



# SIT CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

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# Fall 2021 – Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Homi K. Bhabha

*Representations and Epistemologies of DEI: A Conversation with  
Leading Postcolonial Theorist Homi K. Bhabha*

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 12:00 – 2:00 pm ET



\*Webinar Series Agenda & Registration at [sit.edu/criticalconversations](https://sit.edu/criticalconversations)



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# “Intangible Baggage”

Gen Z and DEI in Education Abroad

*Tim Rivera, Interim DEI Program Manager & Advisor to the CEO, World Learning*



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## Introduction & Outline

- Setting intentions when discussing Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- North Star → Transparency, Accountability, & Authenticity
- What is “intangible baggage”?
- Who are Gen Z and what do they think about DEI issues?
- What is the context from which Gen Z is embarking on education abroad programs?
- Ideas and suggestions for advisers, educators, and students/participants



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What do I mean by “intangible baggage”  
in education abroad?



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# What does ‘Gen Z’ think about DEI?

“Gen Zers are progressive and pro-government, most see the country’s growing racial and ethnic diversity as a good thing, and they’re less likely than older generations to see the United States as superior to other nations.”

– [Pew Research Center, May 14, 2020](#)

“Diversity is the watchword for Gen Z: Diversity matters to them through many dimensions, not just isolated to race and gender, but also related to identity and orientation. Gen Z prioritizes diversity — across race, gender, and orientation.”

– [Deloitte, Welcome to Generation Z](#)

“[Gen Z] are demanding inclusivity that goes beyond representation, moving to celebration of all types of people, relationships, and lifestyles.”

– [Meredith/Harris, Exponential Z](#)



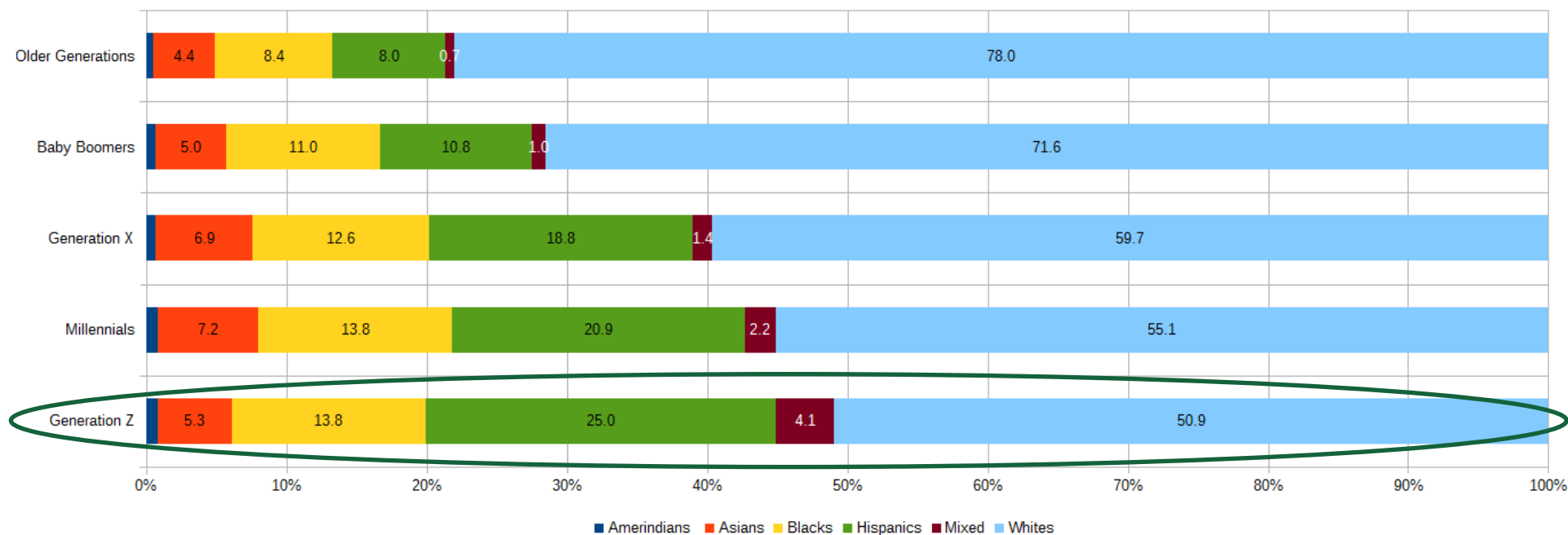
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# Gen Z is the MOST ethnically diverse yet

