

Commoning Intersectionality Project



A Benchmark to Better Understand One's Social Privileges and Oppressions: Review of Existing Approaches and Tools



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Introduction

When addressing intersectional discrimination, the first crucial step is gaining clarity about oneself, particularly understanding how one's privileges and oppressions shape social positioning and relationships with others. This self-awareness is key to navigating interactions and challenging intersecting forms of discrimination effectively. A variety of tools already exist to facilitate this process. This document provides a review of those identified so far. While not exhaustive, this review offers an overview of each tool, including its title, sources, a brief description, and an assessment of its advantages and disadvantages.

If you are aware of other relevant tools, please feel free to share them with us at Commoning for inclusion in future versions of this review. You may contact us at: info@commoning.co.

Review of existing approaches and tools

Title Authors	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
ADDRESSING identities self-assessment By Winer, J.P., Wadsworth, L. P., Forgeard, M., Pinder-Amaker, S., Bjorgvinsson, T., & Beard, C. From Development and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ADDRESSING stands for age, developmental disabilities, acquired disabilities, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, indigenous group membership, nationality, and gender •A worksheet with questions associated to each discrimination ground to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The use of the acronym “ADDRESSING” makes it possible to list the criteria of discrimination while conveying the message of taking action. •Each discrimination ground is defined as per its dominant identity (ex: adult) and targeted identities (ex: children, adolescent, young people, older people) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mainly applicable in a psychological/therapeutic context •Adapted to the North American context •The focus is on the individual dimension and at conceptual level. This may prevent from grasping the social aspects of systemic oppressions.

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implementation of a single-session diversity and multicultural psychology group intervention within an academic psychiatric hospital. the Behavior Therapist 2018	filled in individually and autonomously		
ADDRESSING model By Pamela Hays 1996 (First version), 2008 (Updated version)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ADDRESSING stands for age, developmental disabilities, acquired disabilities, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, indigenous group membership, nationality, and gender •This is a framework facilitating recognition and understanding of the complexities of individual identity. According to Hays, consideration of all factors contributes to a complete understanding of cultural identity. Each factor can help researchers understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The oldest tool identified during this review. •The use of the acronym “ADDRESSING” makes it possible to list the criteria of discrimination while conveying the message of taking action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rather a framework listing criterion for privileges and discriminations, and not a participatory tool •Mainly applicable in a psychological/therapeutic context •Adapted to the North American context •The focus is on the individual dimension and at conceptual level. This may prevent from grasping the social aspects of systemic oppressions.

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	<p>underrepresented groups and oppressive forces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is meant to be used during therapy sessions. 		
<p>Autobiographical works By F3E From « Vivre le genre ! 9 fiches pratiques pour faire progresser l'égalité de genre, Les collections du F3E, Repères sur... » 2018</p>	<p>It is about creating timelines of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •One's autobiography illustrated with drawings, illustrations cut out from the press and alike, in the form of a frieze tracing one's course of life. •One's gendered autobiography written in response to "How did I become a woman or a man in society?" <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is key to create a comfortable and emotionally secure framework by facilitating and insisting that exchanges occur in a space of trust and confidentiality •During the debriefing, it may be more relevant to share only the analysis of the contribution and difficulties of the self-reflective process (rather than one's frieze). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This process of self-reflection is highly formative and highlights the complexity and influence of gender dynamics. •Focus is on how one's life journey has contributed to building one's identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The focus is on one single discrimination grounds at a time. Adding up multiple discrimination grounds may be laborious. •Sharing personal experiences of discriminations and oppressions can generate strong emotions. •This work requires subtle facilitation, as it may trigger difficult realizations and risk crossing into therapeutic territory. If more support is needed, referring to professionals is essential.

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<p>Bowling against oppressions activity By EMA Gender Equality and Intersectionality Lab In the Toolkit on Intersectional Mainstreaming 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflections start from sharing participants' personal experience of discriminations and oppressions. •Participants will stick their stories on a bowling pin to roll a ball towards them and metaphorically fight against their lived oppressions. <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minimum 5 people •Allow enough time for everyone to voice their stories and share feedback •It is key to create a comfortable and emotionally secure framework by facilitating and insisting that exchanges occur in a space of trust and confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This exercise is meant to stimulate reflections through group discussions about personal experiences. •Participants destroys lived oppressions metaphorically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sharing personal experiences of discriminations and oppressions can generate strong emotions. •Only lived oppressions by participants are covered so some discrimination grounds may be overlooked (ex: no reflection on nationality in case there is no migrant participant).
<p>Can YOU? Le jeu des privilèges By Topla, des jeux pour changer le monde 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Each player takes on the role of a character with a made-up story written on a card. •According to the situations announced by the game master, the player advances if one thinks one can answer yes to the statements in each situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A gamification approach to a serious topic •Several languages available and multilingual game play •Working from fictional characters allow taking a step back when discriminated people realise their lived oppressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sensitisation based on fictional characters may risk to overlook one's real identity and situation. •There is a risk of focusing on individual characteristics, and not on the fact that oppressions are social and systemic.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Possibility of playing one’s role <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •From age 12 •Available in English, French, German and Spanish •Several languages can be played simultaneously 		
<p>Check Your Privilege By Courtner Beard with contribution of Jeff Winer 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Group therapy protocol based on the ADDRESSING framework developed by Hays •ADDRESSING stands for age, developmental disabilities, acquired disabilities, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, indigenous group membership, nationality, and gender •Against each of the ADDRESSING criteria, a set of questions is used to create one’s complete identity (ex: How do you identify? Is your identity one that has historically experienced more privilege/power or barriers/stigma?) <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May be used in conjunction with the ADDRESSING identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The use of the acronym “ADDRESSING” makes it possible to list the criteria of discrimination while conveying the message of taking action. •Can be used autonomously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rather a framework listing criterion for privileges and discriminations, and not a participatory tool •Mainly applicable in a psychological/therapeutic context •Adapted to the North American context •The focus is on the individual dimension and at conceptual level. This may prevent from grasping the social aspects of systemic oppressions. •Autonomous work may prevent reflexivity or exchange with other people different from oneself.

