

# Activity 5.3 Identifying Your Communities

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## Description

This activity opens up the conversation and makes visible the many different understandings of the term “community.” Its meaning is often taken for granted. Participants also explore how they feel in relation to certain communities or how they exclude certain people from communities they are a part of.

## Learning Goals

- Develop a nuanced understanding of community.
- Critically reflect on practices of inclusion and exclusion.

## Instructions (50 minutes)

<p><b>Set Up</b></p>	<p><b>Prepare for the Activity</b></p> <p>Provide participants with, or if doing this online ask them to have with them, drawing materials, like paper, pens, pencils, and/or markers, if they would like to draw during the activity.</p> <p>Organize participants into small groups (3-4 ppl).</p> <p>Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.</p>	
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<sup>1</sup> **Citation for this activity:** Janice McMillan (2023). Identifying Your Communities. In Hartman and Byrd (Eds), The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/activities/module-5>

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<p><b>Step One</b></p>	<p><b>Individually Reflect on Community</b></p> <p>Invite participants to independently reflect on the following questions and write a few thoughts down or draw their response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does community mean for you?</li> <li>• What communities do you feel a part of?</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> Allowing participants to draw offers them a different way to think and express themselves.</p>	<p><b>10 min</b></p>
<p><b>Step Two</b></p>	<p><b>Generate a List of Characteristics that Constitute Community</b></p> <p>In small groups, invite participants to share what they have written or drawn.</p> <p>Have participants reflect on the responses shared as they discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What for your group makes up “community”?</li> <li>• What are the characteristics of a community?</li> </ul> <p>Ask participants to then generate a list of characteristics that define community for their group. Invite each group to share this list on a board, shared screen, or other surface visible to everyone.</p>	<p><b>20 min</b></p>
<p><b>Step Three</b></p>	<p><b>Debrief as a Full Group</b></p> <p>Encourage participants to refer to the list of characteristics generated in their small groups as they discuss these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel part of the university, workplace, or broader community where you are based? Why/why not?</li> <li>• Are there spaces where you feel like you belong and spaces in which you feel excluded?</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> The key here is to help participants understand that communities are complex; they are not necessarily always inclusive; they are not homogenous and there are many views in one community.</p>	<p><b>20 min</b></p>

## Reflection Journal

- Communities can indicate spaces where you feel included, but on the other hand, they also exclude. What practices (intentional and unintentional) do communities use that exclude? When might exclusion be acceptable?
- How is the relationship between your university or workplace and the surrounding communities often described? How can we enter these communities in ways that indicate a genuine interest in learning about the community?

- What about power in communities? Who holds power in the communities of which you are a part? What does this say about how decisions are made?

## Practice Journal

This week, identify one community. Describe how you are included or excluded in this community. Reflect on the practices of this community. Who is excluded? Who is readily included? How does power operate in this community?

## Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story): Adichie, Chimamanda. "The danger of a single story." *TED*, July 2009, [www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story).

## Activity Cluster

[4.1 Awareness of Social Identity  
\(Identity Pie\)](#)

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