Ethnic Composition of Demographic Cohorts of the United States in 2018

Brookings Institution (2019)





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### Facts & Figures: Part 1

- ~16% (1/6) of Gen Z identifies as LGBTQ+ ([Gallup, 2021](#))
- Spike in anti-immigrant and xenophobic incidents and rhetoric in recent years
  - 28% of Gen Z are immigrants (6%) or children of immigrants (22%) ([Pew Research, 2020](#))
  - 2/3 believe immigrants strengthen diversity of the US (PRRI, 2020)
  - 31% of Asian American & Pacific Islanders have experienced slurs/jokes since outbreak of COVID-19 ([Pew Research, 2020](#))
  - Likely to see rise in Islamophobic incidents with Afghan refugee resettlements post-evacuation
- Gen Z's views on social issues look a lot like millennials ([Pew Research, 2019](#))
  - 62% of Gen Z agree "increasing racial/ethnic diversity is good for society" (incl. 51% of Gen Z GOP)
  - 66% of Gen Z agree "Black people treated less fairly than White people"
  - 70% of Gen Z agree "government should do more to solve problems" (incl. 52% of Gen Z GOP)
  - 35% know someone who uses gender neutral pronouns
  - 50% believe society not accepting enough of people who don't identify as a man or woman
  - 84% think same sex marriage is a good thing or don't care (same as millennials)
  - 30% believe "there are other countries better than the U.S." & only 14% believe "the U.S. is better than all other countries in the world" (vs. 30% for Boomers/45% for Silent Generation)

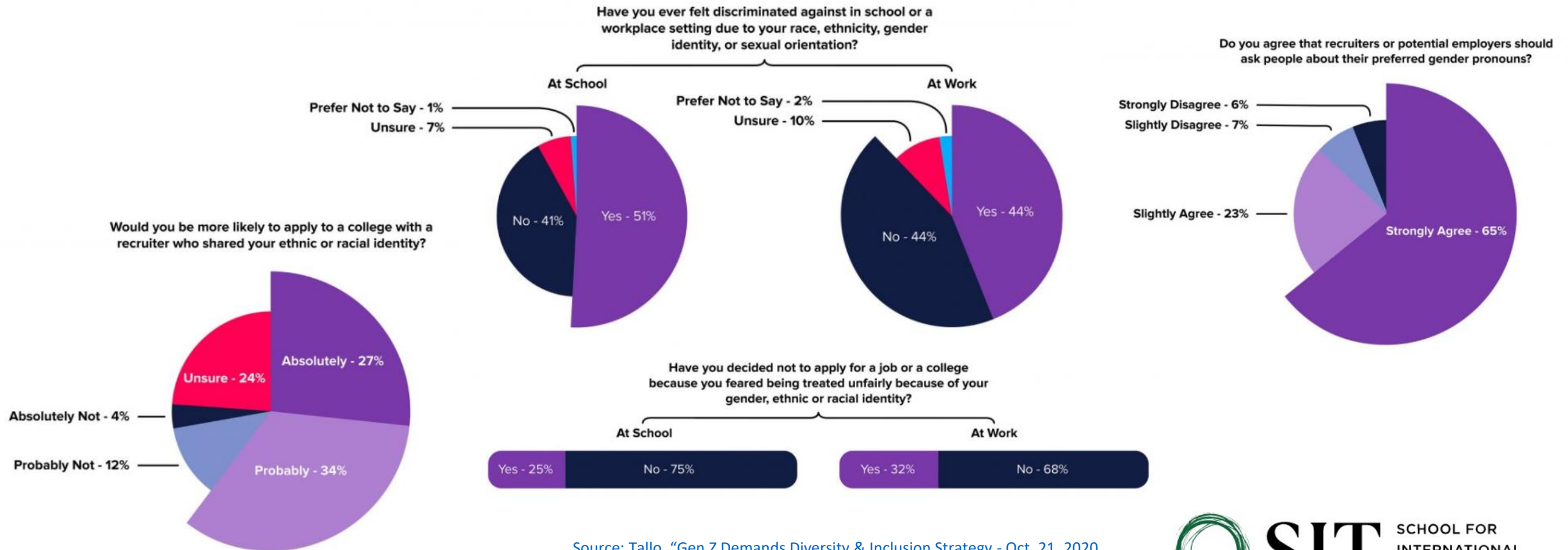




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### Polling data: Gen Z & Higher Education



[Source: Tallo, "Gen Z Demands Diversity & Inclusion Strategy - Oct. 21, 2020](#)

