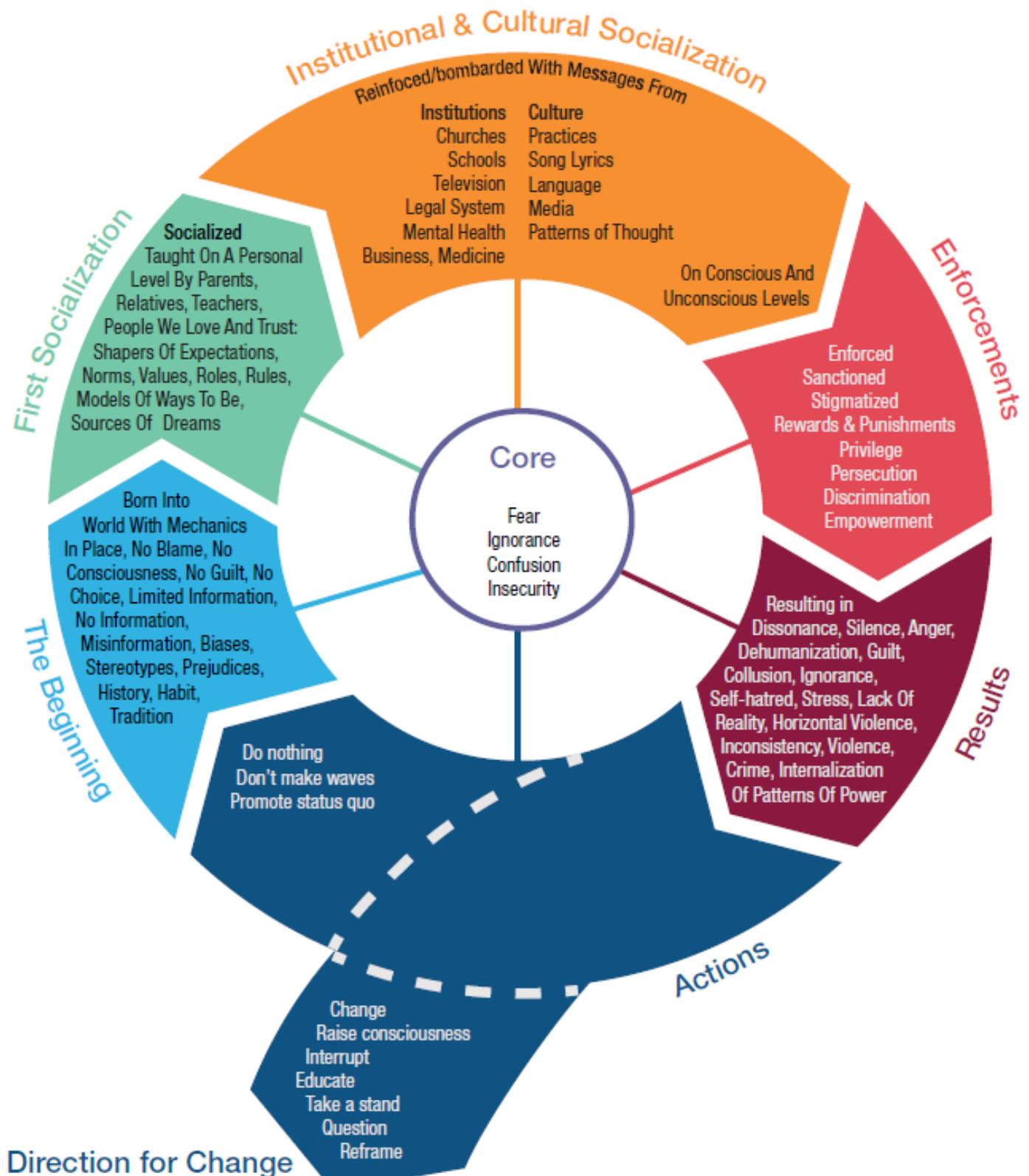


CYCLE OF SOCIALIZATION

Cycle of Socialization developed by Bobbie Harro



SOCIAL IDENTITY GROUPS

Social identity groups are based on the relationships that people who share particular social identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) have to systems of power (aka institutions and other types of systems). These relationships to systems of power either oppress members of these groups or provide them with privilege. Group identities may include group members' physical, cultural, and social characteristics. These identities are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self-claimed and frequently ascribed by others. Many social identities are personally claimed but may not be announced or easily ascribed visually. (These may include sexual orientation, religion and ability.) How identities are positioned in relation to institutions may change from country to country to reflect the socio-political climate of that country.

Social Identities are the portions of an individual's self-concept derived from the perceived membership to a social group. Social identity influences behavior by providing a framework for socializing. Many people have both agent and target group identities and positions. How these identities and positions overlap impacts our experience of the world and our life outcomes. Some social identities and positions may impact our experiences and life outcomes more than others.

