

Intersectionality Critical Reflection Resources

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Acknowledgments

Gippsland Family Violence Alliance acknowledges the Gunai/Kurnai, Bunurong, Bidewell & Ngarigo/Monero people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands now also known as Gippsland. We pay our respects to elders past, present and visiting and acknowledge they hold the stories, traditions, spiritual connection and living cultures of this Country.

We recognise the Gunai/Kurnai, Bunurong, Bidewell & Ngarigo/Monero people's long and continued connection and protection of the beautiful coastline from the oceans through inland areas and to the rugged southern slopes of the mountain ranges. We recognise their continued connection to these lands and waters and acknowledge that they have never ceded sovereignty. **Always Was Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land!**

Gippsland Family Violence Alliance acknowledges that the systemic impacts of colonisation still exist today and that we are committed to respectful truth telling and working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities to improve women's, children's and men's health, wellbeing and self-determination and to achieving reconciliation as a nation.

The Gippsland Family Violence Alliance would like to acknowledge the victims and survivors of family violence, whose tenacity, advocacy and courage have shaped the family violence service sector and provided us with the evidence base for our work. We would also like to acknowledge those who have lost their lives due to family violence and the families, friends and communities who have been impacted by these devastating crimes.

The Gippsland Family Violence Alliance would like to acknowledge our practitioners both current and those who have pioneered the sector who have worked with both victim/survivors of family violence and with people who use violence in the home. These practitioners have supported people in difficult periods of their lives and we wish to acknowledge that vicarious trauma has an impact not only on the workforce but on their family members. Without practitioners we wouldn't have a service system and we thank these workers every day.



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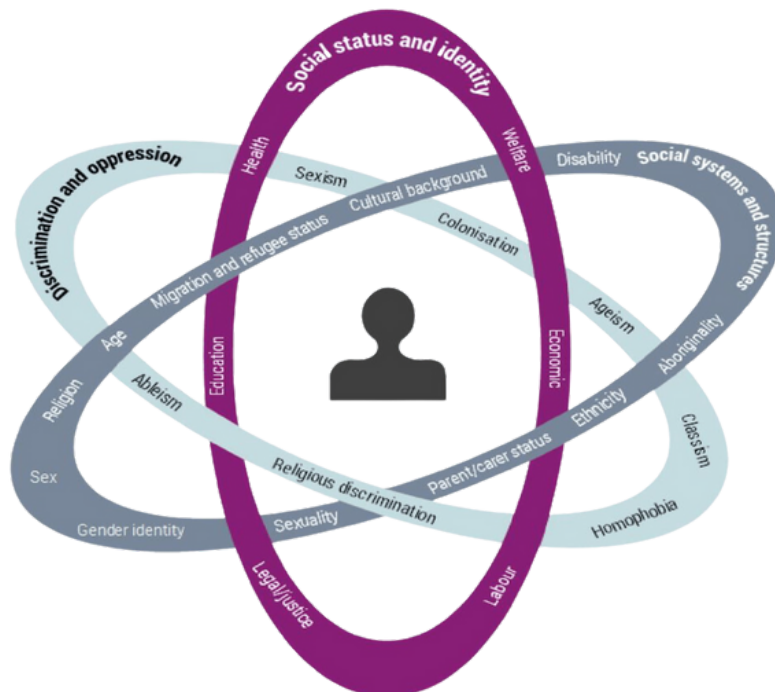
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Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a field of study, analytical strategy, and critical praxis which centralises the key ideas that:

- Race, class, gender, sexualities, and other axes are systems of power
- These systems of power are interconnected and function together to result in inequalities...that shape people's lives.
- Activism for social justice must move beyond... single identity politics to dismantle interconnected structures and systems of oppression and privilege.

Moradi et al., 2020, p. 152



Intersectionality requires us to be reflective in our practice to ensure that we are:

- Listening to others
- Examining our own privileges
- Asking who is adversely affected by our practice.

This can be done at both an organisational level and an individual practitioner level.



Intersectionality and Critical Reflection

It's well documented that Social workers develop their skills and practice within the context of critical reflection.

Mattsson, in her Journal Article: Intersectionality as a Useful Tool: Anti-Oppressive Social Work and Critical Reflection notes that:

'...the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well meaning people in ordinary interactions, media, and cultural stereotypes, and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms—in short, the normal processes of everyday life.(Young,1990,p.21) For social work practice, this implies that a social worker might uphold and reproduce social structures and oppression even though they might just be doing their job with good intentions (Mattsson, 2013)'

All practitioners are brought up in and live in, an environment they are largely unconscious of, which results in them carrying beliefs, myths and bias that they are not aware of, which continues to replicate power structures.