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	self-assessment worksheet (presented above)		
Game of life By Co-savoir (anciennement Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The objective is to discuss power relationships and situations of discrimination. •There 3 consecutive stages: (i) discussion of the concept of privilege, (ii) each participant receives a profile, positions oneself on a starting line and moves forward according to the answers given to the statements, (iii) debriefing. <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •90 minutes •Target audience: Adult literacy programs, community centres, women's centres •Adaptable to any audience •It is key to create a comfortable and emotionally secure framework by facilitating and insisting that exchanges occur in a space of trust and confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Easy to implement •Participants are put in the shoes of a privileged or discriminated person, a different person of who they are. •One of the most known tools to raise awareness about privilege and discrimination. •Working from fictional characters allow taking a step back when discriminated people realise their lived oppressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Privileged people realise their dominant position at the expense of those discriminated against who stay behind as illustrated in this video. •Sensitisation based on fictional characters may risk to overlook one's real identity and situation. •There is a risk of focusing on individual characteristics, and not on the fact that oppressions are social and systemic. •Sharing personal experiences of discriminations and oppressions can generate strong emotions.
Gear 2: Analyse your position within the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gear 2 (of 5) is composed of 10 exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The social and individual pillars are taken into account: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •For beginners, the flower power categories may appear abstract.

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<p>discriminatory mechanisms By Floréal Sotto et Nora El Massioui From the book “40 activities to strengthen your social courage - Acting against prejudice and discrimination in everyday life” 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The first 5 exercises invite to explore one’s environment. •The last 5 exercises invite to explore one’s individuality. <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •These exercises are designed to be carried out individually and autonomously. •With approval of the authors, they may be adapted to a workshop format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploration of individual context (observation) ○ Exploration of personal characteristics (flower power, privilege observation questionnaire) •The exercises are anchored in daily life and experience, which facilitates awareness before action. •Explanations and exercises on the privileges invisibility are clear and facilitate awareness of one's privileges and their superiority-enhancing effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The mental disability and psychic disability (in the flower power) are somewhat similar categories. •Using a flower may give the impression that different factors forming social identity is separate from the others. •Autonomous work may prevent reflexivity or exchange with other people different from oneself. The authors however encourage the readers to discuss with one’s entourage to avoid being left alone.
<p>How Many of You.....exploring our own oppressions By the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW/ICREF) From A toolkit for Applying Intersectionality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participants will be asked to pair an action when they have experienced a type of discrimination presented by the facilitator. •Actions will add up as presentation of discrimination are presented. <p>Facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •5 minutes •At least 5 participants •Works well as an ice-breaker or as an in-depth activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Easy to implement •Participants reflect on the cumulative effects of multiple discrimination and oppression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There is a risk of focusing on individual characteristics, and not on the fact that oppressions are social and systemic. •Only lived oppressions by participants are covered so some discrimination grounds may be overlooked (ex: no reflection on nationality in case there is no migrant participant).

