
**A MUSEUM
EDUCATOR'S
IDENTITY
TOOLKIT:
HOW
KNOWING
OURSELVES
TRANSFORMS
OUR WORK.**

Cat Jensen
Goucher College 2018

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

WELCOME	3
USING THIS TOOLKIT	11
PART II: IDENTITY, MEMORY, STORY, LEARNING	27
PART III: IDENTITY, SOCIETY AND YOU	56
PART IV: IDENTITY, PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION	86
PART V: IDENTITY AND YOUR MUSEUM	116

“Museum education has the power and the responsibility to do the challenging inner work of tackling tough topics and turning them into teachable moments.”

Monica O Montgomery,
Founding Director: Museum of
Impact

THIS TOOLKIT

BELONGS TO:

WELCOME!

A MUSEUM EDUCATOR'S IDENTITY TOOLKIT

Museum Family,

This toolkit was created by a museum educator who after seeing one of their rarely visible identities, represented in a museum space, began engaging with others about why identity and representation matter. They are not an expert of the following knowledge. You are an agent of your own learning and come to this space with your own important knowledge, experiences and talent.

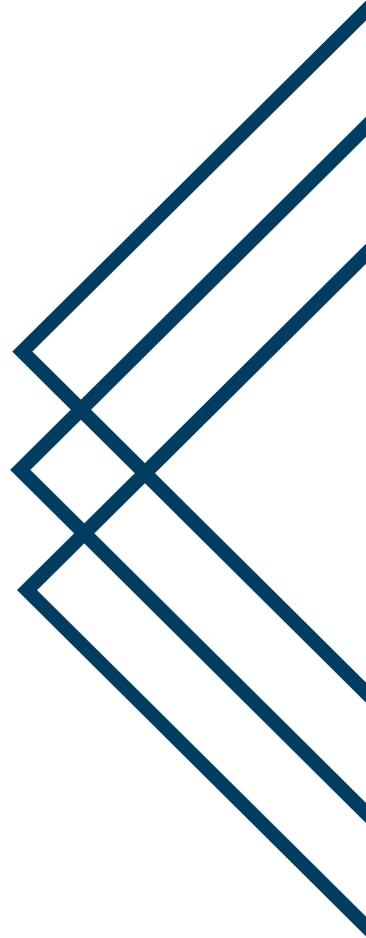
While this has been designed with educators in mind, if you work in a museum, botanic garden, outdoor education center, park, community center or anywhere that connects you and others in any capacity, this is for you.

You are encouraged, no matter where you are in your journey: to open your heart, do your own work, learn everything you can, appreciate the important gifts you offer and love your museum. This couldn't happen without you!

Let's move forward together.

WHY IDENTITY?

Identity is a part of all of us! Knowing about who we are can help us engage with others, empathize with experiences we can't or don't understand and build stronger communities! In order to know others, we must first know ourselves.



WHY MUSEUMS?

Museums are institutions with a long, painful history and practice of dehumanizing and excluding certain identities. Museums are also spaces of great healing and community and joy. Where can we take the future of our museums? How can you be a catalyst for change? Let's get started with the power of you and your work.

THE EXHIBIT THAT INSPIRED THIS WORK

Hidden Histories, Swedish History Museum, Stockholm.



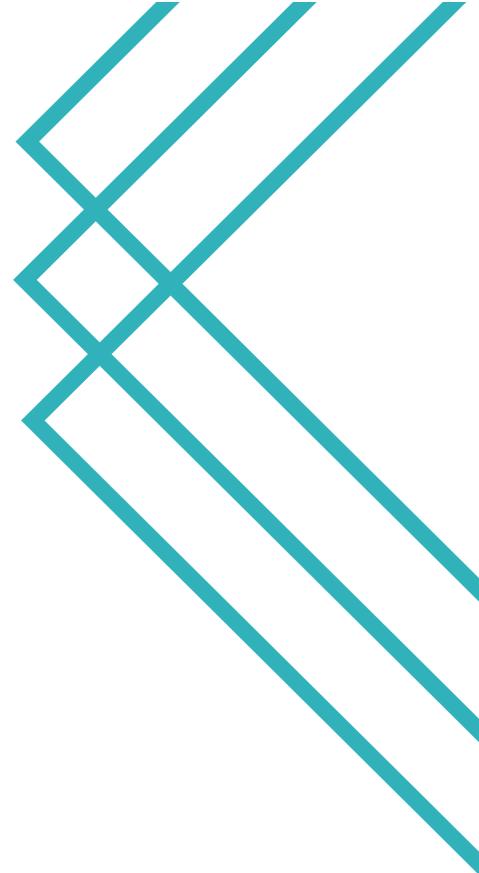
“Museum exhibitions often adopt the perspective of those who represent present or past social norms, which makes those who diverge from such norms invisible. If you don’t know you have a history, it can be hard to believe you have a future. We invited members of the LGBTQ community to share their thoughts and reflections on some of the exhibits. Based on their commentaries, we have created a trail through the Swedish History, Medieval Massacre and Medieval Art exhibitions.”

All around this exhibit, members of the LGBTQ+ community have inserted themselves into the narrative. They demand that their voice be included in the display of everything from statues to paintings. They make space for their history and stories where there is not one present.

This journey is in five parts:

1. Who are you personally? How do you connect to your identity or an aspect of it?
2. How do memory & story impact learning? Is being an educator a part of your identity? How, why?
- 3 & 4. Next, we transition into examining our privileges and oppressions. If we are going to address representation we must have a clear idea of where our own social location and how those with different or similar identities may experience the museum space.
5. We come back to our own museum space. How do you experience your space: as you, in privilege, in oppression? What can you do to facilitate conversations and actions around justice and equity with what you know and will continue to learn? How can we activate our spaces (even in small ways) to become spaces of learning and wonder and also deep critical meaning and transformation?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

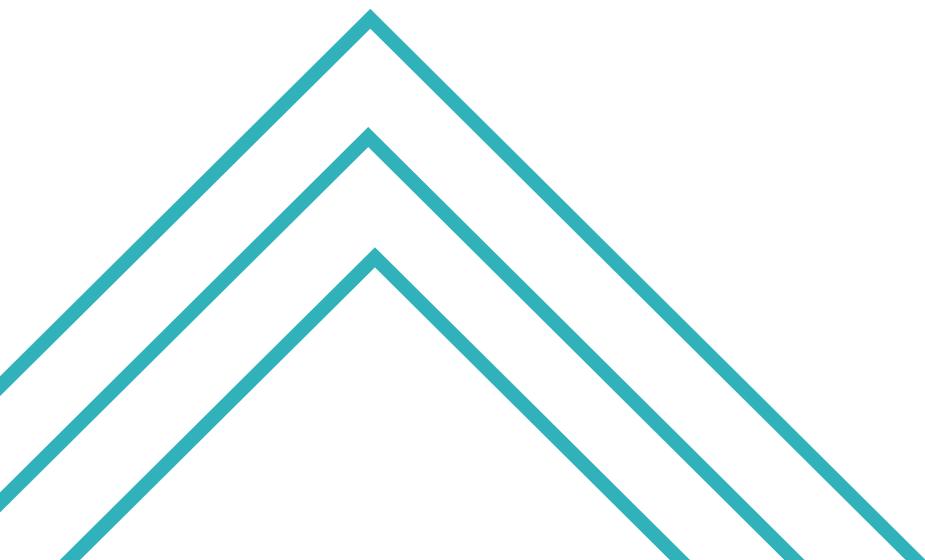


Questions that guided the creation of this toolkit included:

How can museum educators transform museum communities by knowing themselves, their privileges and non-privileges and their personal histories?

How can educators learn deeply about their own identit(ies)?

How can sharing stories of successes and ourselves, make someone a better educator?



WHY THESE QUESTIONS?

How can museum educators transform museum communities by knowing themselves, their privileges and non-privileges and their personal histories?

While the author of this toolkit may not see their sexual orientation or gender identity in museums, they do see their whiteness everywhere. It is necessary to critically examine and understand how these identities intersect and relate to privilege. Knowing ourselves opens space for educational practices that incorporate equity, advocacy and justice.

How can educators learn deeply about their own identit(ies)?

Exercises in this toolkit were designed using feedback from other museum educators and an exploration of personal story and identity. No matter where you are in your identity and museum's journey there is still learning to do and this is just one of many, many resources.

How can sharing stories of successes and ourselves, make someone a better educator?

What can you share of yourself with your museum community? What unique skills do you bring to your museum? What do you love about it? Your story matters!

KEY TERMS THAT GUIDED THIS WORK

1

PEDAGOGY

The method and practice of teaching. Paolo Freire and bell hooks were just two scholars whose practices were consulted.

2

MEMORY AND STORY

Story and memory are an integral part of human experience and identity. Museums create memories that last a lifetime. What stories do we tell about our institutions and the work we do?

3

WAYS OF KNOWING

An indigenous practice and pedagogy. There are many ways to know about the world and there are many truths.

4

IDENTITY THEORY

How do we know who we are? How can knowing who we are enable us to open ourselves up to the experiences and needs of others?

5

RACE THEORY

In a world where racism is very much alive, it is critical to examine society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race, law, and power.

6

GENDER AND QUEER THEORY

It is equally important to explore issues of sexuality, power, and marginalized populations.

7

CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Culture is defined as a set of beliefs, morals, methods, and a collection of human knowledge. Sustainability is defined as the ability to sustain or continue. How can museums contribute to sustaining culture ethically and directly with community?

USING THIS TOOLKIT

As you go through this toolkit, you will focus on how your personal identit(ies) impact the work you do in your own museum space. Everyone's experience will be different and diverse. You will engage with:

**QUESTIONS
TO
CONSIDER**

**TERMS &
DEFINITIONS**

SELF REFLECTION

EXERCISES

**MUSEUM
CONNECTIONS**

**RESOURCES FOR
FUTHER LEARNING**

THE IMPORTANCE OF VULNERABILITY

- Feel what you feel
- Practice Self-Love
- Celebrate Yourself
- Celebrate Your Work

Recommended

Click here to watch: Brené Brown's Ted Talk, *The Power of Vulnerability*

"Vulnerability is the only authentic state. Being vulnerable means being open, for wounding, but also for pleasure. Being open to the wounds of life means also being open to the bounty and beauty.

Don't mask or deny your vulnerability: it is your greatest asset. Be vulnerable: quake and shake in your boots with it. The new goodness that is coming to you, in the form of people, situations, and things can only come to you when you are vulnerable, i.e. open."

CHECKING IN

As you make your way through the exercises in this toolkit you may encounter new terms, concepts and ideas. This might bring up uncomfortable feelings. This is okay! Here are some things you can do.

