

## Social Identity Mapping: A 20-30 Minute Exercise

Adapted from Cruwys, Steffens, Haslam, Haslam, Jetten & Dingle. (2016). Social identity mapping: A procedure for visual representation and assessment of subjective multiple group memberships. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 55 (4), 613-643.

Personal identity is at least partly derived from the social networks to which one belongs. Group memberships having a strong, reciprocal relationship with self-identity, values and beliefs. In addition, situational factors influence which social identity is likely to be salient in each context.

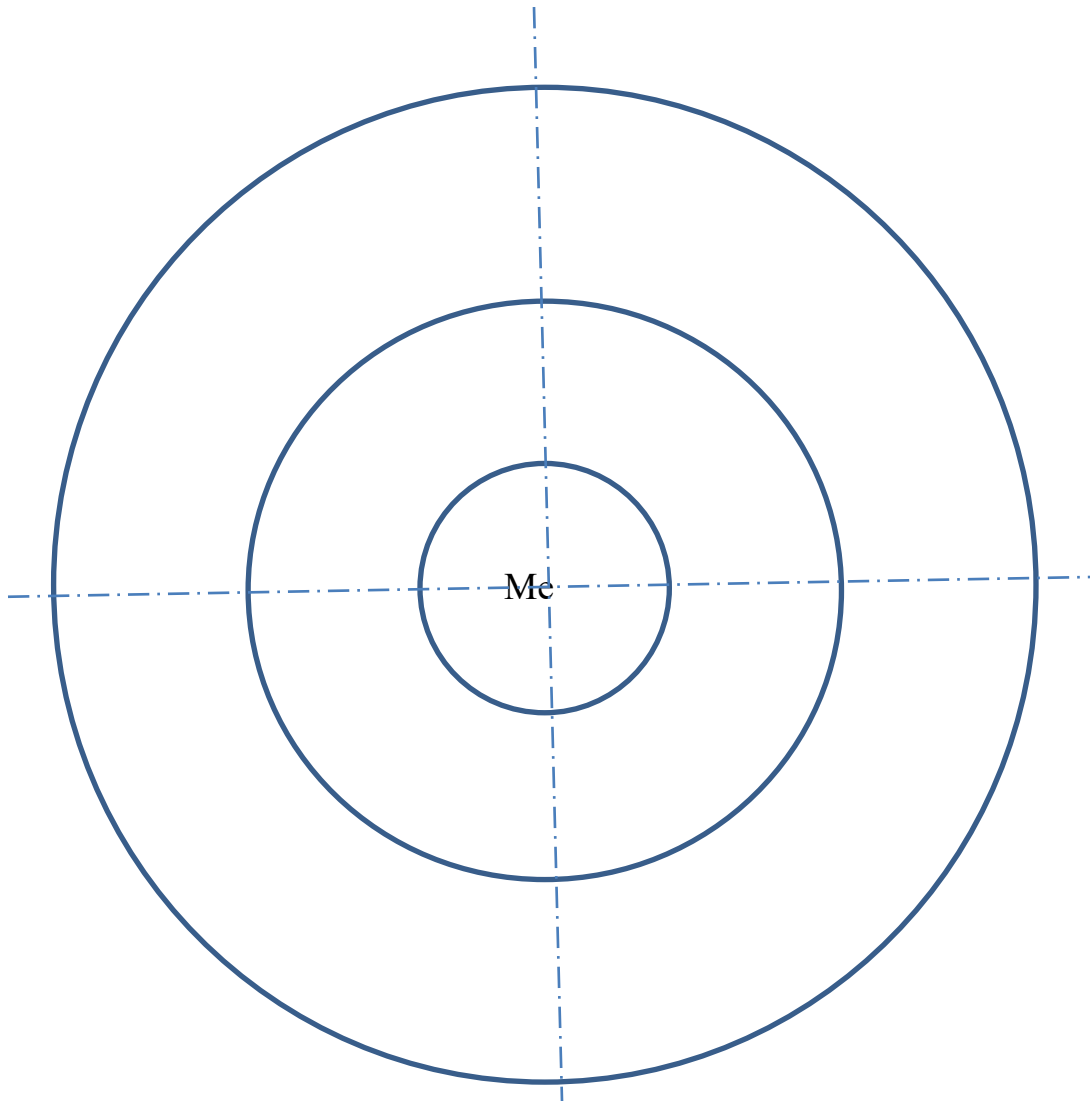
Social identity mapping is visually representing and self-assessing one's network of group memberships. During this exercise you construct a visual map that: (1) identifies the groups to which you belong and the groups' psychological importance, (2) describes the degree to which a group membership is positive, and (3) represents the similarity and compatibility of these groups to one another. Please find some stickies of various sizes or pieces of paper (and tape) and scissors to cut the stickies/paper into three sizes - large, medium and small.

