



Social Identity Atom Facilitation Guide

Materials

- Handouts for each recruitment counselor
- Activity objectives
- Participants will be able to identify their personal values.
- Participants will be able to identify social identities.
- Participants will reflect on their own social identities and their relation to their sorority experience.
- Participants will reflect on how their social identities impacted their recruitment experience and subsequently, may impact PNMs recruitment experiences.

1. Completing the Identities Atom Model

Share with participants: In order to better understand diversity and inclusion, we must better understand ourselves. We're going to take part in an exercise that will allow us to name and think about some of our own identities.

Ask participants: Who can tell me what an atom is in the world of science?

[An atom is “the fundamental unit of matter made up of protons, neutrons, and electrons” (Discovery Education, 2016). Every piece of matter known to humankind is made up of these tiny atoms. The center is called the nucleus, and it includes positively charged protons and neutral neutrons. Electrons are negatively charged and move quickly around the atom in circles all at the same time.]

Share with participants: An atom is complicated and has many moving parts. Just like an atom makes up every piece of matter with all of its building blocks, our values and identities make up who we are, and they interact with one another in many different ways.

Introduce the first part of the activity: “Take a few minutes to think of three to five values that are most important to you, and write them inside of the atom’s nucleus (the center circle). Your values represent who you are as a person and how choose to live your life every day.”

The facilitator should model this activity by sharing a value of their own and how they live that value, then placing it in their “nucleus.” Provide time for all the participants to do this. When they are finished, ask for volunteers to share one of the values they selected and how they live those values in their everyday lives.

Transition: “Now that we have covered our personal values, we’ll next discuss our identities.”



Share with participants: There are two different kinds of identities: personal and social. Personal identities focus on how we see ourselves fitting in the world around us. However, we're going to focus on social identities.

Social Identities

Share with participants: They're called social identities because our society strongly influences how we categorize others and ourselves. Social identities are shaped by a common history, culture, physical characteristics and shared experiences (American Association of University Women, 2015). Social identities are about how we are seen as a member of different groups within our society. It is not unique to one person.

Let's take time to explore some of our social identities.

- In your handout, choose six of your social identities that are most important to you. You will find examples of social identities on the next page.
- Place the category on the top line labeled "Category," (for example, "Gender") and place your own identity in the line labeled "My Identity" (for example, "Woman").
- Everyone's identities and experiences are unique, so you're able to choose the identities you feel are most relevant to you.
- For this activity, we ask you to be honest with yourself.

The facilitator should model the expectation by having an identity category and their own identity chosen to share. Provide time for participants to do so. When they have finished, move on to the next step.

Completing the Atom

Share with participants: There is one final step to complete your atom.

- Think about how often these identities impact your life. In other words, how often do you think about them?
- On the orbit (oval around the atom on which the electron moves) that represents a given identity, draw a dot on the orbit closer to the nucleus the more the identity impacts your life, or draw the dot further away from the nucleus on the orbit the less the identity impacts your life.
- You'll notice each identity intersects the others at varying points. While I identify as a [insert an identity of the facilitator here, for example, "Woman"], I'm not only a [insert same identity] but also [insert another identity of the facilitator here, for example, "Jewish"] and other identities. Each of these interact with one another at different times and in different ways in our lives.
- The facilitator should model the expectation by sharing where they placed a dot on their electron orbit for one of their identities and why.
- Provide time for participants to place their dots. When they have finished, move on to reflection.

Reflection

Share with participants: When you're finished, complete the following reflection questions that follow in your worksheet.



- How are values and identities different?
- How do your values and identities relate or interact?
- Which identities do you think about most often? Why do you think that is?
- Which identities do you think about least often? Why do you think that is?
- How do you think your social identities impact your ability to be a recruitment counselor?
- How do you think your social identities impacted your recruitment experience?
- How have your social identities impacted your sorority experience?
- How can you, in your role as a recruitment counselor, use this understanding to assist PNMs in the recruitment process?
- Why is important to identify your values while exploring your identities?
- Provide enough time for participants to complete the exercise and reflection questions on their own.

2. Processing the Identities Atom Model

Share with participants: “Now that you have thought more about your social identities, we will ask you to form groups of three and discuss your atom models and your answers to the questions on your worksheet.”

Be sure each individual in the group is able to share her answers to each question. Emphasize participants are not expected to share what they do not want to. Share only to their own level of comfort.

When participants have had time to share in their small groups, lead them in group discussion.

- a. What did you learn about yourself, or how did you think about yourself in a new way?
- b. How do our own identities relate to other people’s identities?
- c. How do our identities relate to our sorority experience?
- d. How are we responsible for our own identities?
- e. How can you use this experience in your everyday life?
- f. How does understanding our identities relate to the sorority experience, including recruitment?

As individuals, it is our responsibility to be mindful of where we are coming from and to be sensitive that not everyone is seeing the world from the same perspectives.

Understanding our identities and those of others allows us to reconnect to our own humanity (or compassion), and we have to realize that things like identities are part of our humanity.

American Association of University Women. (2015). *Social identity Wheel*. Washington D.C. Web.

Elements of chemistry: Atoms: the building blocks of matter. (2016). Discover Education. Web.

Patton, L. K.R. Guido, F & Quaye, S.J. (2016). *Student development in college: Theory, research and practice (3rd ed.)* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Adapted with permission from the North American Interfraternity Conference.