reflects on the knowledge and lived experiences of it’s members. If you would like to submit an icebreaker or learning activity to be included in this resource please email your suggestion to d-i@trontario.org

Title:	Ravens: Messengers of Change
Description:	“KAIROS and the Legacy of Hope Foundation have collaborated on the production of <i>Ravens: Messengers of Change</i> , an educational resource for people of all ages that creates awareness and encourages action for reconciliation in Canada by calling on everyone to become, like ravens, messengers of change. Born out of a need to help participants of the KAIROS Blanket Exercise take their newfound understanding a step further through concrete actions on their journey as informed allies, Ravens: Messengers of Change enables people from all walks of life to participate in the resource’s activities in the safety of their homes or outdoors during the pandemic. The activity book is available in English and French.” Visit the link below to download the FREE activity book.
Reference/Link:	https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/indigenous-rights/

Title:	Who’s In the Room? <i>(Group Activity)</i>
Description:	This activity can be facilitated within 60 to 90 minutes as a whole, or split into a series of two 30-45 minute activities. It is best this activity is conducted with a group of individuals where comfort and safety has already been established

	<p>among group members.</p> <p>Present this activity as a method to introduce the varied lived experiences from each person in the room.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request each participant to arrange themselves in groups/circles according to your prompts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where grandparents/parents were born (assign world continents in different parts of the room) b. Where themselves were born (assign world continents in different parts of the room) c. Where they identify their culture with 2. Debrief the above arrangements to showcase the varying familiar cultures present in the room and the cultures that are missing. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Highlight the presence of or lack of diversity in the room (Who/Where is not represented in this room?) b. Discuss the pros of diversity in teams and the cons of lack of diversity in teams 3. Request each participant to arrange themselves on either side of a line separating the room with “I have identified with experiencing...” or “I have not identified with experiencing...” according to your prompts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Religious ‘othering’ b. Education and employment insecurity c. Housing and/or food insecurity d. Gender role stereotypes e. Cultural/racial underrepresentation f. Disability or illness (visible or invisible) g. Poverty and financial struggle h. Acts of discrimination/oppression/racism 4. Debrief the above arrangements to showcase the varying lived experiences present in the room, and highlight the lived experiences that are not present <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Highlight the presence of or lack of diverse lived experiences and perspectives on the team b. Discuss the pros of diverse lived experiences represented in teams and the cons of lack of diverse lived experiences in teams 5. Process the entire activity with reflection questions of what group members learned about themselves, each other and the importance of representing a diverse set of people on groups/teams.
<p>Reference/Link:</p>	<p>Jordan, B., & Stewart, D. (2012, May). <i>Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Training</i>. YWCA Hamilton Staff Development Series. Hamilton; Ontario.</p> <p>YWCA Hamilton is a non-profit agency in Hamilton, Ontario with a robust Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression employee training program developed in</p>

	conjunction with Adobe Consulting Services.
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Title:	Stand Up or Sit Down (<i>Group Activity</i>)
Description:	<p>Explain purpose of the activity is to highlight some of the shared and unique experiences of the people in the room. The Facilitator will cite a variety of different phrases and request group members stand up when they hear a phrase they can relate to, and to sit down when they hear a phrase they cannot relate to.</p> <p>Possible phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I have never felt that I don't belong -I have formal post-secondary education (College or University) -I have never worried about the size of paycheck in comparison to my bills -I wear traditional or culturally specific clothing at special events with friends and family -I speak more than 1 language, fluently or almost -I have friends or family living in another country -I have been to a bar/bat mitzvah, a quinceanera or a hindu wedding -I was born outside of Ontario...Canada...North America -It's not common for me to hear my name mispronounced -I've never wanted to request accommodations to do my job to the best of my ability -I have witnessed or observed language and actions that cause harm to my identity -I've been left out or missed on opportunity because of my identity or background <p>Debrief and process the activity with questions fostering reflection of what they have learned about themselves, others in the room; safety of personal disclosure in group settings; psychological safety of spaces where people access.</p>
Reference/Link:	<i>This icebreaker was facilitated during D&I Panel Presentation 2023 TRO Conference.</i>

Title:	Basic Needs Insecurities (<i>Group Activity</i>)
Description:	Discussion: List and discuss consequences that often surface when basic needs are not met. Think about how insecurities about basic needs may change over