Dismantling power structures begins with the practitioner, by dismantling their own unconscious beliefs, ideas and bias.

Fook argues that critical social work needs to be a critical reflection which helps the social worker to develop their professional role in relation to an understanding of social structures and the globalization context. She argues that critical reflection is a way to bring practice and theory together in a way that develops awareness of the ability to contribute to social change (Social work critical theory and practice Fook, 2002)

Tools for reflective practice

The following tools can be used in group/team or one on one settings to assist practitioners to examine their own intersectional practice.

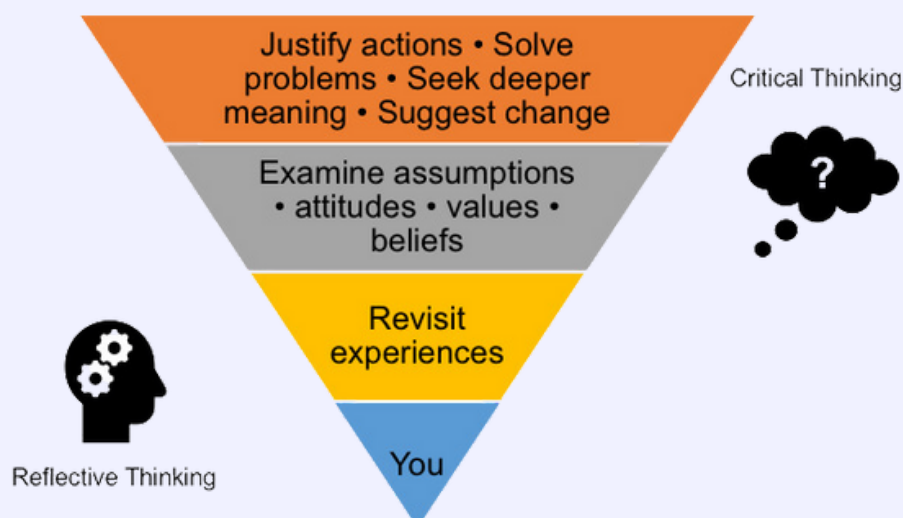
The Gippsland Family Violence Alliance did not create any of the tools, they have either been adapted from widely used reflective practice activities or are activities that have been created to generate conversation.

If these tools are to be used it is recommended that the leader/supervisor works to:

- create a safe space for the practitioners
- ensures that practitioners have access to debriefing and other supportive mechanisms if they need them
- does not use the tools to provide practitioner feedback, they are tools to improve practice, and to generate conversations for practitioner to consider their own practice
- has considered and researched the material enough to ensure that they can have complex discussions

The idea behind most of the tools is to examine privilege, systems of power, or how they challenge systemic systems.

Reflective Practice places the practitioner at the center by allowing them to revisit and understand their prior experience and knowledge of identities, power and privilege. It also involves considering how and why they think the way they do. The examination of their beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions forms the foundation of their understanding.



The Riddle Scale

The Riddle Homophobia Scale was developed in 1973–1974 by Dorothy Riddle, who oversaw research for the American Psychological Association's Task Force on Gays and Lesbians. She devised a scale to assess the current and desired organisational cultures of organizations and workplaces.

Aim: The aim of the activity is to show participants that attitudes of exclusion/inclusion sit on a continuum and that there is a need to challenge attitudes and behaviours, even their own.

Step one:

Ask the group to order the following words in order of least accepting to most accepting. Four are considered exclusionary and four are considered inclusionary.

- Appreciation
- Repulsion
- Nurturance
- Admiration
- Tolerance
- Support
- Acceptance
- Pity

Answer:

Repulsion, pity, tolerance, acceptance, support, admiration, appreciation, nurturance

Step two:

Discuss any surprises, the group had to the order.

Please note: there is another step to this activity, not included in this workbook. There is a test Dorothy Riddle invented called the Attitudes Towards Difference Survey. It's not recommended for the safety of LGBTIQ+ practitioners to use this survey in the workplace anymore.

Johari Window

The Johari Window, isn't exclusively used in intersectionality but created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955, and is used primarily in self-help groups and corporate settings as a self-discovery exercise.

Aim: to identify where people have blind spots as a practitioner.