1. Breathe
2. Listen to your body
3. Sit with your feelings
4. Keep going!

A BREATHING EXERCISE

Take a breath. How do you breathe? Do you breathe through your chest? Your abdomen? Pay attention. If needed, close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and out your mouth. Is your heart racing? Take in three quick breathes through your nose, then a slow breath out through your mouth. Visualize what brings you joy. What you feel is okay. It gives you emotion and energy. What will you do with that energy? **Will you force it down or: embrace it for what it is, question why it happens, and transfer it into doing better?**

PART I: IDENTITY, AN INTRODUCTION

*Who are you? What comes up for you with the word, *identity*? The first section of this toolkit will be an introduction to many different forms of identity. You will engage in exercises and critical reflection to explore you and your experiences.*



IDENTITY IS...



INDIVIDUAL

What makes you, YOU?



COLLECTIVE

Collective Identity is a shared sense of identity among a group. Think of various groups you belong to. What are they? Why are they important?



CULTURAL

How do you identify culturally? Is it where you live? The language you speak? Traditions those close to you engage in?



PERSONAL

When does your identity feel personal? Are there times when you are more aware of it?

PHYSICAL

Does your identity ever become or already exist as physical? Why might someone's identity exist as physical?



EMOTIONAL

Think of your most favorite identity. What would it feel like to suddenly be separated from it? Has there ever been a time when you were unable to express or experience a part of who you are?

who are you?

EXERCISE: IDENTITY TREE

You are the trunk. Add identities to each leaf. Add branches and leaves as needed.



EXERCISE

FILL IN THE CHARTS BELOW ABOUT YOURSELF

IDENTITIES
YOU
RESONATE
WITH MOST

IDENTITIES
YOU WANT TO
EXPLORE
MORE

MOST VISIBLE
IDENTITIES

QUESTIONS
ABOUT YOUR
IDENTITY

INVISIBLE
IDENTITIES

IDENTITY AND YOU



**MY INDIVIDUAL
IDENTITIES ARE:**

**MY COLLECTIVE
IDENTITIES ARE:**

MY IDENTITY IS



PERSONAL WHEN



CULTURAL WHEN



**PHYSICAL AND/OR
EMOTIONAL WHEN**



IDENTITY IS...



LOCAL

Where are you located? Do you relate to the community there? If you are not indigenous, how did your ancestors come to be there?

GLOBAL

We are a part of a global community and so are our museums. Where do you see yourself in a global sense?

HISTORICAL

Are your identities present in history? When or when not? What do you know about your ancestors? Are they a part of your identity?

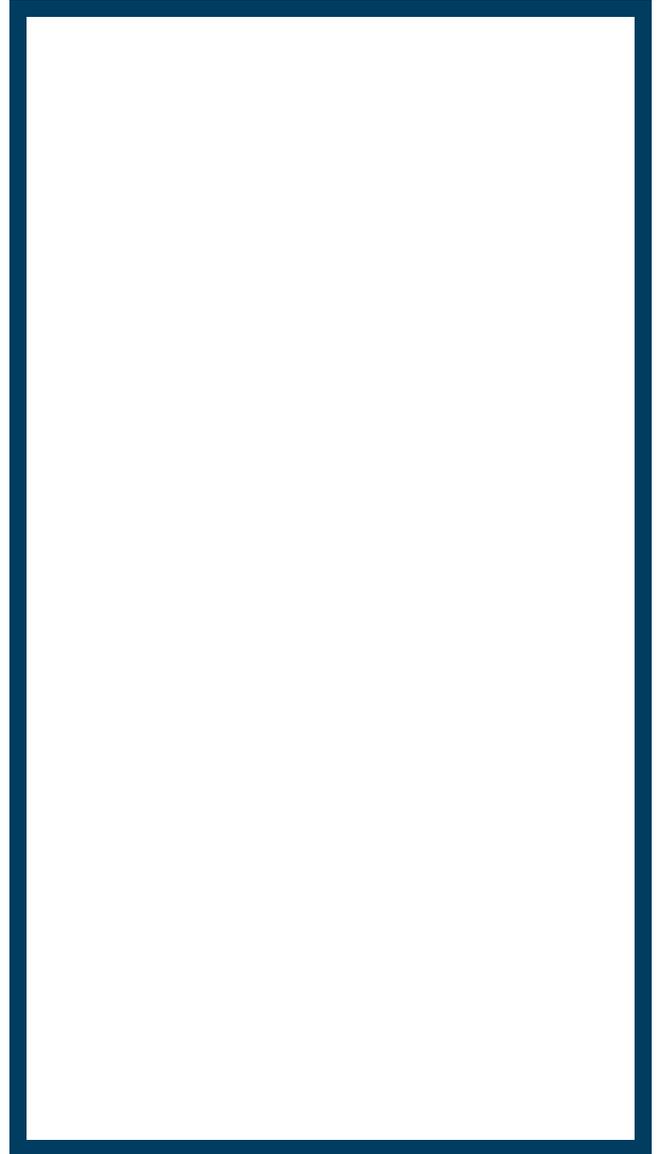


IDENTITY IS...



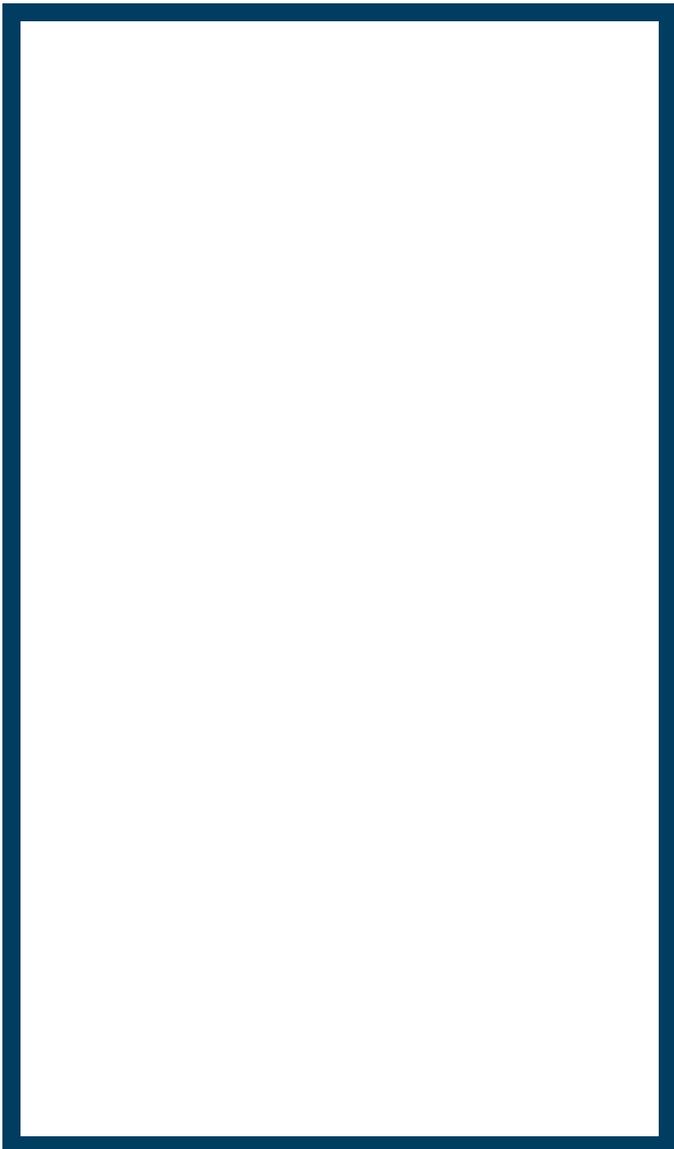
SOCIAL

How do you identify yourself socially? Are you an introvert, an extrovert or somewhere in between? When you have energy how do you use it? How does this occur when you are on the floor/in the gallery/at your site?



RELATIONAL

How are you connected to the land your museum is on? The sky above it? To every person who enters the space? To the communities who were there for thousands of generations before?

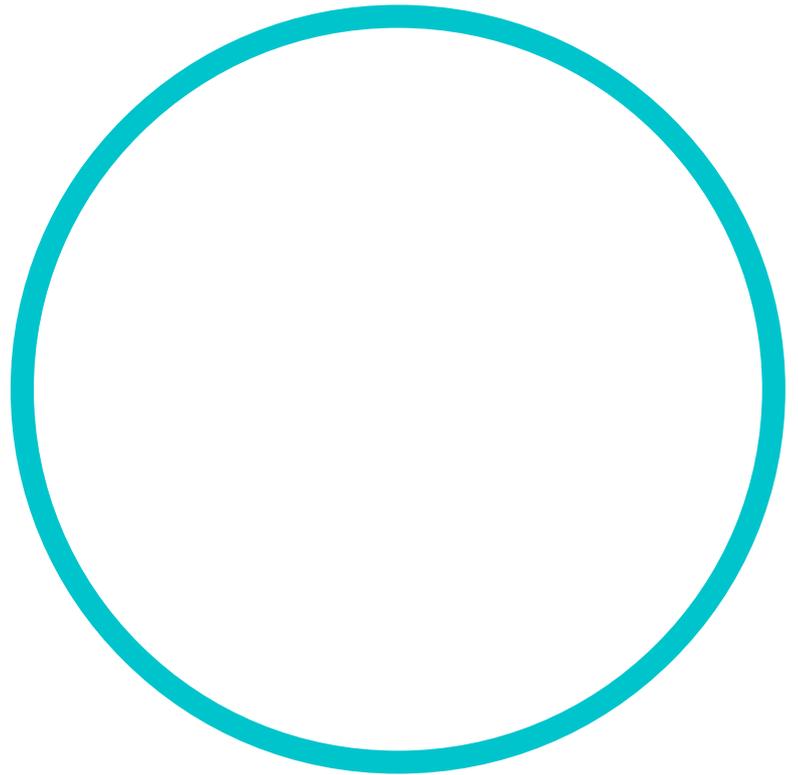


EXERCISE TO ENGAGE



**ASK A FELLOW
EDUCATOR TO PICK
FIVE WORDS TO
DESCRIBE YOU.**

FIVE WORDS:



**WHAT DO YOU
THINK? DO THE
WORDS RESONATE
WITH WHO YOU
ARE?**



IDENTITY IS...



SPATIAL

Where do you feel most like *you*?
Use this space to express how
you feel in your favorite space.

IDENTITY IS...



SPIRITUAL

Do you connect to any part of yourself spiritually? How does this impact your worldview and how you receive others?

What does it mean to have an identity that is environmental? Do you consider yourself to be in identity with the natural world?

