

CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION

The key aspect about critical self-reflection is to find a process that works well and challenges you to consider key issues that impact partnering and also address issues around health inequities. The key is to honestly push oneself to understand how your identities influence you and how that may be influencing the partnering process. It is about honestly assessing issues of ethnicity, culture, racism, power and privilege as these are issues that many partnerships are address if they are addressing health equity in Indigenous communities.

One approach to critical self-reflection is presented here and is based on the work of Cheryl Hyde (2018). It involves a four-step process of understand the self and exploring how that impacts on the partnership.

Step 1: Our Complex Cultural Selves

The first step is to explore and understand one's own identities and how they impact us. These include the values, attitudes, beliefs, practices, and rituals that shape who we are and how we act all of which flow from the various groups of which we are members. As part of this exploration, the following inventory may be helpful. This can be completed directly or can simply be used as a reflective tool.

Cultural identity inventory

Identities	What values, actions or messages are associated with this identity?	How do you understand this aspect of yourself? How do others see you?	What privileges do you have? What privileges have you been denied? How have you responded?
Gender			
Ethnicity			
Class			
Sexual orientation			
Nationality			
Other _____			



Step 2: Privilege and Power

This step builds on the inventory in step one and considers that some of the identities are dominant or privileged. These privileged identities have power related to access to economic, political and education among other resources. By contrast, some of these identities have a subordinate status. These statuses related to social structures and social determinants of health and wellbeing. This step involves reflecting on how these identities are privileged and not privileged and how that may impact the partnership.

Step 3: Understanding Different Vantage Points

A key aspect of this step is to seek understanding of how we see ourselves and how others see us. These may not be the same—we may see ourselves as open and humble and other may experience us as closed and a “know-it-all.” Further, what you may consider to be a central part of your identity, others may not even consider. In completing the inventory, it is important to push yourself to consider an honest reflection about these different vantage points.

Step 4: Synthesis and Next Steps

Hyde suggests reviewing the inventory, your reflection and considering four questions:

- a) What are your overall reaction to this information?
- b) Does any dimension stand out as particularly important to your overall cultural identities?
- c) What have you learned about yourself?
- d) What next steps in this process do you see yourself taking?

Addressing these questions can help you move forward. For example, you may consider further education to better understand your identities or those of other groups. Perhaps there are some skills that you want to develop or relationships you want to build. To guide these next steps, you might want to consider ways that your identities are a) assets to your practice, b) challenges to your practice and c) areas for improvement.

Given that we are focusing on addressing health inequities, particularly in Indigenous communities, understanding identities, and particularly issues of power and privilege, are important. We need to understand the ways that our identities are reflected in the discussion and in the approach that we





are taking to address the health issues. We need to make sure that we are not inadvertently silencing some viewpoints during our discussion. We also need to make sure that different perspectives are integrated into the work. Part of working effectively is to navigating these differences and ideally integrate these differences to enhance the quality of the work. Thus, a final part of this last step is to dialogue about our partnership processes to see how it reflects our identities and whether it is integrative of various identities.

Source: Hyde C. Challenging ourselves: Critical self-reflection on power and privilege. In: Wallerstein N, Duran B, Oetzel JG, & Minkler M. editors. Community-based participatory research for health: advancing social and health equity, 3rd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2018. p. 337-344.