1. Think about (or list) the groups of people with whom you spent time virtually or in the same physical location during the last several months. Reviewing your calendar may be useful. These groups can take **any form**. For example, they could be broad opinion-based or demographic groups (e.g., feminist; American); leisure or social groups (e.g., book group or gardening group); community groups (e.g., faith group); sporting groups (e.g., softball or tennis team); work groups (e.g., sales team); professional groups (e.g., trade union); or any others you think of.
2. Write your name for each group on a separate stickie or piece of paper. Use size to show how important each group is to you: a large stickie for the **most important**, medium size for **moderately important** and small for **less important**.
3. How positive do you feel about being a member of each group? From 1 = Not at All Positive to 10 = Very Positive, write the number in the **top-left corner** of each stickie.
4. In the **top-right corner** of each stickie write approximately how many days in a typical month that you engage in activities with each group ranging from 0 to 30 days.
5. Indicate the number of years that you have belonged to each group in the **bottom-left corner**.
6. From 1 = Not at All to 10 = Very Well, please indicate the extent to which you feel you are representative of the group (i.e., exemplify what it means to be a member of the group) in the **bottom-right corner**.
7. In the diagram on the next page, arrange your group stickies so that the groups you feel most positive (top-left corner number) about are **closest to the center**. The **distance between groups** indicates how different the groups are from each other. If two groups are very different from each other (e.g., they do different things, it feels different being a member of each, they have different members), place them far apart. If two groups are very similar to each other, place them close to each other.
8. How easy or difficult it is to be a member of two different groups (e.g., as a member of your knitting club, it might be very easy to be a member of your family but not easy at all to be a member of your softball team). If it is very easy, connect two groups by a **straight line**; moderately easy, please connect two groups by a **wavy line**; or if it is hard or not at all easy, please connect two groups by a **jagged line**.



**My Social Identity Map Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write your name for each group on one of three size stickies: Large = Most important, Medium = Moderate importance, Small = Less important
3. Top-left corner: how positive you feel about being a group member; 1-10 with 1 = Not positive to 10 = Very positive
4. Top-right corner: Approximately how many days per month you engage with the group; 0-30
5. Bottom-left corner: Number of years you have belonged to the group
6. Bottom-right corner: Your representativeness of the group; 1-10 with 1 = Not at All to 10 = Very representative
7. Place each stickie or piece of paper in the below diagram according to:
  - a. Closeness to the center = the higher the number in the top-left corner (#3) and
  - b. Distance between groups = indicates how different the groups are from each other.
8. How easy or difficult is it to be a member of two different groups?
  - a. Draw a straight line = Very easy, wavy line = Moderately easy and Jagged line = Hard or not at all easy to be in both groups



# Social Identity Mapping: Individual Exercise

## Post-mapping Considerations

1. How many groups are in your map? # of groups = all stickies: \_\_\_\_\_
2. # of Important Groups = internalized as meaningful and self-relevant = largest stickies: \_\_\_\_\_
3. # of Positive Groups = 8, 9 or 10 in top-left corner: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Reviewing your Social Identity Map,
  - a. How proud of your map are you? 0 = Not at all proud to 10 = Very proud: \_\_\_\_\_

b. What I like about my map is:

---

---

---

c. What could be better about my map is:

---

---

---

d. What, if anything, are you thinking of doing to increase the number of groups or spend more time with one or more groups?

---

---

---

Multiple group memberships can predict diverse outcomes such as changes in self-esteem; preserved cognitive function with ageing; mitigated depression, loneliness and substance use resumption; increased physical resilience; and enhanced recovery from stroke. Research shows that multiple positive group memberships are a powerful predictor of health and well-being. More specifically, gains in #2 (Number of Important Groups), # 3 (Number of Positive Groups) and Group compatibility (not included in this exercise's description) predict improved life satisfaction and decreased depression.

Suggested next step: Complete an exercise on [Identifying Your Expert Companions](#)