Survey of 5,000 US high school & college students



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## Facts & Figures: Part 2

- [Stress in America – Gen Z](#), APA, 2018
  - Percentage of Gen Z stressed about:
    - Mass shootings – 75%
    - Climate change – 58%
    - Migrant separation/deportation – 57%
    - Sexual assault/harassment – 53%
  - 37% have received mental health treatment/therapy
  - People of color more likely to report stress than White counterparts
- [Meredith/Harris Poll](#) of Gen Z women, 2020
  - Prioritization of financial security (& career, by extrapolation) and mental health
  - Far more open about mental health challenges



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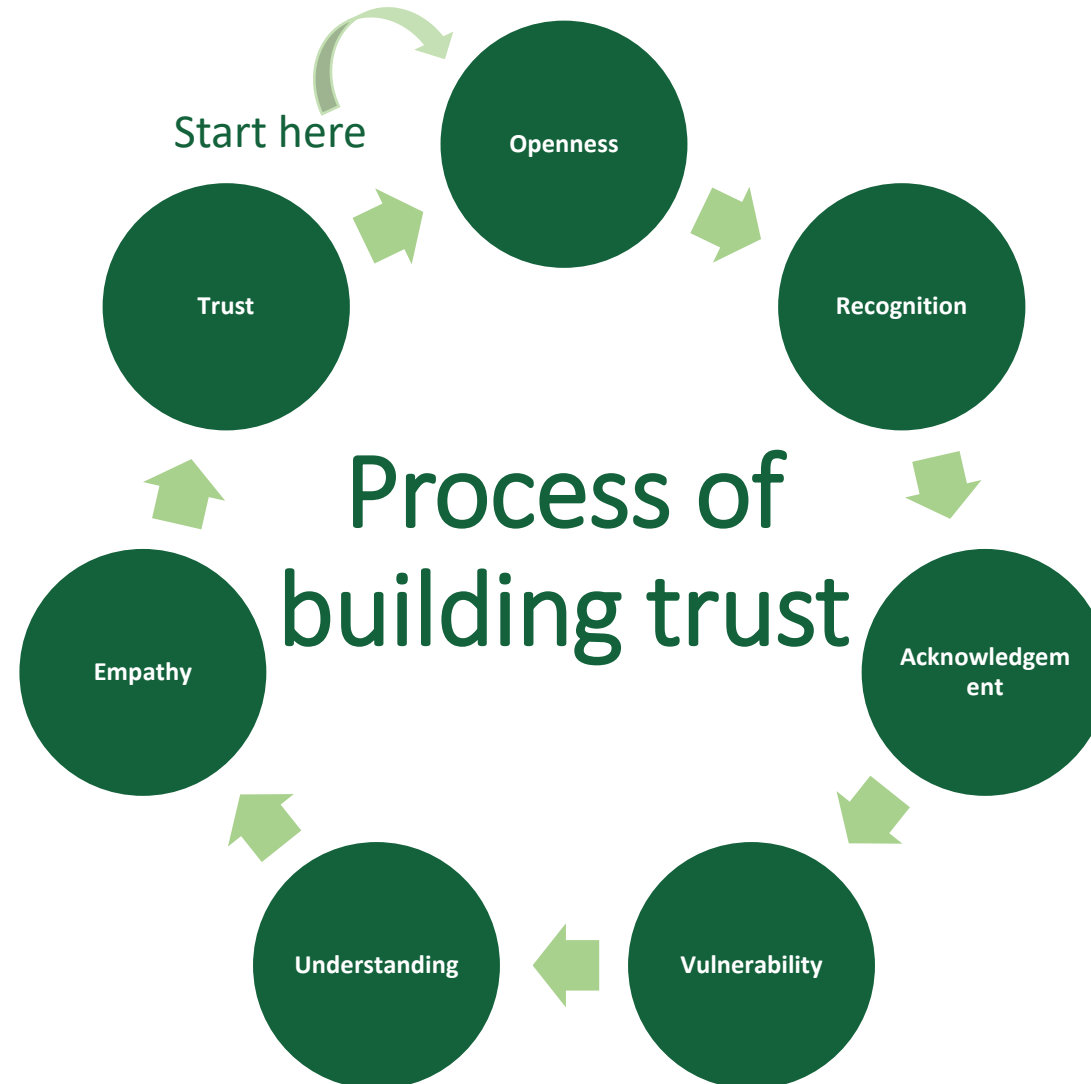
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So...now what?  
What can we do about this?