ENVIRONMENTAL

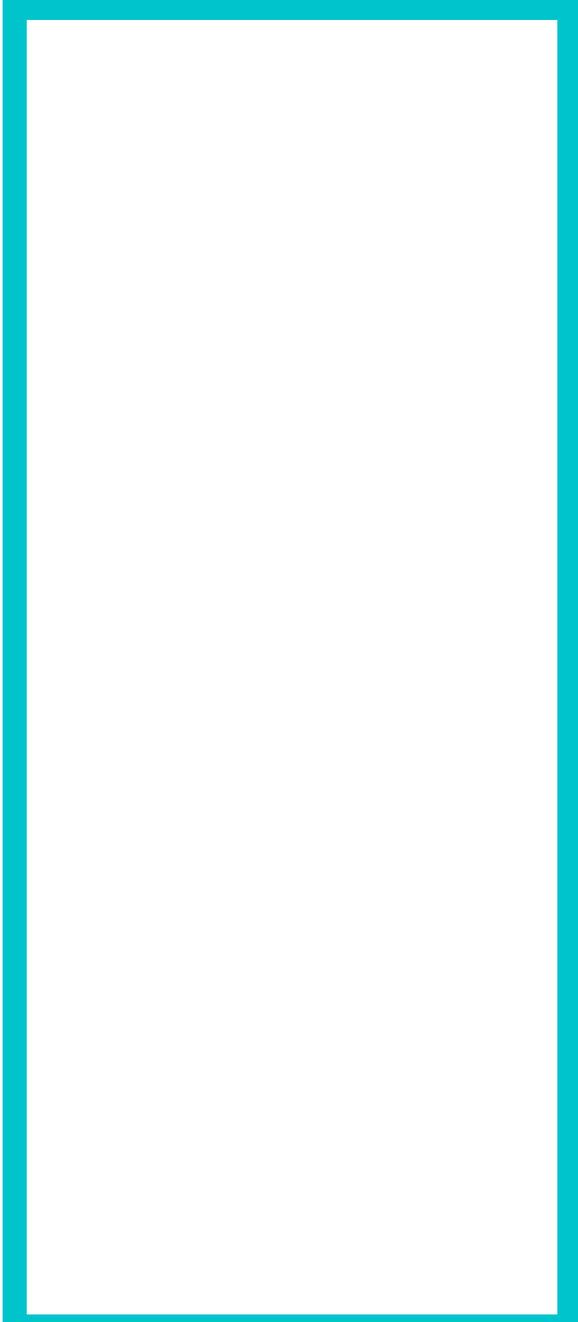
MUSEUMS AS A THIRD SPACE



‘Third space’ isn’t home, and isn’t work - it’s more like the living room of society at large. It’s a place where you are neither family nor co-worker, and yet where the values, interests, gossip, complaints and inspirations of these two other spheres intersect. It’s a place at least one step removed from the structures of work and home, more random, and yet familiar enough to breed a sense of identity and connection. It’s a place of both possibility and comfort, where the unexpected and the mundane transcend and mingle.”

- Michael Hickey

**My Museum Space is
'Third Space'
When/Where/Because:**



IDENTITY IS...



CONNECTED TO MEMORY AND STORY

In the next section, we transition into the power and impact of memory and story. Record any final notes or reflections for this section below.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Allen, B. *Difference Matters: Communicating social identity*. (2003).
Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Beckett, Chris and Taylor, Hilary. (2010). *Human Growth and Development*. Sage Publications Inc. Thousand Oaks: California.

hooks, bell. (1994). *Teaching to transgress : education as the practice of freedom*. New York : Routledge.

Burke, P. (2006). *Social Identity Theory*. In *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* (pp. 111-118). Stanford University Press.

Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper. (2001). *Collective Identity and Social Movements*. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:1, 283-305

“Loving, Knowing Ignorance”: A Problem for the Educational Mission of Museums, *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 2016

Scott, Joan W. (1991). “The Evidence of Experience.” *Critical Inquiry*, 17(4), p. 773-797.

Turner, J. C., & Tajfel, H. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. *Psychology of intergroup relations*, 7-24.

Swedish History Museum sign image taken by the author.

**A MUSEUM
EDUCATOR'S
IDENTITY
TOOLKIT
PART II:
IDENTITY,
MEMORY, STORY,
LEARNING**

CAT JENSEN
GOUCHER COLLEGE 2018

“The consequence of the single story is that it robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult and it emphasizes that we are different rather than how we are similar.”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



PART II: IDENTITY, MEMORY, STORY, LEARNING

In this section, we examine memory, story, and learning. How do you tell stories about yourself and the work you do? How does the way stories are told impact the experiences and learning of others?



IDENTITY & MEMORY



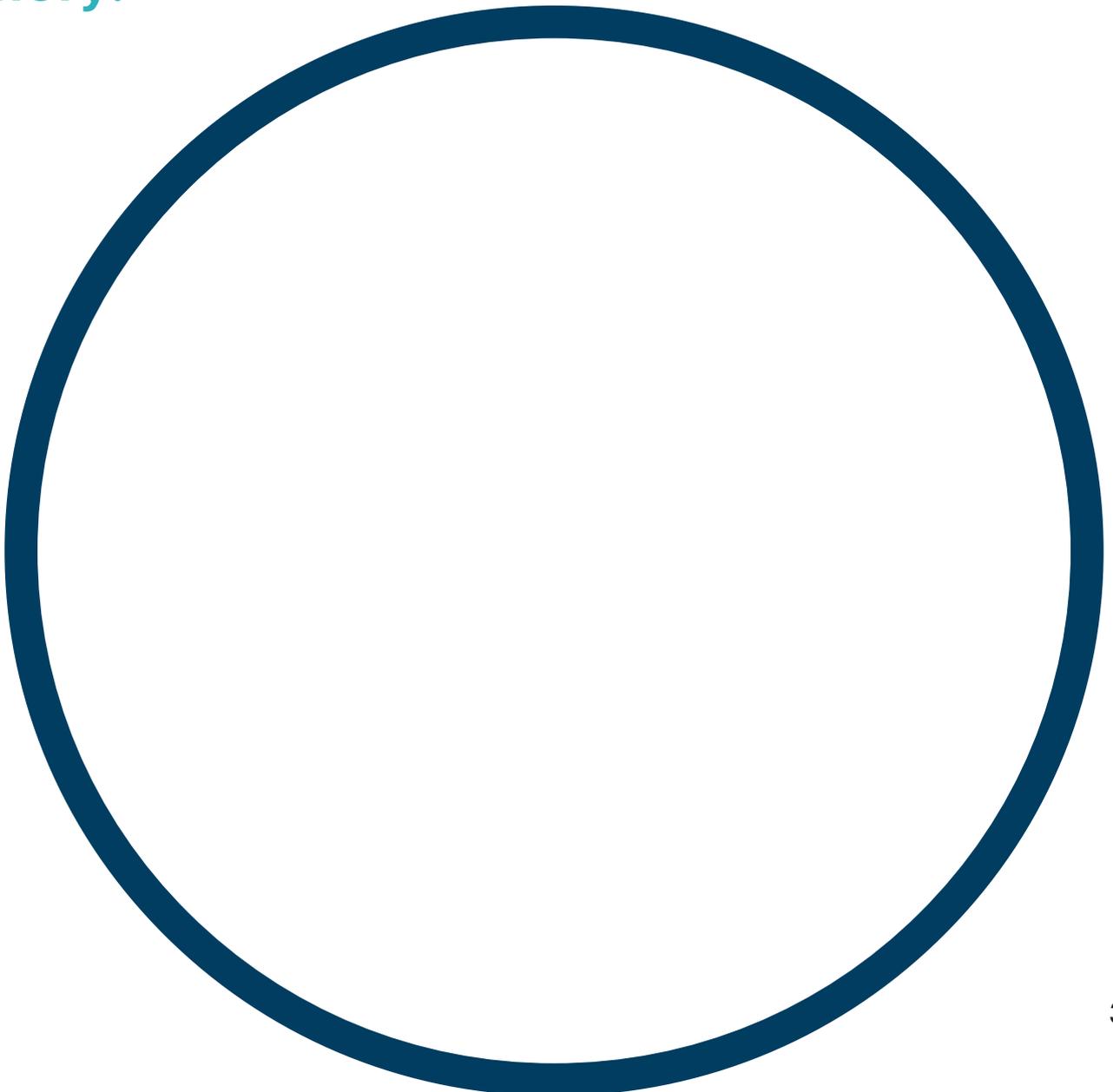
**WHAT IS A FAVORITE
MEMORY AND WHY? WHAT
EMOTIONS COME WITH IT?**



MEMORY & MUSEUMS



Museums have the ability to create memories that last a lifetime. When did you first visit a museum? What was it like? Did it have an impact on why you work where you do today? Record your memory.



IDENTITY & STORY



“Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity...When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

**CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE TED TALK:
THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY**

IDENTITY & STORY



EXPERIENCE STORY CIRCLE:

Stories are a powerful way for us to exchange knowledge, learn about one another and grow together. With two other educators take turns answering the question:

What is your favorite area or space in the museum and why?

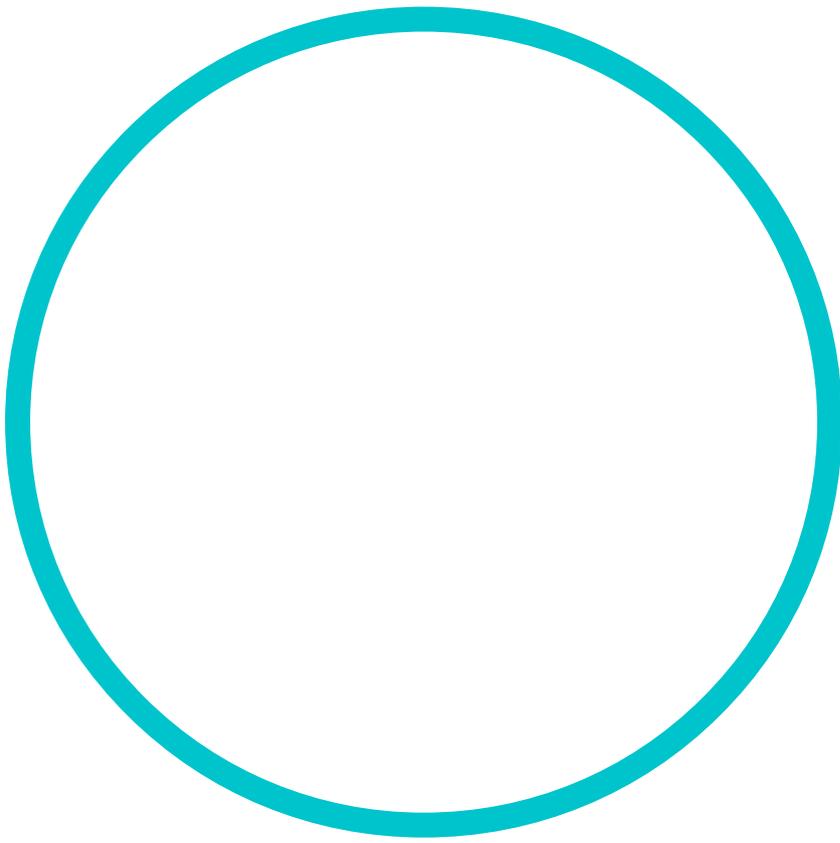
Each participant should spend an entire five minutes speaking without interruption.