Target Identity groups are those social identity groups that are positioned as targeted by oppression, to be disenfranchised, subordinated, exploited and/or otherwise harmed.

Agent Identity groups are those social identity groups that are positioned to be afforded agency, advantaged, dominant and hold unearned privilege in society.

Intersectionality is a critical framework that recognizes the ways in which institutional oppressions exist in relationship to each other. Intersectionality acknowledges all categories of social-stratification, including non-target identities that might be considered dominant when viewed independently.

Oppression is the systematic mistreatment and exploitation of target groups that creates inequity and disparity for the target groups. There are different types of oppression attached to different target/agent groups. How an individual experiences oppression reflects the overlaps between their agent/target positioning. This may change from moment to moment and over time based on our immediate institutional or cultural context. At any given moment in time, it is possible to experience multiple forms of oppression/privilege or simultaneously experience oppression and privilege.

Power There are many definitions of power. The most common definition of Power used to identify the impacts of inequity in social justice work is: The ability to define reality for others and determine access to resources.

Social Identity functions at four main levels

- **Internalized Level:** the internalization of positive or negative stereotypes, values, images and ideologies perpetuated by the dominant norms in society about both agent and target groups.
- **Interpersonal Level:** from someone in an agent group toward someone in a target group (intentional or unintentional).
- **Institutional Level:** policies, practices, procedures and culture of an institution that work better for people in an agent group and cause harm to people in a target group, often unintentionally as an ingrained pattern of the status quo.
- **Structural Level:** the history, culture and current reality of a form of oppression across institutions and/or systems; when the institutional oppression of multiple institutions overlaps to form a web of oppression impacting people and communities targeted by that oppression. This includes implicit and explicit social narratives about that social identity group, such as those perpetuated by the media.

ACTIVITY

Complete the following chart by trying to match the *Types of Oppression* from the list below with the appropriate agent/target pairing. (Don't worry about "getting it right.") Afterward, reflect on the list and circle whether you are a target or agent for each oppression.

Types of Oppression: Nationalism, Racism, Christian Hegemony/Dominance, Ageism/Adultism, Colonialism, Heterosexism, Sexism, Classism, Elitism, Ableism

Agent and Target groups in the United States

Agent	Social Identity	Target
White		Asian/Asian American and Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Latino/a, Hispanic, Arab/Persian, Black, Black/African or African American, Mixed-race, Multi-racial
Non-Indigenous		Indigenous
Non-Trans Men		Women, Transgender, Gender Non-conforming
Heterosexual		Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Asexual
Formally Educated		Not Formally Educated
Wealthy		Poor, Working Class
Christian or Christian socialized/aculturated		Non-Christian
US born		Non-US born
Non-disabled		People with Disabilities (visible and invisible: physical emotional, developmental, cognitive, etc.)
"Proper"/Fluent English Speaker		English language learner, No English, Not "proper" English, accented English
Middle Aged		Child, Youth, Young-adult, Elderly

REFLECTION

Please respond to the following five points of reflection.

1. Circle where you are at in each of these social position categories. How did it feel to do that? What do you notice about where you are at?

2. Pick one of the social position categories in which you experience oppression. List/describe some of the ways that oppression impacts you at the interpersonal, institutional and structural levels. How have you internalized that oppression and what impact does that internalization have on your sense of yourself, of others and the world?

3. Pick one of the social position categories in which you experience agency or social privilege. List/describe some of the ways that agency or social privilege impacts you at the interpersonal, institutional and structural levels. How have you internalized that privilege or social agency, and what impact does that internalization have on your sense of yourself, of others and the world?

4. Pick one form of oppression other than racism. How is that oppression experienced at the institutional and structural levels? Be specific about how that oppression functions within different systems such as education, policing and criminal legal, employment, healthcare, arts and culture, housing, transportation, utilities, parks, insurance, government services in general, etc.

5. Now think about how that oppression is different for people of color and for white people. Notice how the *intersection* of that oppression and racism changes the experiences and impacts for people of color.

Personal Reflection Activity

Answer the following questions about your awareness of and learning about the socialization of the below identities. Bonus points for answering these questions with your family or friends.

The national US conversation on social identities include the following 11 social identity categories based on the most common oppressions currently being addressed: colonialism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, nationalism, elitism, ableism, and Christian hegemony. While there are many more social identities that could be considered for research and discussion, the following identities are the most common and consistently addressed across the country.

Social Identity	When did you become aware of this identity?	What were you taught about this identity?	Who helped you make sense of your thoughts and questions?
Indigeneity			
Race			
Gender			
Sexuality			
Class			
Age			
Citizenship Status			
Education Level			
Physical/Mental Ability			
Religion Followed			
Language Spoken			