

Self-Reflexivity

Examining our Positions of Power and Privilege

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Acknowledgement

This presentation takes place on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, and more specifically of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and selíwítlh (Tseil-waututh) Nations.

Our Approach & Assumptions

- We believe people want to decolonize their work
- We believe western medicine uses generalizations and assumptions are indoctrinated into knowledge regimes. We believe this reinforces harm
- We believe we can deconstruct & decolonize generalizations and assumptions through self-reflexivity
- We believe self-reflexivity is rooted in human rights and social justice
- We believe terms and concepts used in this presentation take on different definitions based on context and should be regarded as such
- We believe impact is more important than intent

Intentions

- Acceptance that this work is lifelong
- Acknowledge that we have a responsibility to the people we are in relationship with to align our actions with our values and beliefs
- Increased understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of our personal values and assumptions and how they affect the people we work for
- An understanding that stepping back is an action, and that the first step is being okay with sitting in a place of discomfort.
- **GOAL:** By the end of this session, people will give themselves with permission to feel and sit in their discomfort.

If you have come
to help me you are
wasting your time.
But if you have
come because your
liberation is bound
up with mine, then
let us work together.

ABORIGINAL
ACTIVIST'S
GROUP
QUEENSLAND, 1970s

- Aboriginal Activists Group

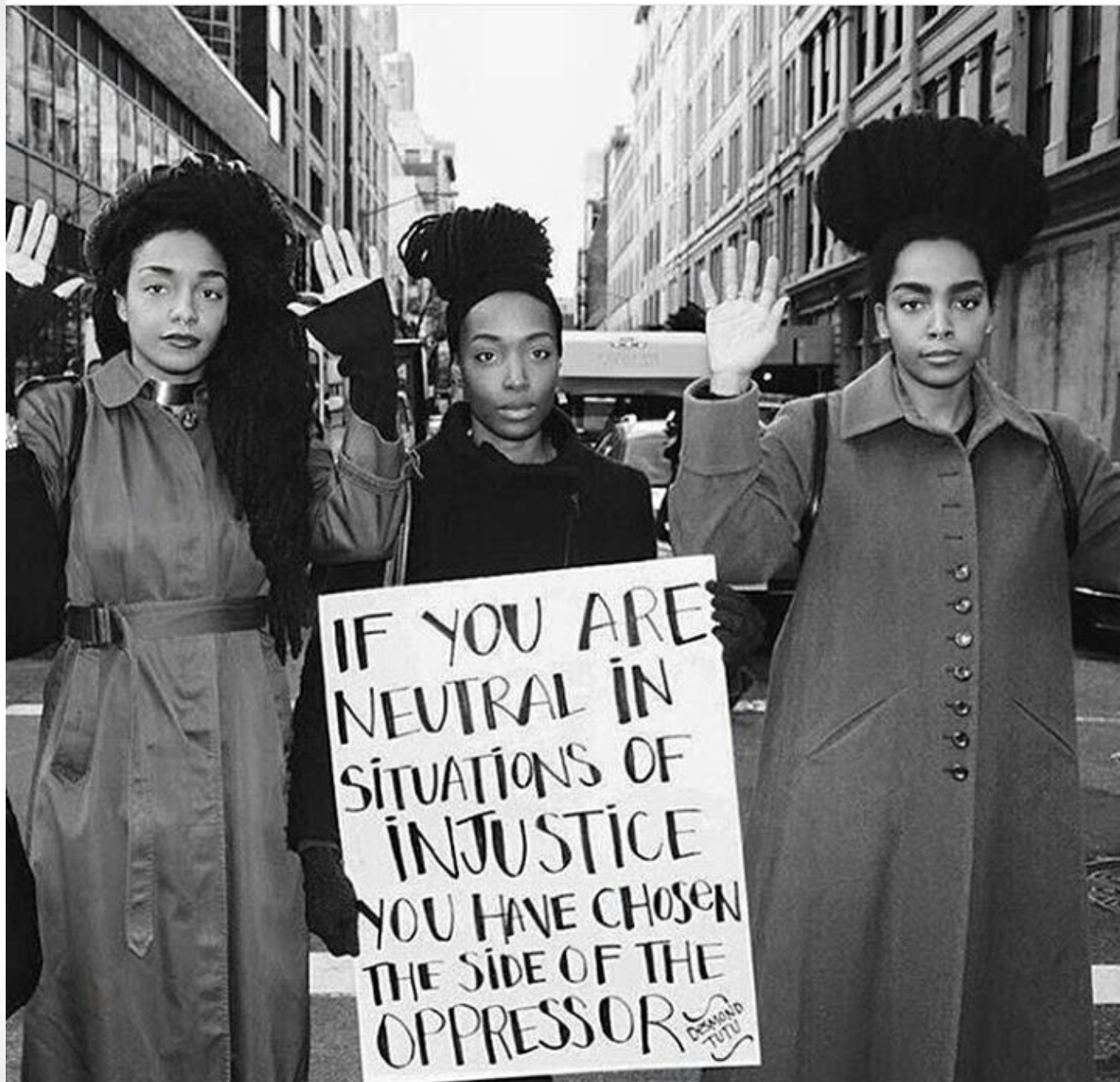
Concepts & Terms

- **Generalization:** Taking something specific and applying it more broadly
- **Assumption:** Accepting something as true without proof
- **Decolonization:** Recognizing colonial systems and actions, actively unlearning how we are taught to conform with those systems/actions, and intentionally acting in ways that disrupt those systems/actions.
- **Cognitive Dissonance:** Feeling of discomfort (psychological or mental stress) experienced when we hold two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values.
- **Schema:** patterning of thought or behaviour that develops over time based on external influences

Concepts & Terms

Assumptions:

- We often are not aware that we automatically make assumptions.
- Assumptions occur, and how they arise from the environment based on fear, lack of information, differences.
- We are usually more comfortable recalling times when we were on the receiving end of someone else's harmful assumptions than when we make and act upon assumptions about others.



- Desmond Tutu

Reflection vs. Reflexivity