RECORD YOUR STORY HERE

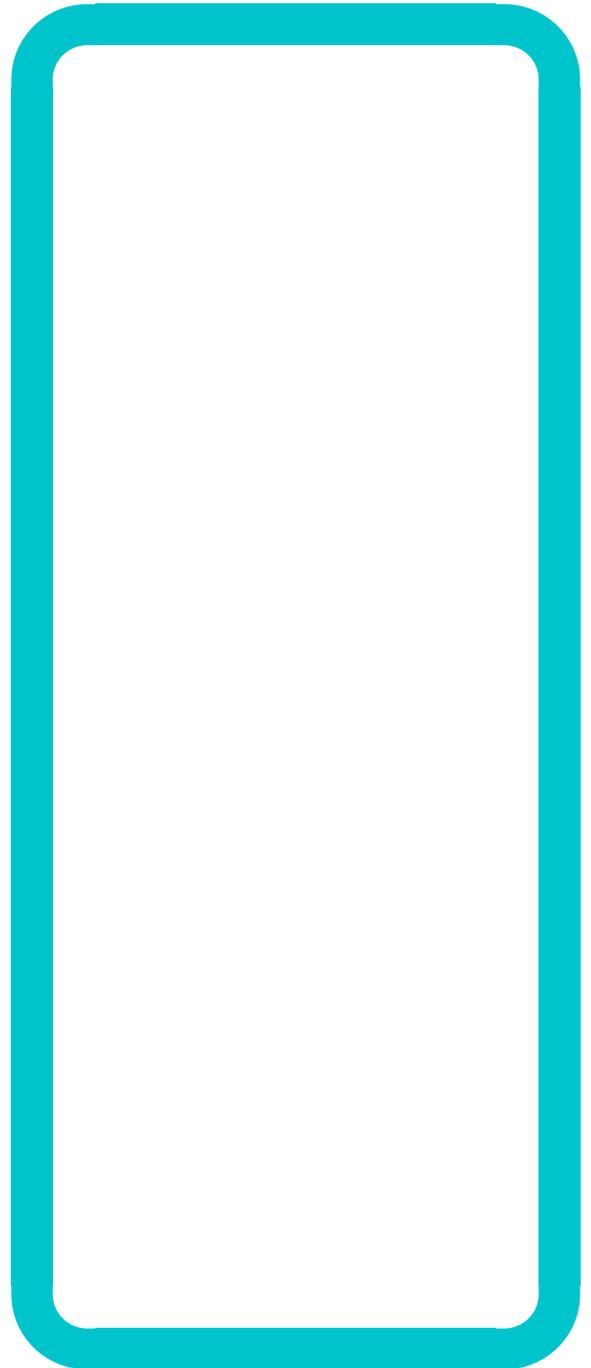


STORY CIRCLE REFLECTION

**DID YOU CONNECT TO THE STORIES
OF YOUR FELLOW EDUCATORS? WHY
OR WHY NOT?**



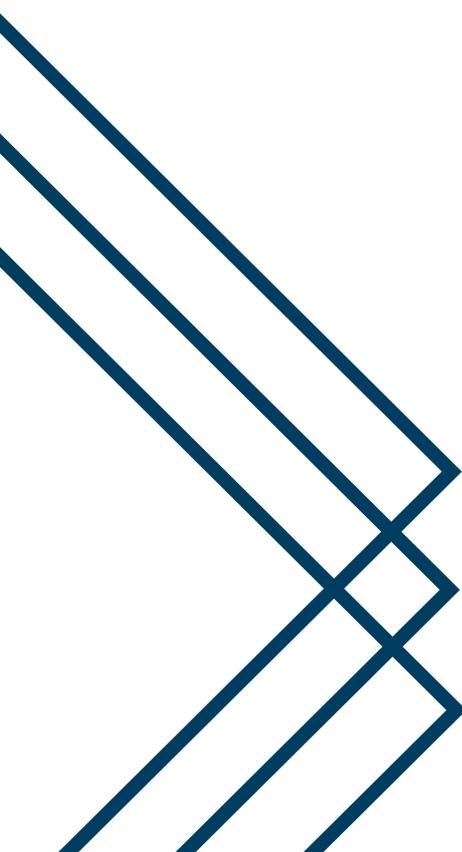
**IF YOU COULD TELL YOUR STORY
AGAIN, WOULD YOU CHANGE
ANYTHING?**

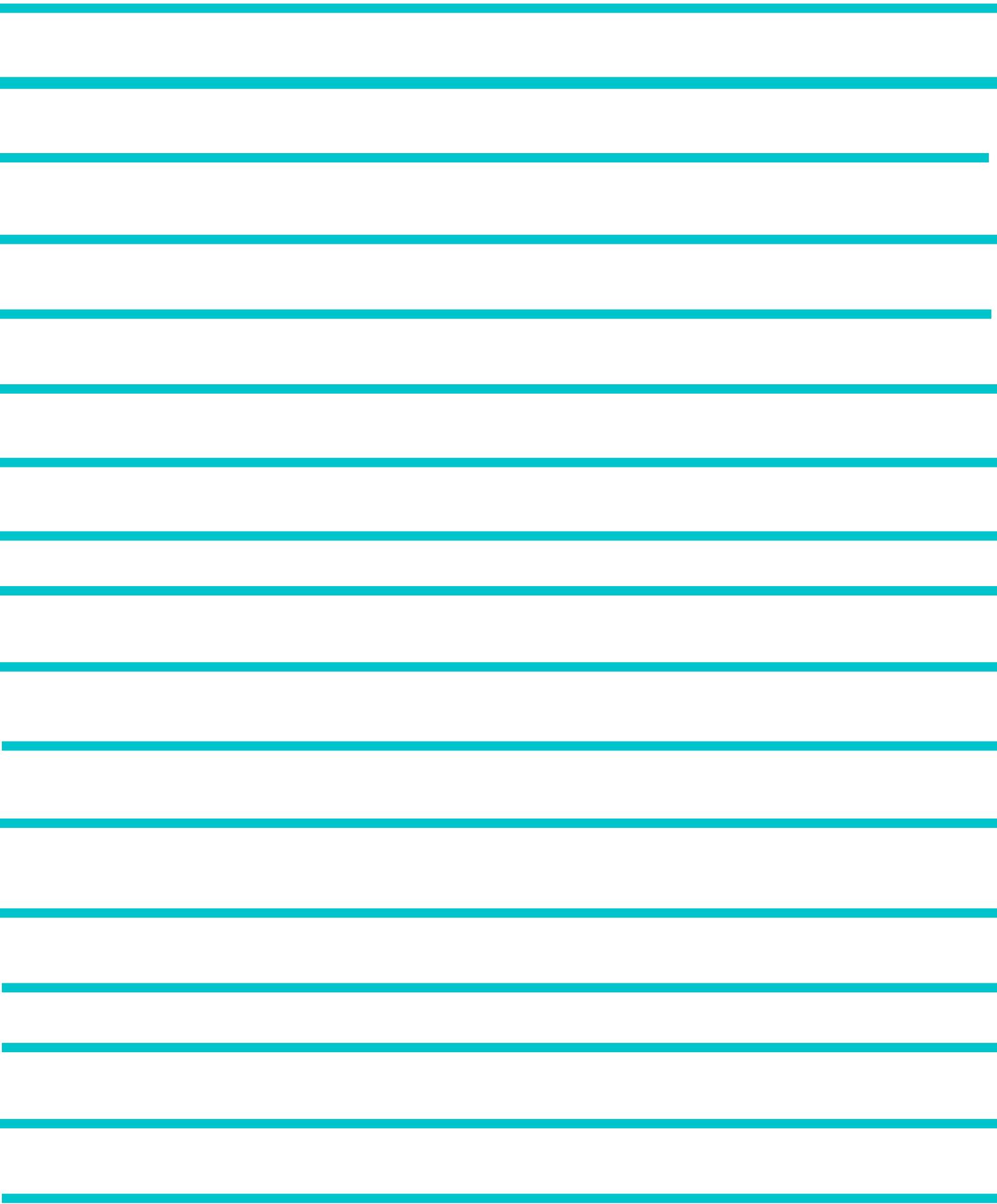


STORY & MUSEUMS



What stories does your museum tell about itself? What stories do you tell others about what happens there?





EXERCISE TO ENGAGE



Items and objects are carriers of story and have unique identities. Museums often hold objects that do not belong to the people who work there, but to a community outside the museum. How do museum workers tell stories that honor the identities of these items? Do we have the right to?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Read about Artifact Reading by [Clicking here](#)



EXERCISE: IDENTITY ITEM

Select an item from your life that demonstrates something about your identity. Bring it to your museum and tell others its story. How does it relate to you? Why is it important?

Where did it come from? Where do you keep it? How is it influenced by any of the identities you just read about/engaged with? Fill in the next couple of pages with information about your item and your identity.

EXERCISE: IDENTITY ITEM

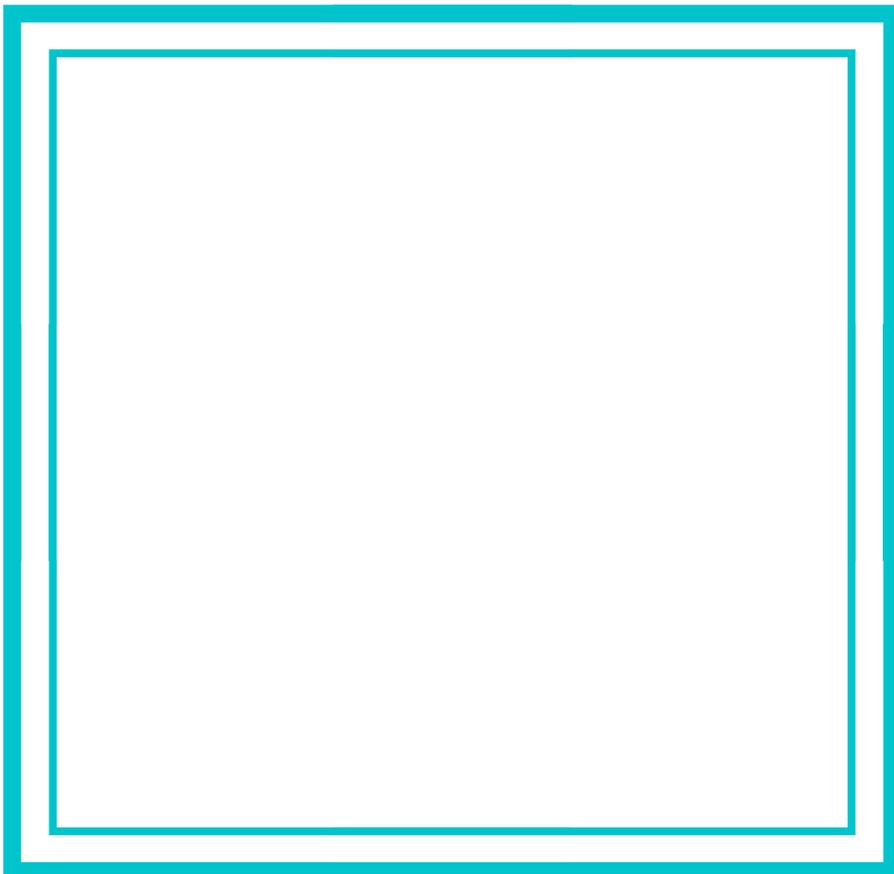


Your item

The story

EXERCISE: IDENTITY ITEM

What did you learn about yourself,
your item or your story?

