

Intergroup Dialogue - A Method for Engaging Dialogue among Faculty and Students.

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PURPOSE

To stimulate and support faculty and student dialogue around gender in medicine.

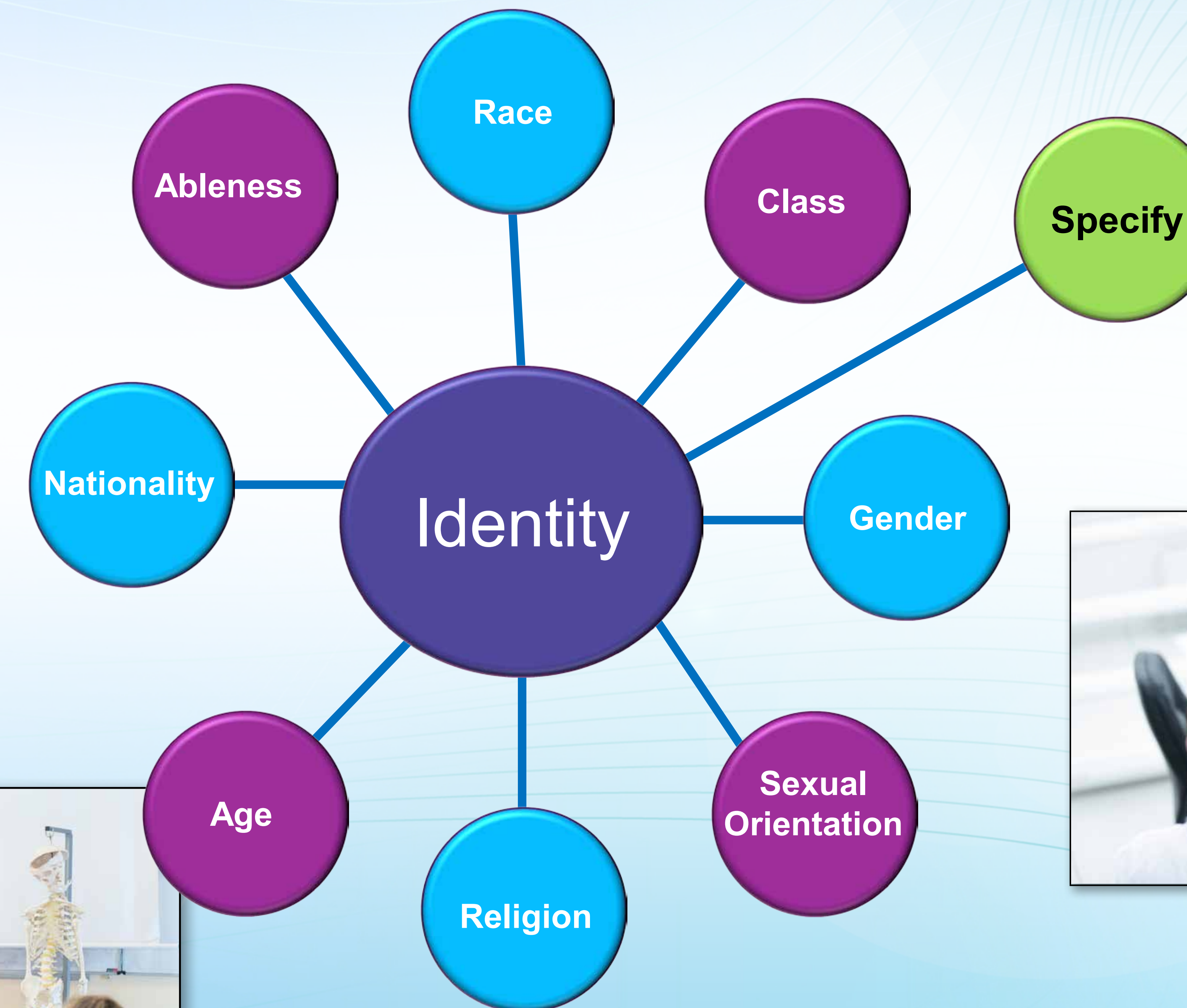
DESCRIPTION

- Intergroup dialogue is a strategy to bring individuals from diverse backgrounds together for individual learning and collaborative action, with focus on issues considered divisive or taboo.
- Intergroup dialogues aim to provide meaningful engagement in “structured, supportive and sustained environments” (Maxwell, 2011)
- SELECT 3rd year “mini-course” = 3 two-hour sessions led by group of 6 faculty + 1 student
- **Dual purpose:**
 - to experiment with Intergroup Dialogue
 - to create space for engagement around gender in medicine
- **Exercises:** Trust-building ice-breaker, individual writing, a gallery walk, fishbowl activity.
- **Participants:**
 - Voluntary participation
 - 11 students – representing a mix of men and women - completed the course
- **Results:**
 - 6 students completed both a pre- and post-survey
 - Participants noted growth in empathy, comfort in conversing with those with different viewpoints or experiences, deeper understanding of their own privilege, and increased self-respect.

TRANSFERABILITY

Intergroup Dialogue is transferable to many varied contexts in which real communication and learning across differences is the key. We used the technique to explore the topic of gender, but even within this boundary, issues of race, sexuality, power and other important topics were discussed. The technique could be used at other medical campuses, to discuss any number of topics, with groups such as: other health profession students, patients and caregivers, faculty and students, university and community members.

Social Justice Wheel



LESSONS LEARNED

- 3 sessions over a period of 6 weeks worked well.
- Be careful to assign/require individuals to participate. Be careful in evaluating participation.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- Taking time to build trust is key to full engagement.
- Take care in creating a “safe” environment for sharing
- Diversity among participants and facilitators is critical.
- Include a student facilitator.
- Co-facilitation by 2+ facilitators per session ideal. Faculty leader dyads with co-faculty support allowed co-faculty to debrief and give feedback to the lead faculty. Process was ‘feed forward’ iterative design that supported on-the-fly adjustment and incremental improvements as the sessions progressed.
- Facilitator preparation key.

References:

1. Maxwell, KE, Nagda, BA, Thompson, MC. Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change. Sterling VA: Stylus Publishing 2011.

All material from the Social Justice Training Institute
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