Reflection

- Witnessing one's own experience in order to examine it more closely, give meaning to it, and learn from it.
- Paying attention to experience, thoughts, feeling, and emotions
- Thinking back on an event or situation

Reflexivity

- Conscious participation and knowing the self
- Understanding of larger patterns, dynamics, and systems at play
- Examining issues from different perspectives and see beyond established ways of thinking
- Challenging assumptions of the self and others
- Identify root causes of issues
- In real time

Intersectional feminism.

Feminism is feminism.
Matters.
EVERYTHING
matters.



- Alana Dickens

Activity One

- What are some generalizations or assumptions people make about education, learning, and/or knowledge?

Some examples:

- Education will lead to increased knowledge or changed behaviour
- Educator is the expert and people have something to learn from them
- Participants in education session have something to learn
- The solution is more important than the process
- Best way to set out learning about something is better done in an unassociated and fragmented way (e.g. learning about medicines in a classroom rather than out on the land)
- Education is supplementary to and preparatory to life, not life itself
- It is more important to measure what has been learned rather than it is to learn

Activity Two - Purpose

Activity Two: Spectrum Identities 20 mins

- Having an understanding of our **identities**, how we relate to them and how they influence the way we work with people around us, is integral to the way we engage with people working in an OPS. It's important to engage on a level that acknowledges our **positions of power and privilege** in order to truly meet people where they are.
- **Personal Identity Wheel:** This is a lower stakes, let's get comfortable/to know one another in a lighter kind of way. This activity creates a bit of safety as we move along this exercise. Fill in the personal identities as well as the middle. Have each table discuss what people wrote down amongst themselves, including their thoughts, comments, concerns, etc. (5mins)
- **Social Identity Wheel:** have the group complete the wheel but reinforce they do not need to share what they filled into the boxes or out themselves in any way. Fill in the boxes as we did on the personal identity wheel, then ask yourselves each of the questions in the middle. Place the numbers next to each of the identity categories it applies to (you can choose more than one, identities are fluid, complex, and non-linear). Discuss as a larger group what came up for you in doing this (5 mins)
- **Spectrum Identity:** ask a few questions from the list below to the group. Have them discuss the question at their table. Debrief how the exercise went afterwards as a larger group (14 mins):