	<p>time due to different circumstances.</p> <p>Question: Consider members of racial and ethnic communities who are disproportionately disadvantaged with respect to access and resources, especially when faced with a global economic crisis. What practical steps can you take to help identify and proactively work toward meeting the needs of students and co-workers in need?</p>
Reference/Link:	<p>Mentimeter - Creating a Word Cloud</p> <p>https://www.mines.edu/diversity/wp-content/uploads/sites/278/2020/04/basic-needs.pdf</p>

Title:	<p>Self-Awareness Checklist - Individual Cultural Competency (<i>Self-Reflection Activity</i>)</p>
Description:	<p>Self-reflection and self-awareness provide the basis for cultural competence and cultural humility; it's about bringing awareness of our own unconscious bias, beliefs, experiences and how they impact the way we behave. When this is realized, the way we make choices, decisions and actions can change. A deeper understanding of our own lives gives us the opportunity and freedom to change those things we'd like to change.</p> <p>The following self-reflection checklist fosters awareness of the underlying skills that cultural competency is built upon.</p> <p>Am I self-reflect? Do I learn from mistakes? What are my motivations? Am I clear about my personal values and beliefs? Am I aware of what I am feeling and thinking in situations? Am I aware of my strengths and weaknesses? Am I aware of how people like me or unlike me are depicted in the spaces I belong to?</p> <p>Am I able to experience myself as being competent to cope with basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness? Am I able to take responsibility for my actions? Do I take pride in my accomplishments? Am I self-motivated? Am I willing to take risks? Am I capable of handling criticism? Do I take opportunities to learn about cultures and experiences different than mine?</p> <p>Do I look after myself physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally? Do I</p>

	<p>maintain my personal boundaries? Am I able to say “No”? Am I aware of the supports in my life (personal and professional)?</p> <p>Do my judgements of others affect how I listen to them? Do I treat others with respect and honour their differences? Am I open to learning new ways of thinking about my life and society?</p> <p>Do I listen to others with curiosity and interest even when I do not agree with them? Do I take time to learn about someone who experiences life differently than me? Do I “ask” more or “tell” more when dealing with differences? Do I take the time to express myself fully? Do I express my feelings in a respectful way? Am I aware how I communicate both verbally and non-verbally? Am I confident that I can adjust my communication and therapeutic strategies to form respectful relationships?</p>
Reference/Link:	<p>Adapted from a model developed by Casey House Hospice in Toronto, Ontario and influenced by Holstein (2019).</p> <p>Holstein, J. (2019). Cultural Competence for Health Professionals Instrument Development. Linkoping, Sweden; Linkoping University.</p>

Title:	Taking Stock with Liberation Theory (<i>Self-Reflection Activity</i>)
Description:	<p>All of us have been socialized within an oppressive society and will have had a range of experiences where we have been in different roles. This self-reflection exercise provides the opportunity to examine the thoughts, emotions, past, and personal histories that drive our current ways of thinking and experiencing the world.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your earliest memory of being socialized into the role of the oppressor? 2. What is your earliest memory of being socialized into the role of the oppressed? 3. What were some of the social rewards you received for conforming to what was deemed “normal” in your culture or in society at large? 4. Can you remember a time when you resisted either being oppressed or conforming to the role of the oppressor, if so what happened and how did it feel? 5. As an adult can you identify what ways that you have perpetuated the

	<p>oppressive socialization of children?</p> <p>6. How will this personal reflection influence your future?</p>
Reference/Link:	<p>Writing a Theory of Liberation - Interaction Institute for Social Change : Interaction Institute for Social Change</p> <p>Jordan, B., & Stewart, D. (2012, May). <i>Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Training</i>. YWCA Hamilton Staff Development Series. Hamilton; Ontario.</p>

