

# Identity Wheel

Use this activity with youth to think critically about how they see themselves and how they believe the world sees them. By examining their own identity, youth think about the **Ways I Am**.

This activity was adapted from the *Urban Youth Movement: Imagining Futures In and Through Higher Education* curriculum.

## Why This Matters

- Identity shapes the expression of social and emotional skills and informs how one defines which skills are most important.
- Youth practice self-awareness and reflection to think about their own identity.

## Getting Started

- Materials: Blank sheet of paper with a large circle in the middle, extra paper, whiteboard or large sheet of paper, Markers/colored pencils
- Time: 45 minutes- depending on group size
- Draw your own identity wheel ahead of time so that you can share it with youth as an example.
- We use the terms "identities" and "components of your identity" interchangeably.

## How To Use It

- 1) Begin by telling youth that we will be talking about our identities. Ask youth what an identity is. Continue to explain that an identity is what makes a person who she or he is. It also relates to how a person sees herself or himself relative to the world and how the person understands her or his possibilities for the future.

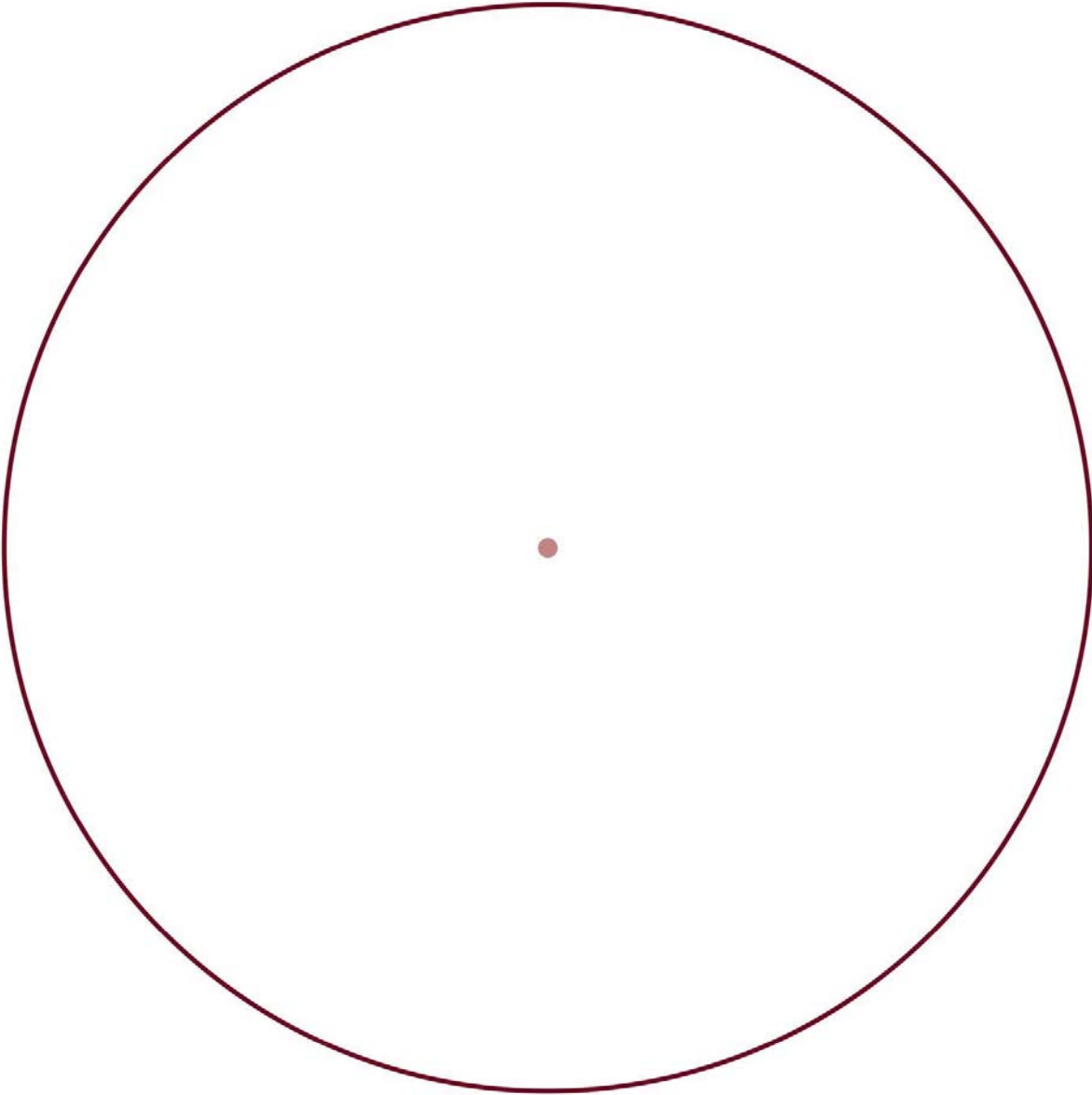
- 2) Ask youth to come up with examples of what might be elements of one's identity. Write this list on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Explain we will make a wheel to describe the most important components of our identity. You can bring an example of your own identity wheel to share with youth.
- 3) Ask youth to write down all of the components of their identity on a separate sheet of paper (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social class, education level, abilities, etc.).
- 4) Using a blank circle, ask them to divide their wheel into sections that show the parts of their identity, with the size of each section relating to how aware they are of each identity on a daily basis. For example, a person might not think too much about being male or female, but might be very aware of their race and think about it a lot. [Tip: It is helpful sometimes for youth to rank their identities in order of importance.]
- 5) Once everyone has completed this activity, have youth share their circle and then answer these question in small groups or the large group:
  - Tell us why you see yourself this way.
  - Which parts of your identity were you most aware of? Why do you think that is?
  - Do any of these identities help you achieve your goals or aspirations?
  - Do any of them make it hard for you to achieve your goals or aspirations?
  - How much control do you have over your identity? Are there certain parts of your identity over which you feel you have more or less control? Why do you think that is?

## Take It Further

- Do this activity at the beginning and end of a program cycle. Have youth compare the two identity wheels and discuss why the wheel might have changed.

# Template: Identity Wheel

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**Parts of My Identity:**