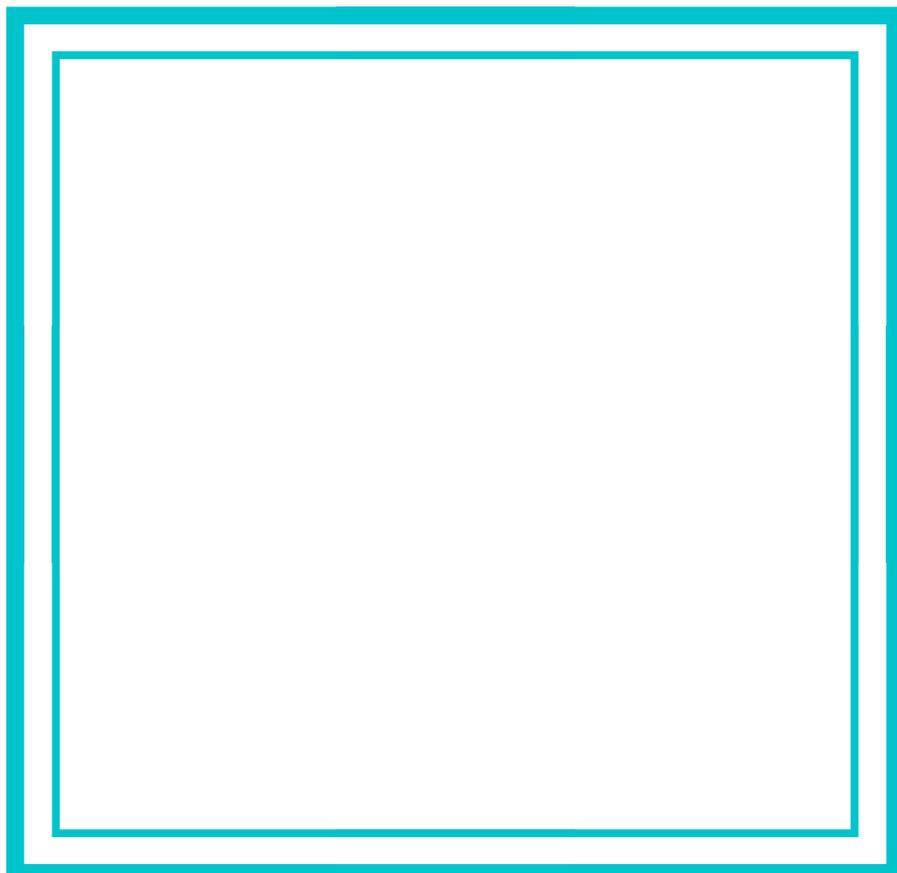


Does your
story change
or evolve in
any way?

EXERCISE: IDENTITY ITEM



Did you present your items story differently depending on who you shared with?



How can story be a part of your educator pedagogy?

why do you educate?

EDUCATOR IDENTITY

FILL IN THE CHARTS BELOW ABOUT YOURSELF

WHAT INFORMS YOUR PEDAGOGY

WHEN DO YOU LOVE WHAT YOU DO?

WHEN DO YOU NOT?

WHAT DOES EDUCATOR MEAN?

WHY EDUCATE HERE?

EDUCATOR JOURNEY



How did you come to work at your museum? Use this space to record your journey however you wish!

IDENTITY & MUSEUM EDUCATION



Do you identify with being an *educator*? Does the work you do come up when people ask about you and your story? Does this impact what you bring to your museum space?



HOW DO YOU LEARN?

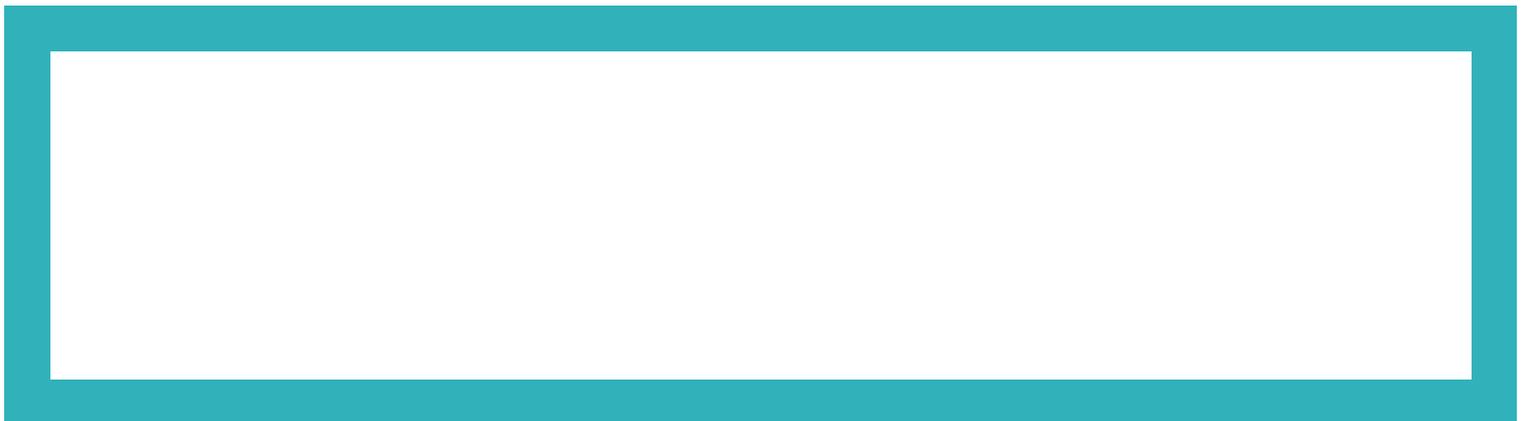
I LEARN BEST WHEN



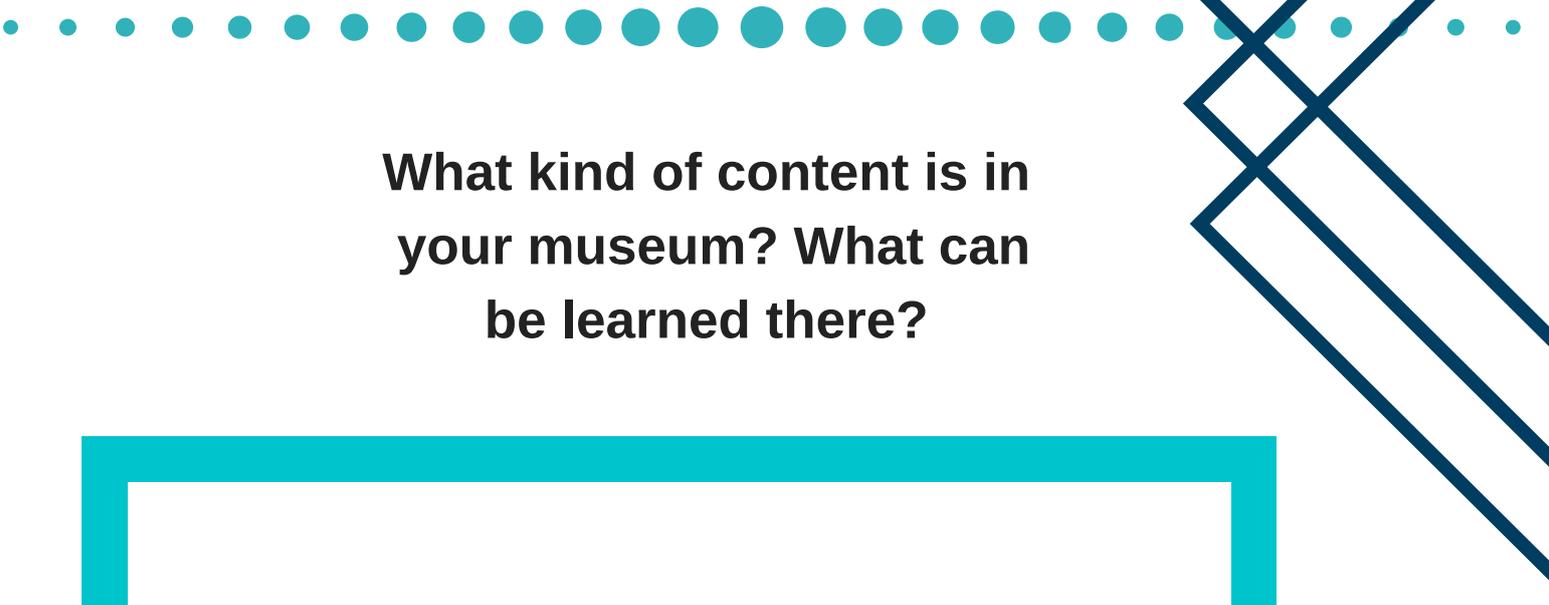
TOOLS I USE FOR LEARNING



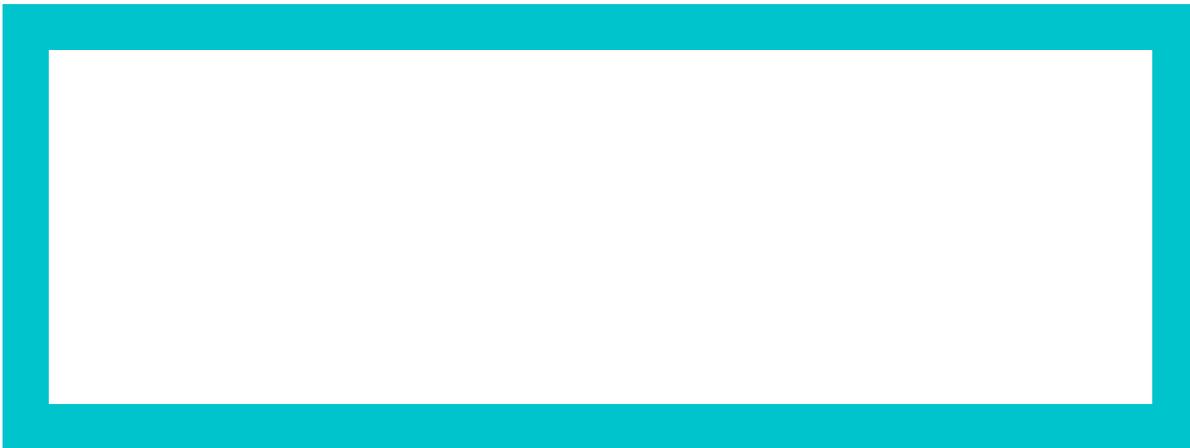
WHEN LEARNING SOMETHING NEW I NEED



LEARNING & MUSEUMS



What kind of content is in your museum? What can be learned there?