Title:	Examining Power and Privilege (<i>Self-Reflection Activity</i>)
Description:	<p>Social locations are the identities that someone occupies, some of which afford us privileges, some of which marginalize us. They are descriptors or labels adopted by us or imposed on us. Social locations often form the biases and judgements that make up the way we are viewed by people, institutions, and society. They are also the ways in which each of us differ and are unique; they are not static and may change over time; they are the identities that shape our personal culture and lived experience of the world we live in. Examples are: gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, education, ability, age, first language spoken, immigration status, First Nation status, religion.</p> <p>Intersectionality is a feminist sociological theory first highlighted by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) as “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations”. The theory suggests that the oppressive values occurring in society do not exist independently of one another; instead forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination.</p> <p>Identifying your own social locations and being able to identify where you enjoy dominant group privilege is integral to participating in the integration of an anti-oppression anti-racist framework personally, professionally, organizationally and politically.</p> <p>The following self-awareness questions prompt the participant to examine where they have experienced power and privilege:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are my social locations? 2. Which of these are areas where I experience privilege? 3. What social, economic, political privileges do I experience because of this social location? 4. What is the power that I enjoy because of the privileges reflected on above? 5. How does this impact people around me (consider structural power)?
Reference/Link:	Jordan, B., & Stewart, D. (2012, May). <i>Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression</i>

	<i>Training. YWCA Hamilton Staff Development Series. Hamilton; Ontario.</i>
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Title:	Privilege for Sale Activity
Description:	<p>This activity creates space and opportunity for participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● acknowledge and investigate privilege. ● empathetically connect and reflect on the experience of having (or not having) privilege. ● consider how no one privilege is more important than another, that for someone any privilege may feel essential. ● identify privileges that they take for granted in their everyday life. ● investigate and consider what groups may have limited access to what privileges and effect that lack of access may have on an individual. <p>When we say privilege, we are talking about social privilege(s), or a special, unearned advantage or entitlement, used to one's own benefit or to the detriment of others. These groups can be advantaged based on social class, age, education level, disability, ethnic or racial category, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religion. Having privilege doesn't make you a bad person. In fact, we all have privilege in the sense that we are able to access higher education. What is most important is to understand and unpack your privilege, allowing you to be more understanding and open-minded about the experiences of those different from yourself.</p> <p>SEE LINK BELOW FOR PRICES AND STATEMENTS</p>
Reference/Link:	https://intercultural.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/Privilege-for-Sale-Activity-and-Reflection.pdf

Title:	I am But I am not
Description:	<p>To break down stereotypes and misconceptions, this would be a simple activity.</p> <p>Things need - paper, pens, and enough time for each person to share their thoughts, but it's a great way for people to take pride in who they are and to build respect amongst their coworkers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fold a regular sheet of paper in half from top to bottom. 2. On the left half, have participants write the words, "I Am..." 3. In the middle of the sheet (on top of the fold), have them write the word,

	<p>“But.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. On the right half, have participants write the words, “I Am Not…” 5. Then, in the left column, ask participants to write something they are (e.g., man, woman, Korean, Asian, Catholic, Hindu, 25, 50). 6. In the right column ask them to write something about that group that is not true about them (e.g., I am 50, but I am not afraid of technology.) 7. Instruct participants to write at least five I Am, But I Am Not statements. 8. Go around the group and share each statement. 9. Discuss stereotypes and how your team can overcome them.
Reference/Link:	https://getsling.com/blog/diversity-activities/

Title:	Commonalities and Uniquenesses (Group Activity)
Description:	<p>This activity can be performed in ~15 minutes, and can be adapted to various group sizes. Consideration could be made to group size so everyone can contribute and have their time to share about themselves. Either component can go first.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commonalities: The group needs to work together to find out something they all have in common. Encouragement is given to go beyond basic commonalities (i.e we are all in this room, we are all wearing shirts, etc.). Participants can make suggestions and then the group needs to determine if it applies to all (i.e. I like to meditate each morning - only half of the group verbalizes or raises their hands that they also do the same). The group continues to dig in to find something they have in common. This section ends when the group confirms something they all have in common. 2. Uniquenesses: Each participant, if they are willing (participants can pass), will share something about themselves to determine something that is unique about them. Others can contribute to share if they have that in common. I.e. “I was not born in Canada”, and then two other group members also were not born in Canada, that individual needs to think of something else, i.e. “I like to ride my bike”. If others like to ride their bike, they will continue to think of unique things about themselves. Once the person finds something unique about themselves, the next person can share their unique contribution. This section also highlights what we have in common as well. <p>We are all unique, and yet we have so much in common!</p>
Reference/Link:	