Step One:

Identify where you have known:

- Strengths with the people we work with (for example you may have an excellent grasp on the complexities experienced by people with a cognitive disability)
- Inherent or unknown bias (for example, you may not realise that you tense up or speak differently to people with a lot of tattoos or hold the belief that sex workers are inherently)

You do this through your own self identification, but also by working with a manager/trusted team member to identify what is known.

Step two:

You can begin to look at what is unknown. For example:

- Can you identify that you don't know much about dismantling capitalistic structures by looking at what is already known about you?
- Can you identify that you don't know how you would react to working with a sex worker because it's an unknown blind spot to you?

Please note: its not an easy exercise to identify blind spots. It's better to identify known bia's and work to improve those before trying to tackle what is completely unknown to everyone, including yourself

Johari Window

Known to self, known to others - these are obvious traits which both you and those around you know about you.

Known to self, not known to others - these are traits known to you, but you may keep hidden from those around you

Known to others, not known to self - These are things other people may recognise in you that you do not recognise in yourself

Known to no one - these are your biggest blindspots.

Known to self Known to others	Known by others Not known to self
Known to self Not known to others	Known to no one



Social Identity Wheel

The Social Identity Wheel is commonly used as an educational tool when teaching about Social Identity Theory.

It can be applied to intersectionality as a way for practitioners to explore their own identities and to begin to understand how their own identities impact on their interactions with clients.

Aim: To have practitioners identify their own identities and meanings to them, and to begin to understand that how they conceptualise their own identity isn't a monolith.

Step One:

Give the worksheet to practitioners to complete individually for 5-10 minutes. Practitioners should number the boxes 1-5:

1. Identities you think about most often
2. Identities you think about least often
3. Your own identities you would like to learn more about
4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
5. Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you

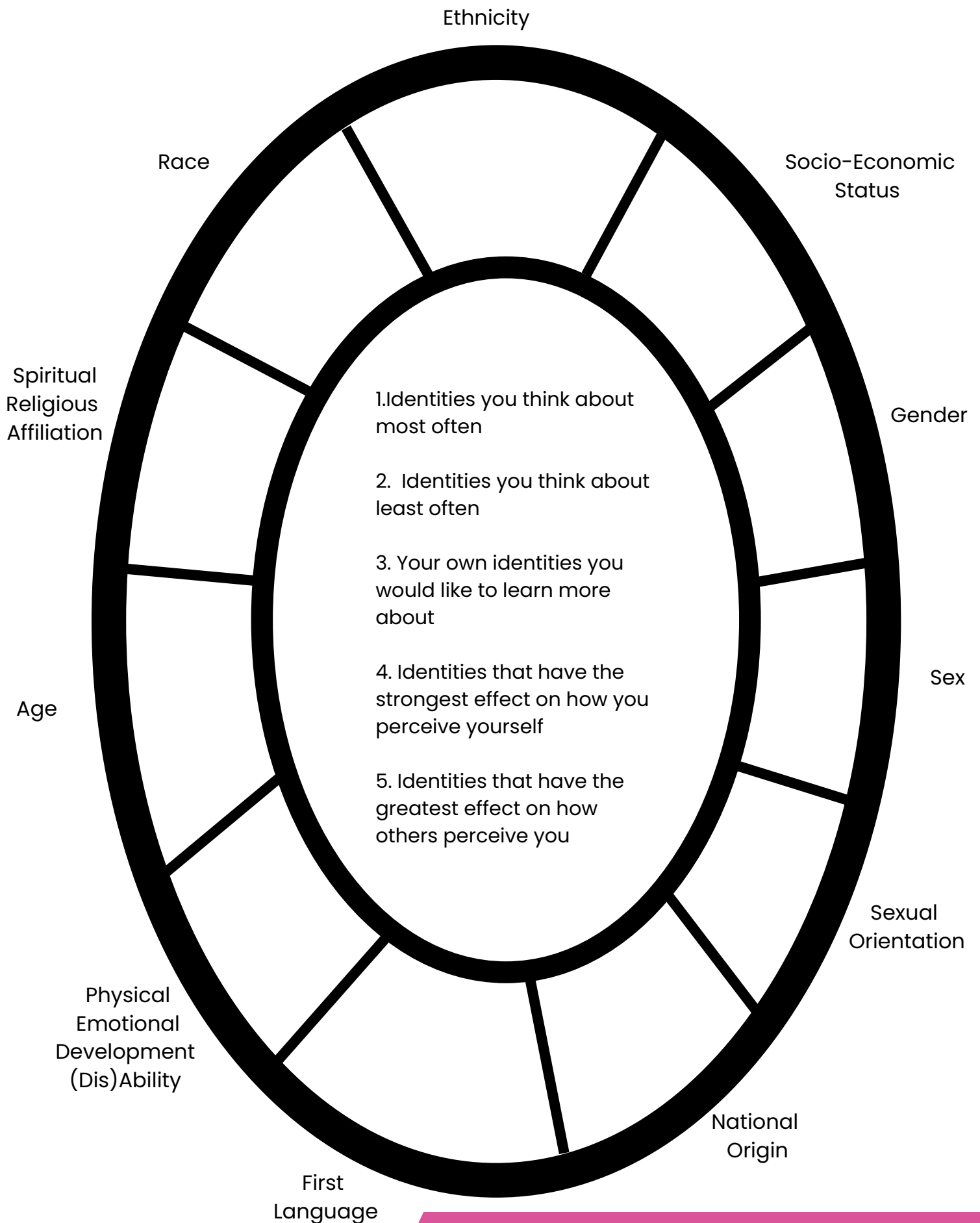
Numbers may appear multiple times on the sheet.