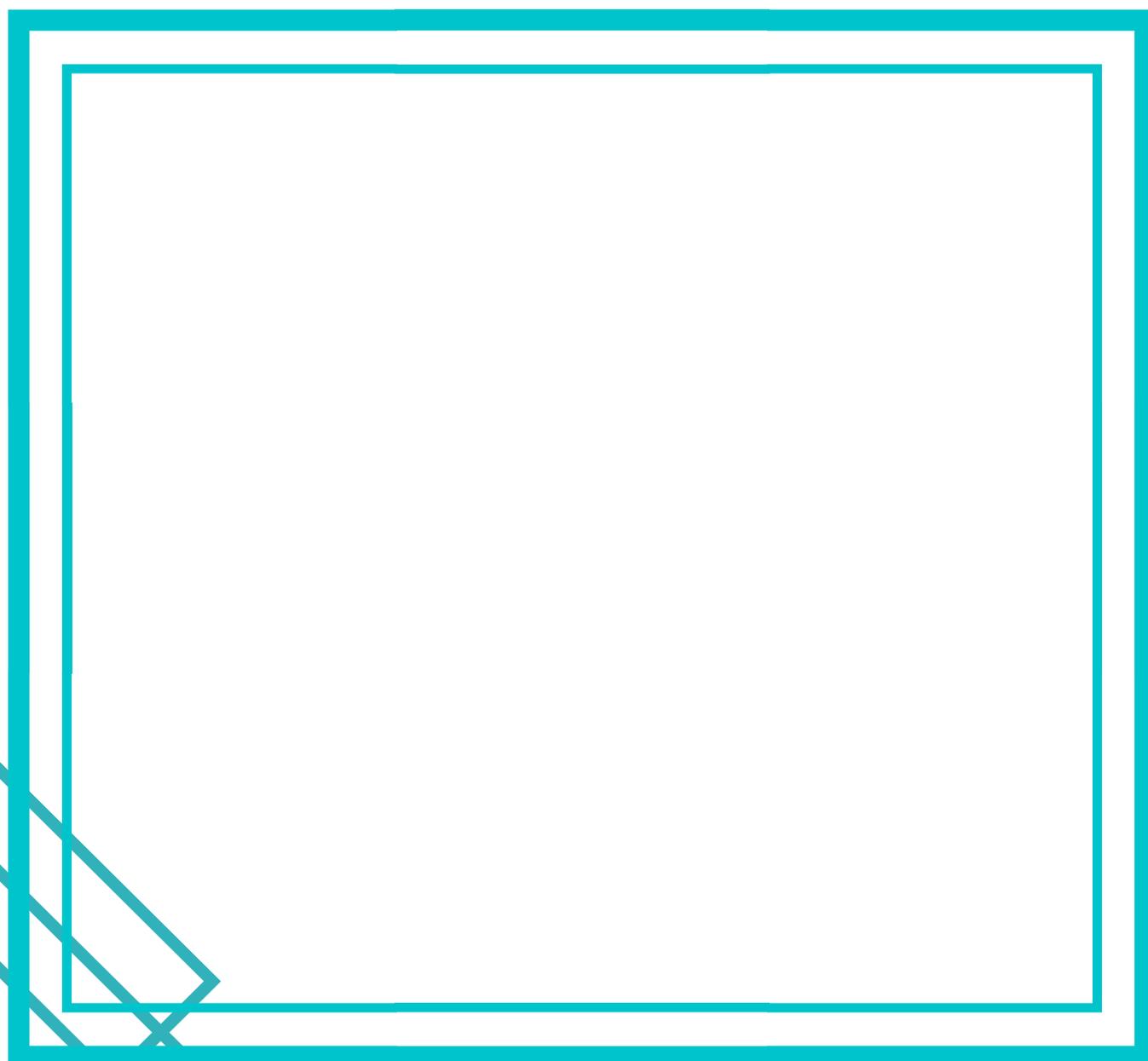
What do you love to teach/facilitate? What is the desired outcome? How do you measure if a lesson/facilitation has been successful?



IDENTITY & LEARNING



Think of the last time you learned new content in your museum space. How was it presented? How did you go about taking in and retaining the new information? If you had presented the information to someone else, how would you do so?



IDENTITY IS...



**IMPACTED BY SOCIETY,
HISTORY, AND POWER.**



**THE NEXT
SECTIONS
EXPLORE HOW
IDENTITY IS
COMPLEX AND
IMPACTED BY
MANY DIFFERENT
EXPERIENCES AND
EVERYDAY
REALITIES.**

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES



Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (2007).
Teaching for diversity and social justice (2nd
ed.). New York: Routledge.

Adichie, Chimamanda. "The Dangers of a
Single Story." TED. London. July 2009.
YouTube. 13:33.

Eleuterio, Sue. Folk Culture Inspires Writing
Across the Classroom. C.A.R.T.S. Newsletter.
New York: City Lore. Fall 1997:4. Accessed
July 5, 2018.

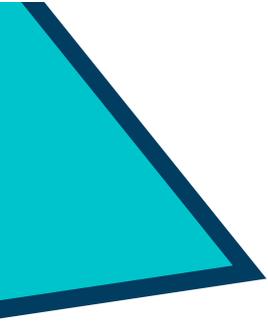
http://www.louisianavoices.org/pdfs/Unit7/Lesson1/ARTIFACT_Reading.pdf

Freire, Paulo. (2000). Pedagogy of the
oppressed /New York : Continuum

Granger, Colette A. (2011). Silent Moments in
Education: An Autoethnography of Learning,
Teaching, and Learning to Teach. Toronto Ont.:
University of Toronto Press.

hooks, bell (1994). Teaching to Transgress.
Education as the practice of freedom, London:
Routledge.

**A MUSEUM
EDUCATOR'S
IDENTITY
TOOLKIT
PART III:
IDENTITY,
SOCIETY
AND YOU**



PART III: IDENTITY, SOCIETY AND YOU

This section asks you to explore how you identify with your race, your gender and other experiences and consider how these identities occur in your museum space.

Note that this is not an all inclusive overview of all identities. Definitions and in-depth examination of these identities, privilege and oppression will be covered in Part IV.



IDENTITY AND YOU



EARLY LIFE

“The total set of expectations in which children become clear about norms and expectations and learn how to function as respected and accepted members of a culture...children are socialized at both conscious and unconscious levels to internalize the dominant values and norms of their culture, and in doing so, develop a sense of self.”

Allen, B. *Difference Matters: Communicating social identity.* (2003). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Were you able to visit museums or other public education centers when you were young? Do those experiences or others you may have had have an influence on your pedagogy and how you teach?



IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



RACE AND ETHNICITY

How do you identify with race? Ethnicity? How do you define each term? Do any emotions come up when you read/hear/see/feel them? Is race and/or ethnicity a part of your personal identity?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Does your museum engage in critical conversations about race? How does race impact visitor experience? How does race impact your experience?

RACE & ETHNICITY AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



GENDER

What experiences do you have with gender? Have you ever been treated differently because of your assumed gender?

SEXUALITY

Has your sexuality ever been doubted or questioned? Have you ever had to "come out" to someone?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Does your museum have gender-neutral bathrooms? How do people of all genders and sexualities know that they are welcome there?

GENDER & SEXUALITY AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



AGE

Do you ever think about your age when you are at work? Why or why not? Have you ever experienced not being taken seriously because of your age? Is your age a defining part of your identity right now?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

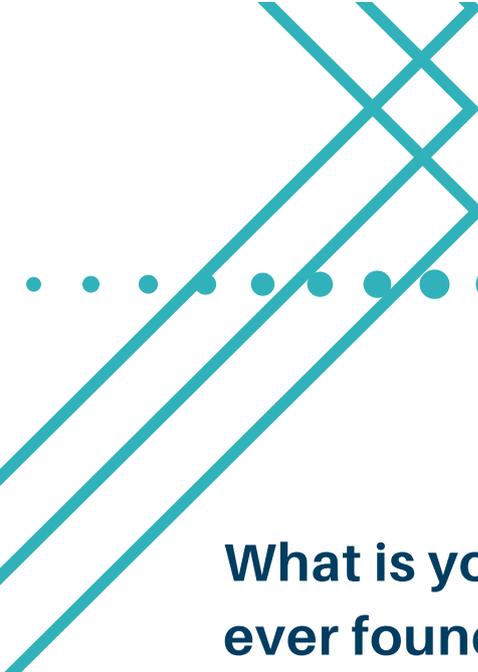
How does your museum respond to young people? Are they valued as having their own knowledge and important contributions? Are they ridiculed when they are on their phones or communicating in new and different ways?

Are elders respected and accommodated with alternative ways to experience your space? Does your space offer discounts and or scholarships for youth, students and elders?

AGE AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM



IDENTITY AND SOCIETY

ABILITY/(DIS)ABILITY

What is your definition of accessibility? Have you ever found a space to be difficult to navigate?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Ability is not limited to physical experience. Are there low-sensory areas or hard of hearing materials at your museum? These might include sound canceling headphones, light dimming glasses, quiet areas.

Are there ramps, places to sit down for guests who need to/have chronic pain and other ways to experience an exhibit that does not involve steps?

Are there subtitles on all your digital media and translation services available? Do guests have to call ahead weeks in advance to gain access to services? How might this be limiting to increasing/improving programming?

ABILITY/(DIS)ABILITY AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (CLASS)

Are you upper class, middle class, working class, poor? Do you sometimes have to worry about finances? Did you grow up in a different class than you are now? How does this impact your attitudes about class today?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

How much does it cost to visit your museum? Does your museum offer free or reduced priced days or rates? Does your museum offer scholarship for Title 1 schools? When free days are available, how are people treated? Do you offer trainings on making sure people are not unintentionally using phrasing/language isolating and insulting to poor/discount accessing guests? Is your museum near public transportation? Are families with small children without childcare included in everything from programs to staff meetings?

CLASS AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



RELIGION/NON-BELIEFS

Is there a religion or belief system that is part of your identity? How does it show up in your daily life? Has it ever been a part of your educating pedagogy?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Do you work in a museum where items of a particular faith are present? Does your museum put on events with holiday names in the title? Around holidays do your exhibits put on crafts and activities that only promote one type of belief system?