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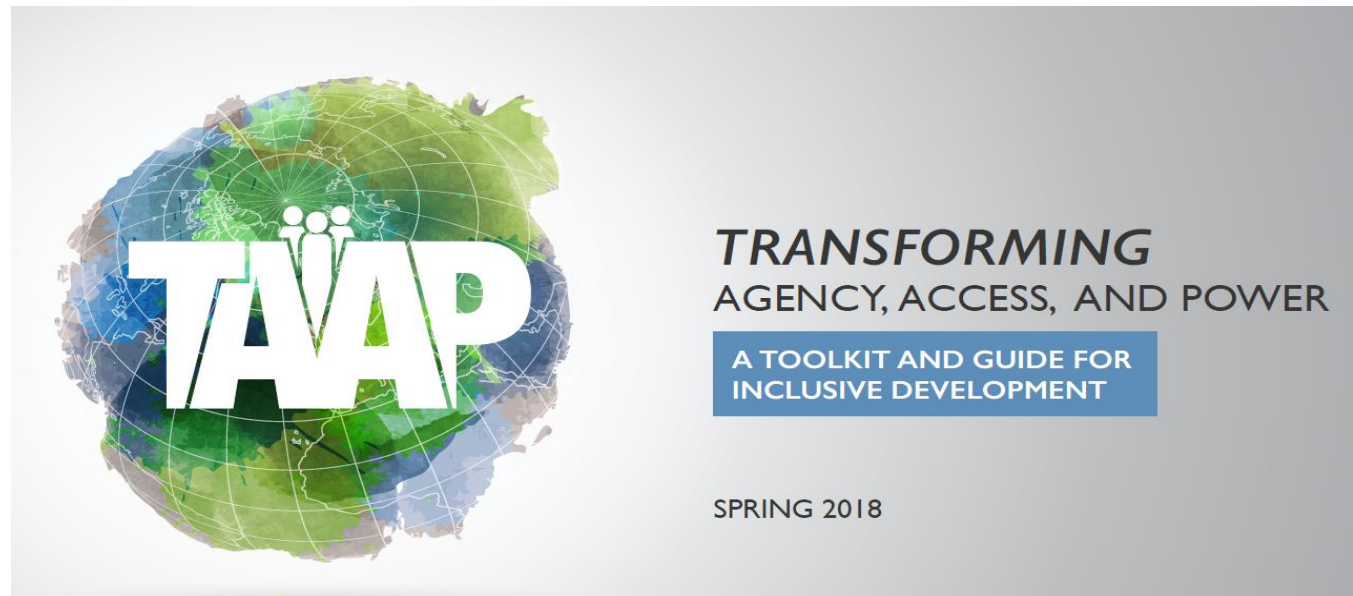




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## Potentially useful exercise



Phase 1, Step A - “Inclusive Inquiry & Reflection”

pg. 51-57, [TAAP Toolkit](#)



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### Guiding questions for reflection

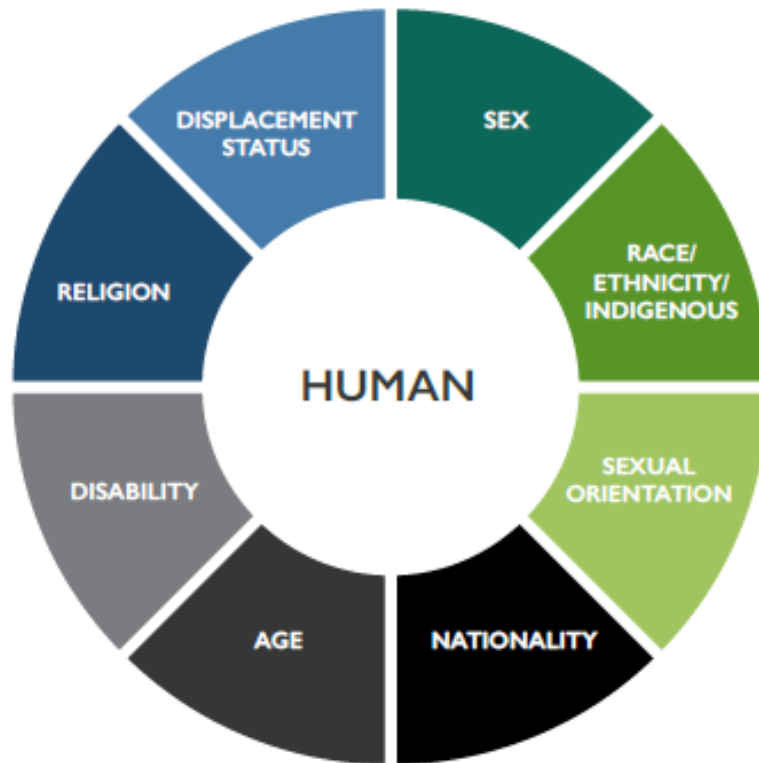
1. Where were you born, where is your family from, and how important to you is where you grew up?
2. What is your religious affiliation or spirituality? Is that a big part of who you are?
3. Consider your interests or hobbies and how that forms your identity. (E.g., an athlete, artist, cook)
4. Does your academic background have an impact on your identity?
5. How might your economic status or life experience have helped to have formed who you are?