Step Two:

Have an open discussion. You can pick all or some of the below talking points:

- Why is it important to critically reflect on our own identities?
- What did you learn about yourself or what did you think about that you've never thought about before?
- Thinking about how others have perceived their identities in comparison to you, were you surprised by the variation/similarities between how people perceive themselves?
- Discuss how your identities may impact on how your clients interact with you.
- What role does privilege play in this? What role do pride and shame play?

Social Identity Wheel



Privilege, Resistance and Proximity to Power Wheel

The Privilege, Resistance and Proximity to Power Wheel has been developed by Interwine. It's recommended if you're using this that you make a donation or purchase some of their resources www.interwine.net.au.

Aim: The aim is for practitioners to gain a greater understanding of who holds power in society and where they sit on the wheel as individuals.

Step One:

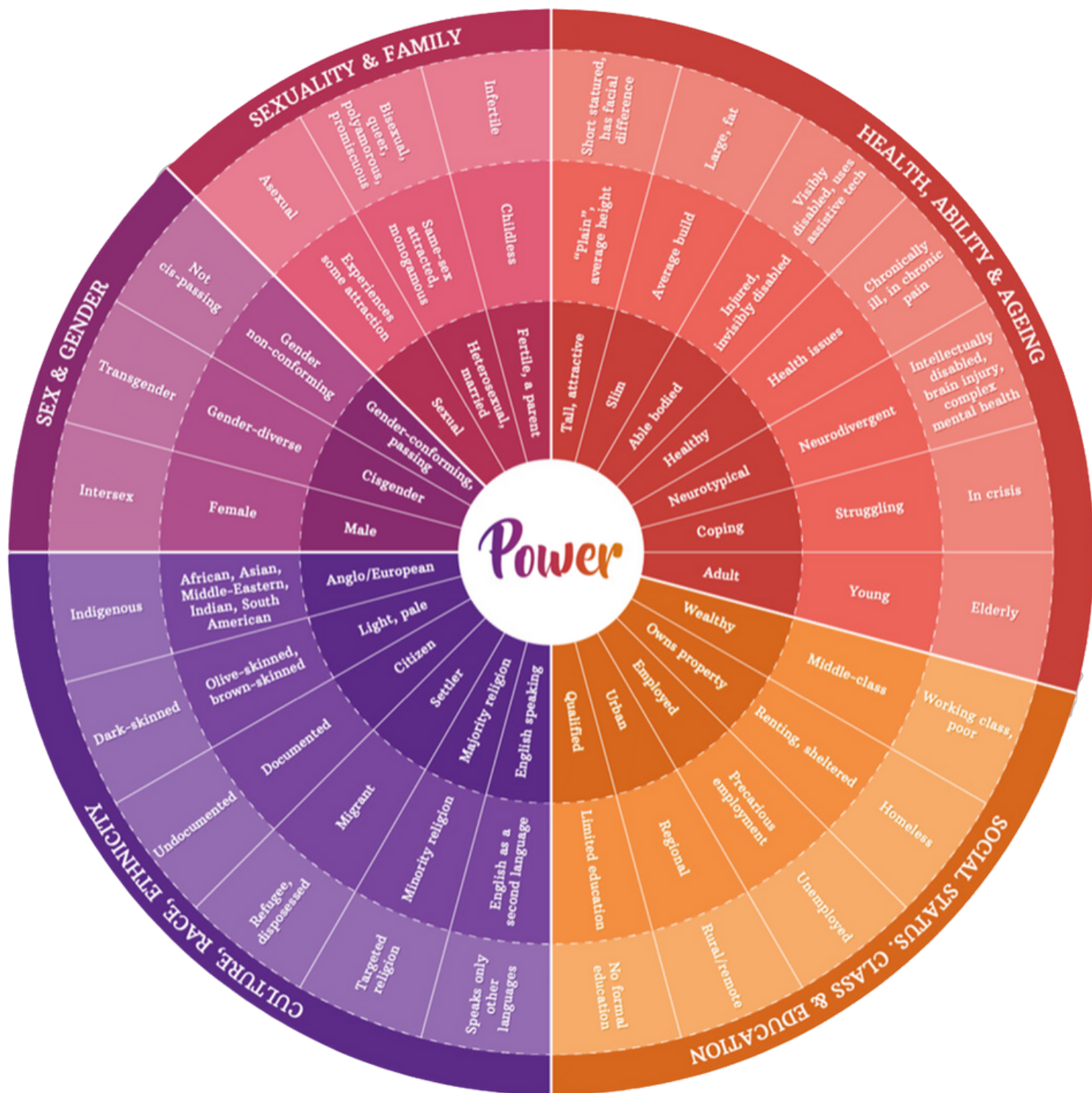
Have the practitioners spend 5-10 minutes examining the wheel.

