

# INTERSECTIONALITY REFLECTION: INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

## REFLECTION EXERCISE #1:

Bring to mind an image of a Muslim, a person with disabilities, and a woman, and answer the following questions:  
What do they look like?

- What are the genders of the Muslim and the person with disabilities?
- What are the races of each of the individuals?
- Do the Muslim or the woman have disabilities?

When asked to bring to mind an image of a Muslim person, you may have pictured a nondisabled, darker-complexioned man, even though 1 in 5 U.S. Muslims are Black, around half are women, and Muslim people have disabilities just like any other group.

When we consider diversity, there's a tendency to picture people that belong to only one marginalized group, which can make many people effectively invisible. To avoid erasing the wide variety of human experience, it's important to consider the experiences of people of intersecting identities and backgrounds. Intersectionality, a concept developed by Black women scholars and activists, describes the overlapping experiences of belonging to more than one marginalized group. One way to understand intersectionality is to look at the wage gap in the United States.

It's widely known that women, on average, earn less than men, but that isn't the full picture. For most women of color, the wage gap is even greater. In 2018, for every dollar that White men earned:

- Asian women earned \$0.90
- White women earned \$0.79
- Black women earned \$0.62
- American Indian and Alaska Native women earned \$0.57
- Hispanic or Latinx women earned \$0.54

Another strong example of intersectionality is socioeconomic status: membership to basically every other marginalized group is associated with a greater likelihood of economic disenfranchisement. Groups that are more likely to experience poverty, earn less, and have fewer employment opportunities include children, older adults, girls and women, people of color (particularly those with darker skin), individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community, migrants, and people with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup>Mohamed, B., & Diamant, J. (2019, January 17). *Black Muslims account for a fifth of all U.S. Muslims, and about half are converts to Islam*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/black-muslims-account-for-a-fifth-of-all-u-s-muslims-and-about-half-are-converts-to-islam/>

<sup>2</sup>Ibrahim, I., & Ismail, M. F. (2018). Muslims with disabilities: Psychosocial reforms from an Islamic perspective. *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 22(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2017.1351327>

<sup>3</sup>Moradi, B. (2017). (Re)focusing intersectionality: From social identities back to systems of oppression and privilege. In K. A. DeBord, A. R. Fischer, K. J. Bieschke, & R. M. Perez (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual orientation and gender diversity in counseling and psychotherapy* (p. 105-127). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/15959-005>

<sup>4</sup>Moradi, B. (2017). (Re)focusing intersectionality: From social identities back to systems of oppression and privilege. In K. A. DeBord, A. R. Fischer, K. J. Bieschke, & R. M. Perez (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual orientation and gender diversity in counseling and psychotherapy* (p. 105-127). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/15959-005>

<sup>5</sup>Bleiweis, R. (2020, March 24). *Quick facts about the gender wage gap*. Center for American Progress. <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2020/03/23133916/Gender-Wage-Gap-.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>American Psychological Association. (2019). *Guidelines for psychological practice for people with low-income and economic marginalization*. [www.apa.org/about/policy/guide-lines-lowincome.pdf](http://www.apa.org/about/policy/guide-lines-lowincome.pdf)



# INTERSECTIONALITY REFLECTION: INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

## REFLECTION EXERCISE #2

Write down each aspect of your own personal identity:

Race _____	Disability and neurodiversity _____
Ethnicity _____	Age _____
National origin _____	Socioeconomic status _____
First language _____	Spirituality and religion _____
Migrant status _____	Indigenous heritage _____
Gender _____	Body size _____
Sex _____	Geographical location _____
Sexual/affectional orientation _____	

Look at what you have written. How does it feel to see these aspects of your identity as labels in writing?

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How do these aspects of your identity interact and intersect?

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How do you think your identity has made your life easier or harder? Perhaps both?

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Do you think these aspects affect how other people see you? What about how you see yourself?

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How might changing one aspect of your identity impact your life? (e.g., how others see you, the career opportunities you've had, the neighborhood you live in)

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What are some ways you can foster the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds in your area of influence at work, home, or in your community?

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What larger-scale solutions to inequity and marginalization do you think are required? How can you personally advocate for those?

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