NB: These are just a few questions from the Toolkit. The full list is available for download [here](#).

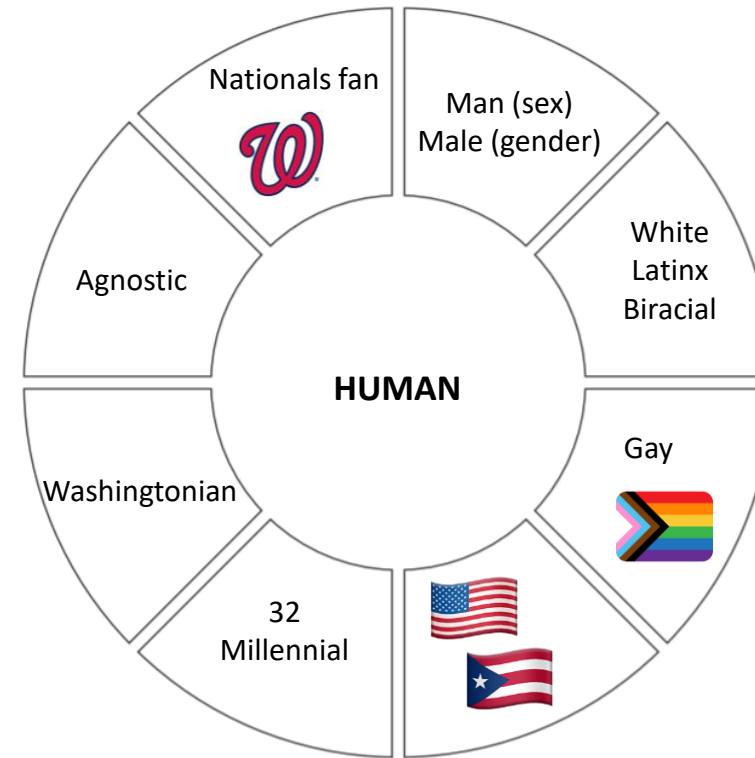


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IDENTITY WHEEL **SAMPLE**



TIM RIVERA'S IDENTITY WHEEL



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# Discussion building: social awareness

1. Which of your identities are most important to you?
2. Which of your identities is a birthright vs. which ones were 'expected of you' vs. which ones did you choose?
3. Which of your identities gives you access to a privileged group? (And which can you leverage to *pass* as a member of a privileged group?) Insert green/up and down/red arrows accordingly.
4. What are some common stereotypes/myths about your identities?
5. **Which aspects of your identity are most salient at home, and which aspects may be most salient in \_\_\_\_\_? What does difference look like in \_\_\_\_\_?**

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# Generally good practices to use: Part 1

- Get to know your students – ask about who they are beyond demographics
- Communicate what students can expect at the earliest possible opportunity
- Pre-Departure
  - Ask students about their pre-departure expectations and stereotypes of destination
  - Brief students on local stereotypes that may be applied to them
- Be sensitive to complex conversations in a group vs. individually
- Consider socio-economic equity \*while\* students are on the program
- The difference between a safe space and a safe bubble



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# Generally good practices to use: Part 2

- How inclusive is the program itself?
  - Accessible to students with disabilities?
  - Which voices are you elevating through the academic content and programming?
  - Are you using technology for inclusion and not exclusion?
- Lived experience: elevate / privilege local voices from communities abroad
  - Connect students with peers (e.g., local Instagram, TikTok, or other social media influencers)
  - Use technology to stay connected \*locally\* rather than back home
- Cultural relativism – understanding an individual's behavior, practices, and beliefs through the context of their local culture
  - Interrogate that culture – history, language, religion, art, etc.
  - Beware approaches that could be received locally as colonial...imposing American values onto local culture



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**Thank you so much!**





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