

Social Contact Survey

Many people in the US circulate in narrow social circles. This exercise takes a snapshot of your own social contacts. Your reflections on this survey and its results will be used in an upcoming intergroup dialogue experience. Questions for reflection are listed at the end. Write notes on your answers before attending the dialogue so you are prepared. You will *not* be asked to share your notes.

Directions: Keep track of your social contacts over 3 to 5 days and list them here and on additional note paper as needed. You will *not* share this list, so you may identify contacts by name, initial, or descriptor (e.g., sister, passenger on bus, etc.). If you can't recall everyone, don't worry; this is just a snapshot.

List each contact on the lines below. After each name indicate the person's apparent race/ethnic group (R/E), social economic class (SES), gender (GEN), sexual orientation (SO), religion (R), disability (D), age (AGE) and intimacy level (I). *Note:* The survey collects only *apparent* identity, not actual identity since you will not know all identities. Do not ask people their identities! Also, keep in mind that we do not assume social identity for the people we meet; rather we respect everyone's own identity as it is shared in any interactive context. However, for the purpose of this learning exercise only, you may observe apparent skin color and label a person as "white", "person of color", or another ethnic identity. You may presume certain religious identities according to clothing or other overt indicator (religious jewelry, clothing, etc.). Among your friends, family, and acquaintances, social identity descriptors will likely be more accurate.

Try to identify groups of people in your routine public contexts. For example, if you use public transport daily you might label fellow bus or metro riders as "about half people of color and half white", "mostly African American", "mostly White", etc. Identify your religious settings (i.e., mostly older; about half people of color & half white; completely Christian, etc.). Try to capture the general diversity of your own neighborhood; attend to apparent skin color, age, social class, etc. The goal is to *take a snapshot* of the overall diversity of your routine social life.

For intimacy level categorize contacts with suggested abbreviations: immediate family (f), extended family/kin (f+), close friend (cf), acquaintance (a), peer/colleague (c), or utilitarian contact (u). Utilitarian contacts include gas station attendant, grocery store attendant, shop keeper, people on the subway, etc. For religion, categorize your contacts by affiliation if known (*P* – Protestant, *C* – Catholic, *M* – Muslim, *J* – Jewish, etc.) or secular (*S*). Indicate age as desired, e.g., "old", "child", "middle age", "college age", etc. Add other diversity categories if you feel they are important (body size, language use, etc.).

Social media: Social media plays an increasing role in our lives. Indicate and reflect on your social media contact diversity. Are contacts mostly of a certain age and share your political orientation? Add a category indicating social media diversity.

Political contacts: Politics in the USA increasingly divides people. Add the political affiliation of your contacts if known (e.g., Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative, etc.).

Reflection on the diversity in your life ~

- Overall, how much diversity do you routinely encounter in your daily life?
- With which groups do you tend to have the most contact and the least contact? Why do you think this is so?
- With which groups do you have the most intimate contact?
- Is the diversity you encounter in your life limited to people with lower status or power than yourself? What implications might this have for you?
- For those of you in field internships, do you mostly encounter diversity through interactions with clients? What implications does this have for you?
- Are fellow students the main source of diversity in your life? What meaning might this have for you currently and over time?
- How do you feel after completing this survey?

About barriers to diversity in your life ~

- What are the barriers toward achieving greater diversity in your life?
- To what extent is the diversity in your daily life constrained by the larger society?
- To what extent is the diversity in your daily life self-imposed or the result of personal choices you are making?
- To what extent is the diversity in your life a result of your own comfort level interacting with people seen as different from yourself? Which social differences make you most uncomfortable and why?
- How can you increase the diversity in your life?
- Do you *want* to increase the diversity in your life? Why or why not?
- How do you *feel* when considering attempts to increase the diversity in your daily life (e.g., nervous, excited, irritated, discouraged, overwhelmed, etc.)?
- What meaning does this survey have for you with regard to your development as a culturally competent social worker?
- What questions do you have about the implications of diversity in your personal and professional life?