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2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Check on participant's ability to perform intended action before starting 		
Implicit Association Tests By Harvard 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“The Implicit Association Tests (IAT) measures the strength of associations between concepts (e.g., black people, gay people) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy). The main idea is that making a response is easier when closely related items share the same response key.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •IAT cover many discrimination grounds: age, gender, gender and science, gender at work, native people, race, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability, weight. •It provides third party feedback through a machine. This is the only tool of this kind in the review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Meant as an individual autonomous exercise in front of a computer •Need a computer and an internet connection •Available in English only
Intersectionality String Game By the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA/W/ICREF) From A toolkit for Applying Intersectionality 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A participant holds a ball of yarn/string and starts describing oneself. As soon as someone has something in common, one gets the ball of yarn/string, shares what the 2 people have in common and keeps presenting oneself. And so on. •Everyone should hold to the yarn/ string as the exercise goes on. <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minimum 10 minutes and as long as participants speak •At least 5 participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participants will realise that each human identity is complex and that each one has similarities and differences with one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •While participants will explore what they have in common, this may not be about privilege/ oppressions.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Works well as an ice-breaker or as an in-depth activity 		
<p>Invisible Backpack of Privilege Activity By the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW/ICREF) From A toolkit for Applying Intersectionality 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Adapted from a concept from McIntosh •Meant to reflect on one's privileges and power as well as on the concepts as a group •Based on statements written on cards distributed randomly to each participant, one after another, participants read their statement, reacts to it and let the others share their own reactions. <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •30 minutes •At least 5 participants •It is key to create a comfortable and emotionally secure framework by facilitating and insisting that exchanges occur in a space of trust and confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Focus on the invisibility of privileges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There is a risk of focusing on individual characteristics, and not on the fact that oppressions are social and systemic (unless the facilitator brings light on it). •Sharing personal experiences of discriminations and oppressions can generate strong emotions. •Only lived oppressions by participants are covered so some discrimination grounds may be overlooked (ex: no reflection on nationality in case there is no migrant participant).
<p>Reflexivity tool By F3E From « Vivre le genre ! 9 fiches pratiques pour faire progresser l'égalité</p>	<p>The facilitator asks all the participants: "What would be different in your life today if you were born of the opposite sex or gender?"</p> <p>Facilitation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Easy to implement •Compare one's life journey with those of people with different dominant/dominated identity characteristic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It allows exploring one dimension after another, and not multiple dimensions at once. •While the tool is easily adaptable to other discrimination ground than

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de genre, Les collections du F3E, Repères sur... » 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Allow 5 to 10 minutes for reflection before anyone shares one's answers. •Ask the participants to react to the answers: what struck them, what surprised them? •Encourage participant to dig into this question individually to sharpen their awareness of the weight of gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It allows to put oneself in the shoes of a privileged or discriminated person. 	sex/gender, it may be laborious to explore all discrimination grounds one after another.
Self-Reflection: My identity factors By HI, Inclusive Friends From Making it Work How-To Guide : Intersectionality in Practice 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •First exercise of the first part of the guide is about self-reflection on one's identity characteristics •Based on the power flower, each participant creates their personalised power flower depending on how they identify to each identity characteristic. Facilitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is key to create a comfortable and emotionally secure framework by facilitating and insisting that exchanges occur in a space of trust and confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of identity characteristics are provided to start with. •Possible to add up categories to the suggested ones to cover complexity of identities better. •Each individual can decide on the identity characteristics mattering most for oneself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Using a flower may give the impression that different factors forming social identity is separate from the others. •While not mentioned in the guide, it is worth debriefing about each participant's situation and feelings after everyone has created one power flower.
Take a step forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •"In this activity participants experience what it is like to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It tackles the question of empathy towards people who are different from oneself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Privileged people realise their dominant position at the expense of those discriminated

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<p>By Council of Europe From COMPANION – A campaign guide about education and learning for change in Diversity, Human Rights and Participation 2007</p>	<p>someone else in their society. The issues addressed include: (i) Social inequality being often a source of discrimination and exclusion; (ii) Empathy and its limits.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participants are provided a role card and built the role’s profile and life journey based on questions provided by the facilitator. It then goes on with the game of life (as presented above). <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is key to create a comfortable and emotionally secure framework by facilitating and insisting that exchanges occur in a space of trust and confidentiality. •The facilitator may create a calm atmosphere with soft background music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Easy to implement •It allows to put oneself in the shoes of a privileged or discriminated person. •An adapted version of the game of life, one of the most known tools to raise awareness of privilege and discrimination. 	<p>against who stay behind as illustrated in this video.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sharing personal experiences of discriminations and oppressions can generate strong emotions.
<p>The Able Privilege Scale: A New Educational Tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •23-question tool designed to help people understand in a deeply personal way the reality that persons with disabilities do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •High number of people sensitised with one single facilitation •Three rounds allowing the participants to situate oneself, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Only disability is covered. •The tool (composed of 23-item questionnaire and profile of people with disabilities) is not available online.

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<p>By Alan B. Larson and Robert O. Choate, Stephen F. de l'Austin State University 2011</p>	<p>not have the privileges of non-disabled people.</p> <p>Facilitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A group of 10 to 30 people, or more •75 minutes •Sequence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Explanation of what constitutes able-bodied privilege/disability discrimination (ii) 1st round: each person fills in the questionnaire based on one's profile, followed by a discussion of the participants' results. (ii) 2nd round: each person completes the same questionnaire using 2 profiles of persons with proposed disabilities. 	<p>and compare one's situation with that of 2 imaginary profiles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This reflection tool is about personal power in relation to society, and how this personal power may fluctuate according to the presence and/or type of disability. The unit of analysis thus becomes the social structure, the relationship between the person with a particular disability and society's response to that disability (Rioux & Valentine, 2006), and not necessarily attitudes towards a particular disability. 	

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