

Fussion of identities

Key message

To develop a sense of belonging it is essential to reflect on the way we identify ourselves with our environment and to be aware of how it influences the formation of our identity. In addition, this will enable us to find out our group of reference and the mark it leaves on us.

Key words: group identity, fusion identity

Summary

During adolescence and young adulthood our identity is still being defined and people from our milieu can be more influent than we imagine in this process. It is thus important to think about how we see ourselves, the people from our milieu and those from our group of reference, in order to be aware of their influence. The short test provided hereafter is based on the *“Measure of the representation between the individual and the group”* of Schubert and Otten (2002) and sound out the level of identity fusion with the group of reference.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
• Early detection	• individual • small	• 16 - 19 • 20 - 24	• 15 min • 30 min

Purpose

- Identify the group of reference of participants and sound out the level of identity fusion with it.
- Motivate young people to think about the positive influence of environment on the construction of the personal identity.

Description

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Step 1: On a blank page (to be done individually or through an interview in pairs) participants have to answer the following questions:

- *What do you usually do in your free time?*
- *Think about your groups of people, your social and family circle, with which one would you say you identify the more? (friends from the neighbourhood, a group on internet, ...)?*
- *From 1 to 10, how close do you feel with this group? *You can add a visual representation (see handouts »Fussion of identities«).*
- *What are the things you prefer to do with these people? And what do you like the less?*
- *Do you feel identified also with other groups? Which ones?*

Step 2: Ask the participants to draw 4 circles in line with the following legend: “Family”, “Friends” “My Neighbourhood”, “Society”, and another central circle below which will represent themselves. Tell them to look for some good thing they get with each of these groups and to note it on an arrow that

will link the group circle with the central one (themselves).

Step 3: Make a pool and debate on how difficult was the exercise, the groups identified and the level of fusion detected. Reflect about the positive aspects we share with our social network and how we are influenced by our environment. Ask them, if they want, to hand over the working sheets to the teacher/trainer/educator.

Materials needed

Paper and pen (Handout "visual representation of the identity fusion assessment" optionally)

Methodology

Self-Assesment

Advice for Trainer

- You can develop the dynamic by carrying out the same assessment of identity fusion with several social groups (family, school, city, country, etc.).
- As it is mainly a self-assessment tool, this dynamic can result out of place if it is applied on its own. It is advised to embed it during the same session with others that address group identity, the identification of prejudices or self-concept, among others.

Source / Literature

Gómez A. and Vázquez A. (2015): The power of 'feeling one' with a group: identity fusion and extreme pro-group behaviours. *Revista de Psicología Social*: 481-511.

Handouts

[Visual representation of the identity fusion assessment.](#)



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