Step Two:

Have an open discussion. You can pick all or some of the below talking points:

- Was there anything on the wheel that surprised you?
- We may not always feel close or further away from power on a personal level. Why might that be?
- What systems reenforce privilege and keep some people closer to power and some further away?
- Is privilege chosen or placed on people by society? Whose responsibility is it to dismantle systems of privilege?

Privilege, Resistance and Proximity to Power Wheel



www.interwine.net.au

Social Change Maker

The origin of the Social Change Maker activity is unclear. However, it's a common activity undertaken in Development and Advocacy courses.

Aim: The aim is for practitioners to identify their values around how they want to make change. For the purposes of this activity, the discussion should be about dismantling systems of power related to the patriarchy, capitalism and racism.

Step One:

Using tape, mark the room into four equal parts.

Step Two:

Discuss with your group about what resonates with them as a person. The four options are:

- **Researcher**, data collector (someone who seeks to understand the problem)
- **Quiet collaborator** (someone who works behind the scenes to convene meetings, may provide direct client support, etc)
- **Frontline activist** (the people with the placards, marching at events)
- **Lobbyist** (meeting with politicians, making deals)

They may identify with several of the identities.

Step three:

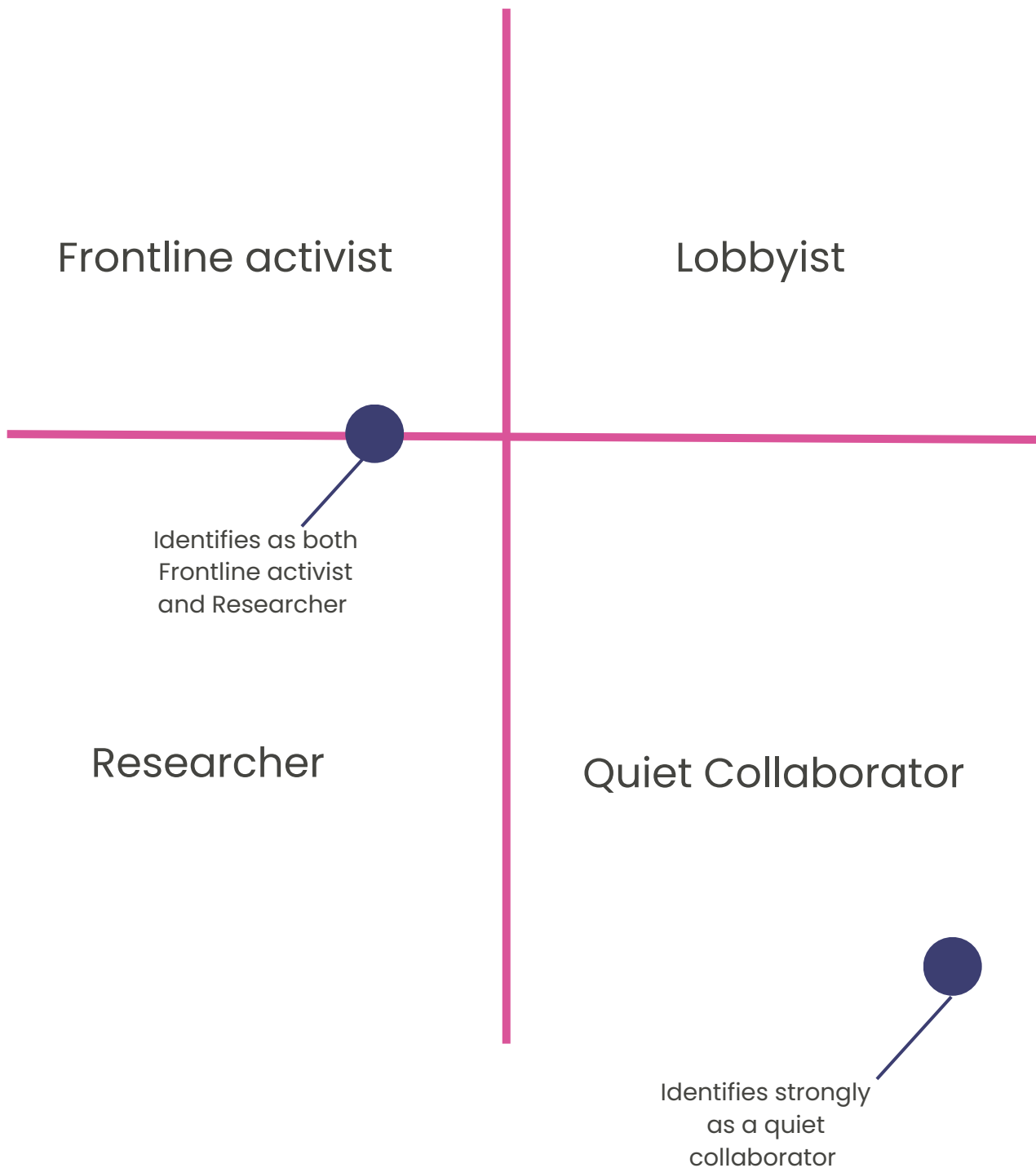
Using the divided room, get people to stand in the position they most resonate with. The closer to the line they are, the more they identify with multiple identities, the further away they are, the more they strongly identify with one identity.

Step Four:

Keeping them standing in place have the practitioners explain:

- Why they choose their position
- How they could use people in the room with different identities to effect change

Social Change Maker



Intersectionality Reflection

The Intersectionality Critical Reflection, is tool that can be used alone or in supervision to reflect on practice with clients. It's been adapted from a Journal Article: Intersectionality as a Useful Tool: Anti-Oppressive Social Work and Critical Reflection, Tina Mattsson, 2013.