RELIGION/NON-BELIEF AND

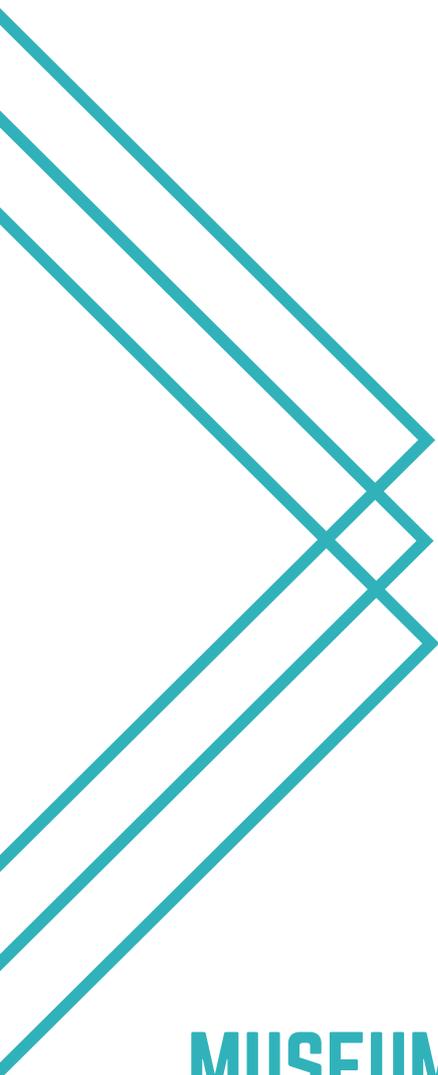


MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM



IDENTITY AND SOCIETY

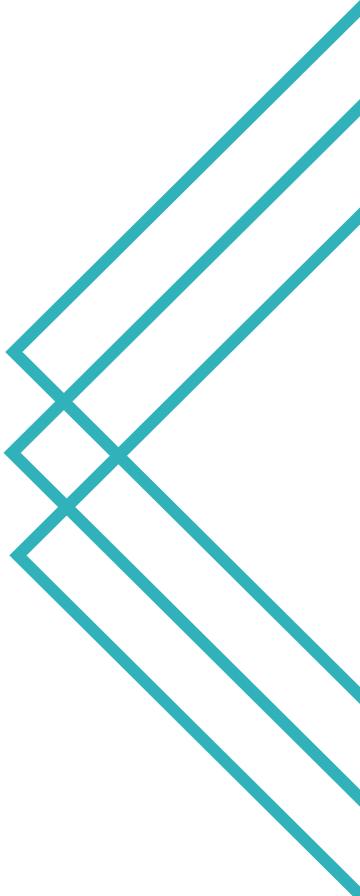


EDUCATION

What is your highest level of education completed to date? What about members of your family? Your co-workers? Those running your department?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Does your museum require that certain positions have higher degrees even if they are not heavy research or specialty based?



EDUCATION AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY

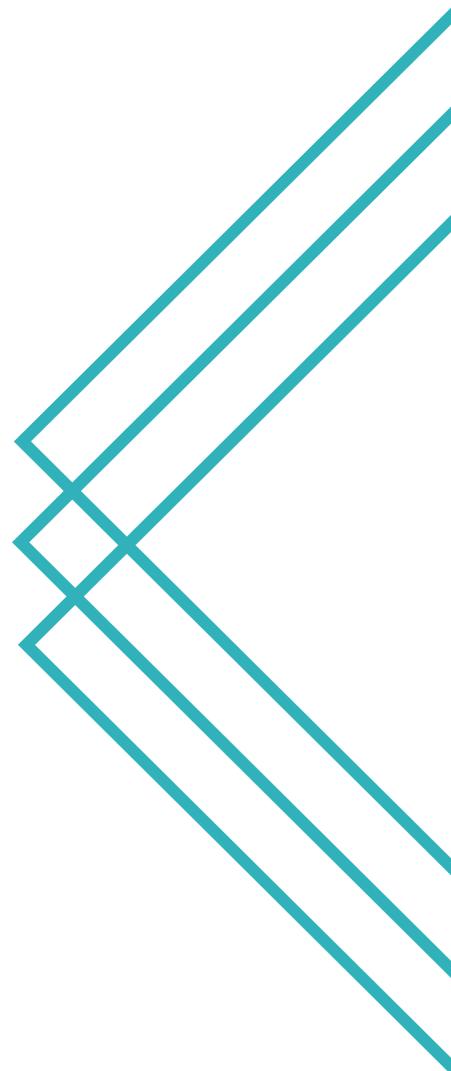


COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Is where you were born a part of your identity? How does this impact your experience and the way you receive others? If your country of origin is someone different than where you live now, how does this impact your identity?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Is your museum space welcoming to immigrant or refugee communities? Does your programming reflect only a Western worldview? Are there members of your staff and volunteer teams who are from other countries of origin than the United States? How are their insights and truths visible in your space and programs?



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND



MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM



IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



LANGUAGE

Is English (the privileged language of the US) your first language? Can you find signage and information with your first language wherever you go? When you visit a space for work, fun or otherwise are you confident someone will speak your primary language and you will be helped without question? Do you speak more than one language? How is language a part of your identity?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

How many languages are spoken among staff, volunteers and other members of your museum community? Are there bi/multilingual signs or handouts available?



LANGUAGE AND

MY IDENTITY

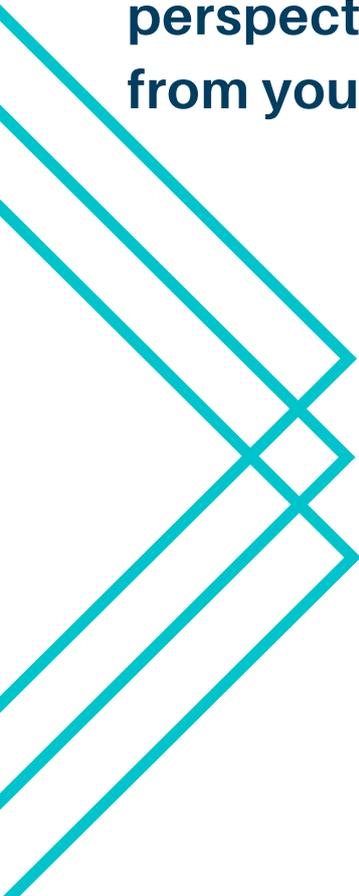
MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



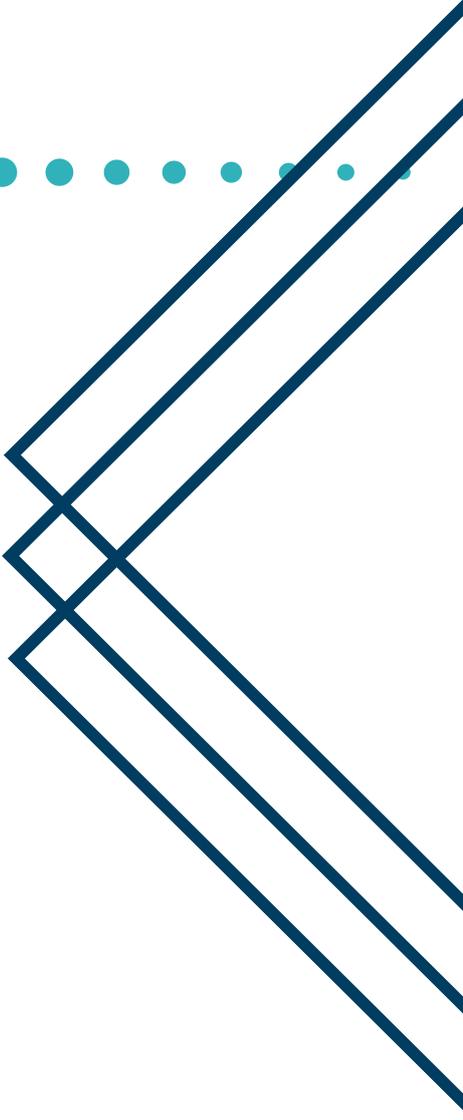
LEARNING

What does it mean to "know" something? How do you know what you do? When you learn, do you consult sources that are from perspectives of identities different from yours?



MUSEUM CONNECTION

When you teach, facilitate, are in a show or give a lecture, are you aware of many styles of learning? Does your work include visual, oral, kinesthetic, audio, written elements? How do you respond when guests question the validity of cultural knowledge not their own?



LEARNING AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



WORK EXPERIENCE

Is working with your museum your first or one of your first jobs? Is it a career goal to continue to work in museums? If this is not your first job, what did you do before? What skills got you to where you are? Did the position you are in require you to have a certain number of years of experience? What if you had not had a certain number of years but possessed all the necessary skills and were still not given a position?

MUSEUM CONNECTION

Does your museum tend to post jobs that require a degree? Are staff and volunteers acknowledged and respected for what they contribute and the skills they have regardless of education background?

WORK EXPERIENCE AND

MY IDENTITY

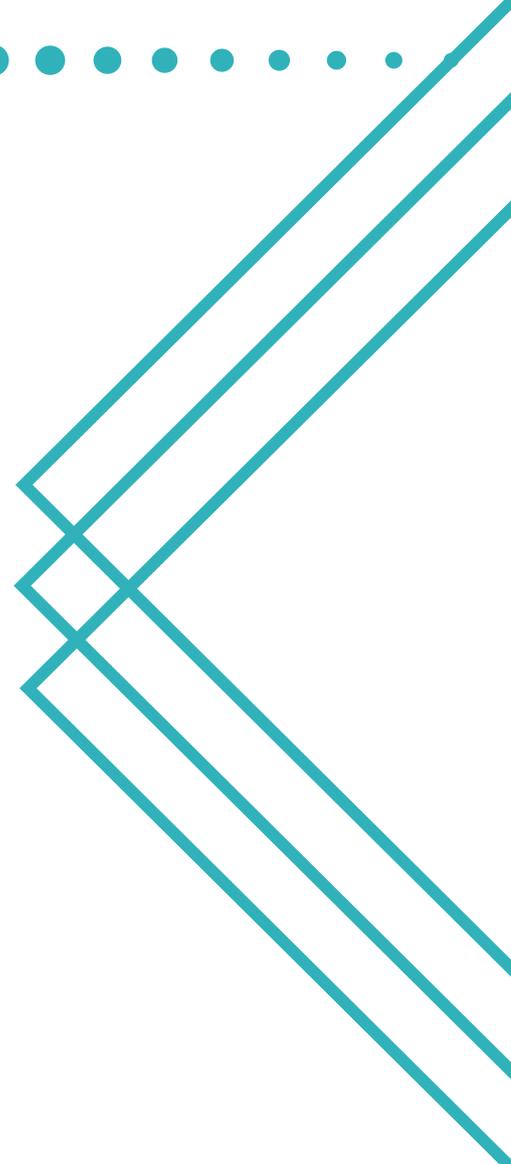
MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY



VETERAN STATUS

Are you or anyone you know a veteran? Active duty? How can this impact everyday experience and identity?



MUSEUM CONNECTION

Does your museum offer discounts to those who are active duty, or who have been in the service? Are these voices and perspectives considered in your space?

VETERAN STATUS AND

MY IDENTITY

MY MUSEUM

IDENTITY IS...