Activity Two – How To

PART ONE: PERSONAL IDENTITY

- Fill in the personal identities around the outside as well as in the middle

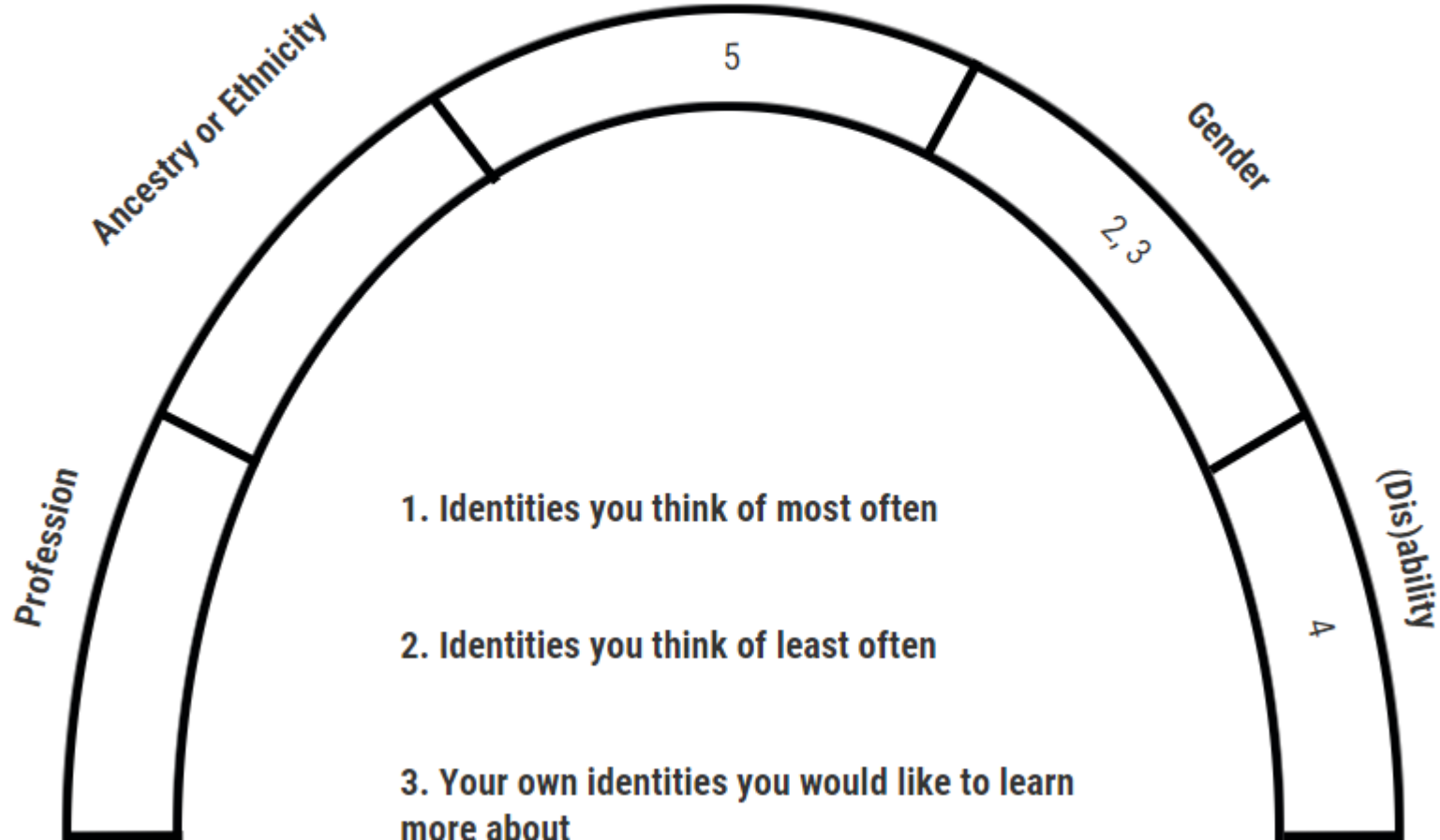
NOTE: We are not going to ask you to share anything about yourself you do not want to

PART TWO: SOCIAL IDENTITY

- Reflecting on the statements in the centre and how they relate to aspects of your social identity, fill in the boxes with the numbers as they pertain to each identity category (you can choose more than one, identities are fluid, complex, and non-linear)

Activity: Social Identity

Socio-Economic Status



Activity Two, Part Three: Spectrum Identity

- At your table, choose 2 of the following questions to discuss
 1. What part of your identity do you see having the most effect on your interactions with the people you work with?
 2. What part of peoples' identities do you most often see affecting their interactions with you?
 3. What part of your identity do you see having the most effect on your interactions with co-workers/peers?
 4. For what part of your identity do you feel you receive privilege for most often?

Slavery was legal.
Apartheid was legal.
Colonialism was legal.
The holocaust was legal.

**Legality is a matter of
power not justice.**



wake up world
IT'S TIME TO RISE AND SHINE

What does it all mean

- Everything is connected and our identities play a role in the ways in which we interact with one another.
- Aspects of what formed our social identities has also formed the assumptions we hold (e.g. lived experiences, culture, religion, family, community)
- Self-reflexivity improves awareness of:
 - Our generalizations and assumptions,
 - Our identities, and
 - Our positions of power and privilege
 - And provides us with clarity in how to align our actions to our values and beliefs

PRIVILEGE is when

YOU think something is not a

PROBLEM because it's not a

PROBLEM to you PERSONALLY

Building Self-Reflexivity

- Be curious
- Approach feedback and criticism as a gift and be okay with the discomfort without needing to explain
- Impact is more important than intent
- Challenge current knowledge, understandings, and what we might feel as right, wrong, true, or false
- Read or watch things curated by people from marginalized communities
- Identify challenges to self-reflexivity
- Identify facilitators/catalyzers to self-reflexivity

Conclusion: Questions to ponder

- What are my priorities and what are the priorities of the people I work with? Do they align?
- What is meaningful to the people I work with and for?
- How are my assumptions & generalizations connected to my identities, power, and privileges?

- What are my assumptions? Beliefs? Attitudes in this situation?
- How did my actions match my beliefs? Why did I act the way I did?
- What knowledge influenced me? What knowledge should have influenced me?
- What did I learn from this situation?
- What will I do in this situation now that I have reflected upon it? (rather than responding habitually or unconsciously)