Aim: The aim is for practitioners to critically reflect on their practice with clients, particularly those who have challenged them.

Step 1: Start with identifying a critical incident and describe it with as much specific details as possible. It could be any practice experience that made you stop and think, and react on what have happened. Write down your description, as writing is a good way to think the incident through, and to actually remember it and its different parts. It is natural that your description develops as you are writing it.

Step 2: Make a critical reflection on your description. Start with identifying power relations operating in the incident. By using intersectionality as a base for the reflection, it is possible to stay focused on gender, sexuality, class, and race as central categories of oppression and how they actually work in and affect social work practice. When understanding how power relations might affect the social worker, the client, and the social work organisation, it is possible to investigate alternative understandings and actions.

Step 3: Reconstruct and redevelop new and emancipating strategies for theory and practice which are possible, as the social worker identifies and understands the means of social change and recognises their agency and their own construction of power.

Please note: that this activity has been taken from a Journal Article. You do not need a critical incident, in order to reflect, you may wish to reflect on any client interaction or any any service provision.

Additional Resources

Journal Articles:

Tina Mattsson: Intersectionality as a Useful Tool: Anti-Oppressive Social Work and Critical Reflection, 2013

Books:

Claudia Bernard, Intersectionality for Social Workers : A Practical Introduction to Theory and Practice, 2021
(Can be accessed via Google Scholar)

Youtube:

[Intersectional feminism and a gender just political and economic transformation](#)

[The urgency of intersectionality | Kimberlé Crenshaw](#)

[What Intersectionality Really Means for Movements: Prof Kimberlé W. Crenshaw](#)

Government Document:

[Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement](#)



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