SYSTEMATICALLY INFLUENCED AND IMPACTED

Before transitioning into our next sections where we dive deeper into identity, privilege and oppression and museums, it is critical to consider the ways our identities have or have not been able to exist in space.

When have you been influenced or impacted by a system such as a school, a museum, a church, a camp? How have these institutions shaped your identity?

SELF-REFLECTION SPACE



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Craib, Ian. (1998). *Experiencing Identity*. Social Theory Ser. London: Sage Publications.

Dewhurst, M. & Hendricks, K. (2016). Dismantling Racism in Museum Education. *Journal of Folklore and Education*, 3, 25-30.

Erikson, E. H. (1980). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York, NY, US: W W Norton & Co.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). "Yes, but how do we do it?" practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In Landsman, Landsman, Julie, & Lewis, Chance W. (Eds.), *White teachers, diverse classrooms : A guide to building inclusive schools, promoting high expectations, and eliminating racism* (p. 29-42). Sterling, Va: Stylus Pub.

Reed-Danahay, D. E. (1997). Introduction. In D. E. Reed-Danahay (Ed.), *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social* (pp. 1-17). Oxford: Berg.

Scott, Joan W. (1991). "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry*, 17(4), p. 773-797.

**A MUSEUM
EDUCATOR'S
IDENTITY TOOLKIT
PART IV:
IDENTITY,
PRIVILEGE AND
OPPRESSION**

“...while it is accurate to say that the past five hundred years do not constitute the entire span of Indigenous history, this period has had a disproportionate impact on our communities and cultures. And its impact on our communities continues.

Colonization is not over, not has the holocaust in the Americas ever fully been recognized. The continuing legacies of these policies in Indian Country are very much a part of contemporary experience and lives continue to be lost because of them. The period may have been short relative to deep ancestral histories, but it has had the most devastating impact.”

Amy Lonetree, Decolonizing Museums

PART IV: IDENTITY, PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION

This section of the toolkit addresses how some identities are favored above others in society. Use this section to examine where you have privilege, where you don't and how it impacts you in your museum space.

**CLICK THE ARTICLES BELOW
TO READ AND REFLECT:**

**Why I Won't Give You Ten Tips to
Manage Your Privilege**

**6 Ways to De-Weaponize
Your Privilege**

By Natalie Burke

PRIVILEGE

Unearned entitlements: Things of value that all people should have and experience. **Example:** Feeling safe in a public space.

Unearned advantage: When an unearned entitlement is only available to certain groups of people.

Example of unearned advantage: All people should feel safe in your museum space, but this isn't always communicated by your space. If your museum claim to be a space where LGBTQ+ folks are welcome but there are no gender-neutral bathrooms, not all members of the community are going to feel safe and respected.

Conferred dominance: When one group is given power over another. **Example:** When indigenous folks are not in positions of curation in your museum and white researchers have historically been seen as the educated "experts" on indigenous cultural items and history.

OPPRESSION

The attitudes, behaviors, and systemic social arrangements by which members of one group are exploited and subordinated while members of another group are granted privileges.

Read More: [White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.](#)

“The dominant groups have given priority to their own experiences and places in the world and have constructed serviceable others: that is constructed others so as to be of service to the dominant groups’ own needs, values, interests and points of view. Indeed, although its specific forms may have changed throughout Western history, the Western project has had an unnerving continuity: dominant groups constructing serviceable others.”

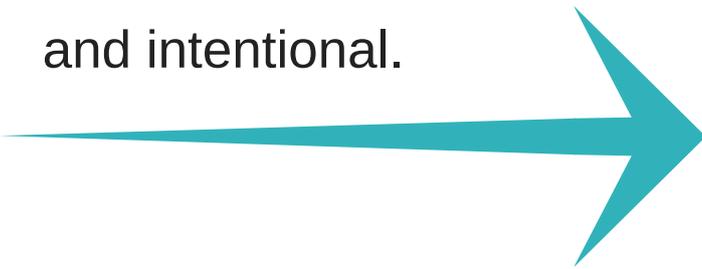
Edward E. Sampson, *Celebrating the Other: A Dialogic Account of Human Nature*.

PRIVILEGE IS...



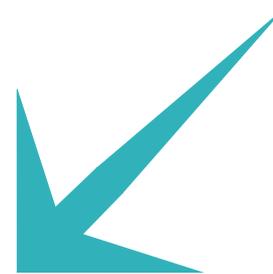
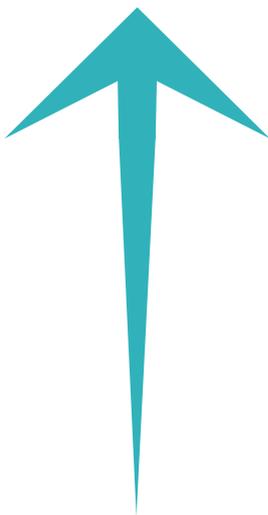
INDIVIDUAL

The personal attitudes and actions that reflect prejudice against a social identity group
Can be unintentional and intentional.



INSTITUTIONAL

The policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by institutions that disadvantage some identity groups and advantage others. Can be intentional and unintentional.



SOCIETAL/CULTURAL

The social norms, roles, rituals, language, music, and art that reflect and reinforce the belief that one social identity group is superior to another. Can be intentional or unintentional.

SECTION KEY TERMS

1

PATRIARCHY

A social system in which men hold primary power and predominate roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property.

2

POWER

The ability to control access to resources, the ability to influence others, and access to decision makers.

3

WHITE SUPREMACY

The belief that white people are superior to those of all other races, especially the black race, and should therefore dominate society.

4

RACISM

Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior

5

COLOR-BLIND RACISM

A form of racism that ignores racism and its historic, political, social and emotional everyday realities.

6

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Occurs in all types of institutions even when the institution does not intend to make distinctions on the basis of race.

7

COLONIZATION

A series of events and conditions that occur when white Europeans travel, conquer and take control of non-European ancestral land and resources.

social identity	privileged identity	(dis)advantaged identity	system /ism
race	white	people of color	racism
sexual orientation	straight/heterosexual	LGBTQ+	heteronormativity
gender	cisgender men	womxn*, gender non-conforming and transgender folx	cisgender privilege
class	rich, upper middle class	working class, poor	classism
sex	biological men	intersex, biological women	sexism
ability (dis)ability	non- disabled, temporarily disabled	(dis)abled	able-ism
age	adults	young people/ youth, elders	ageism adulthood
religion	protestant christian	other faiths, atheism	religious oppression

*used to promote inclusivity among non cis- and transgender women

ADVANTAGES AND YOU

FILL OUT THE BOXES AS THEY RELATE TO YOU

PRIVILEGES
YOU HAVE

WHAT YOU
WANT TO
LEARN

FEELINGS

WHAT TO
WORK ON

QUESTIONS

(DIS)ADVANTAGE AND YOU

FILL OUT THE BOXES AS THEY RELATE TO YOU

NON-
PRIVILEGES
YOU HAVE

WHAT YOU
WANT TO
LEARN

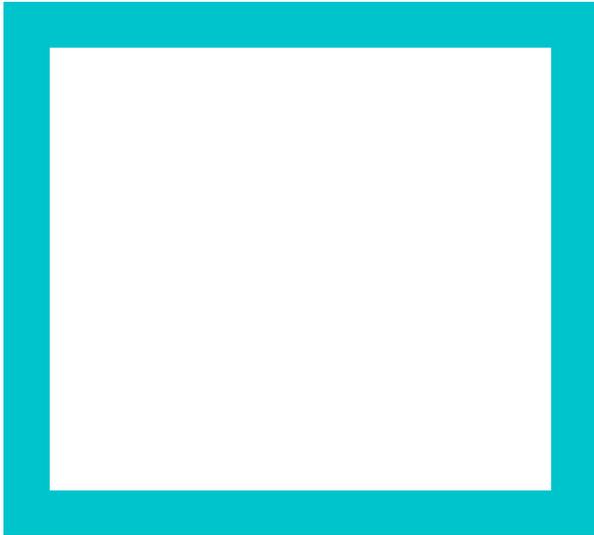
FEELINGS

WHAT TO
WORK ON

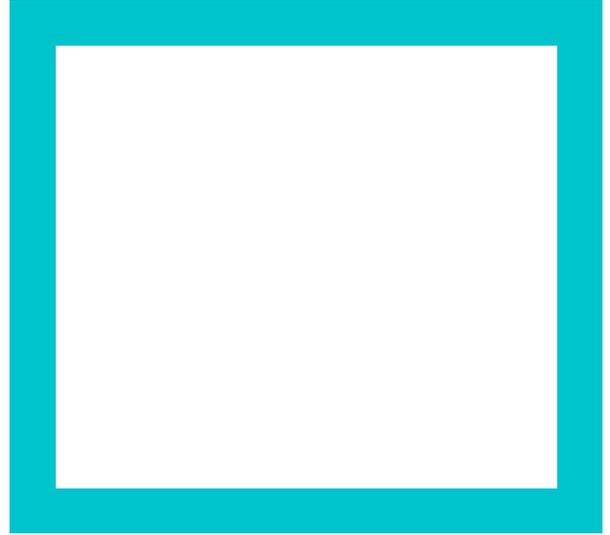
QUESTIONS

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND YOU

**The social identities
I think most about**



**The social identities
I think least about**



**The social identities
that have the
greatest impact on
daily experience
and identity**



**The social identities
that have the least
impact on daily
experience and
identity**



INTERSECTIONALITY



“Intersectionality is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them. Intersectional erasures are not exclusive to black women. People of color within LGBTQ movements; girls of color in the fight against the school-to-prison pipeline; women within immigration movements; trans women within feminist movements; and people with disabilities fighting police abuse — all face vulnerabilities that reflect the intersections of racism, sexism, class oppression, transphobia, able-ism and more.”

**WE ALL HAVE
MANY
IDENTITIES**

Read more here: Kimberlé Crenshaw “Why Intersectionality Can’t Wait” Washington Post Sept 24th, 2015.

SELF-REFLECTION

How do your identities intersect? Are there some that are present before others? Are there any you choose not to reveal at times? Why? Why might other do this?

SELF-REFLECTION SPACE



IDENTITY AND



WHITENESS/WHITE SUPREMACY

If you are white, white identified or benefit from whiteness in another way, how can you begin to explore this privilege deeply and intentionally?

POWER

When do you hold power over others? How does this also happen in your museum space and with the work you do?

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

What does it mean to be a part of an institution? Do you/can you challenge the way yours has or does participate in racism?

COLORBLIND RACISM

Have you heard or used the term "color-blind racism" before? Why is this term actually harmful? What happens when someone refuses to see the lived experience of someone else?

MUSEUM CONNECTION



WHITENESS/WHITE SUPREMACY

Look at the historic and current leadership of your museum. Is it mostly white?

POWER

Who has power in your museum space? When you have it, how do you acknowledge and it or use it? Are there ever times when guests assume you have all the power over the content there? Do you challenge this in the way you facilitate and or teach?

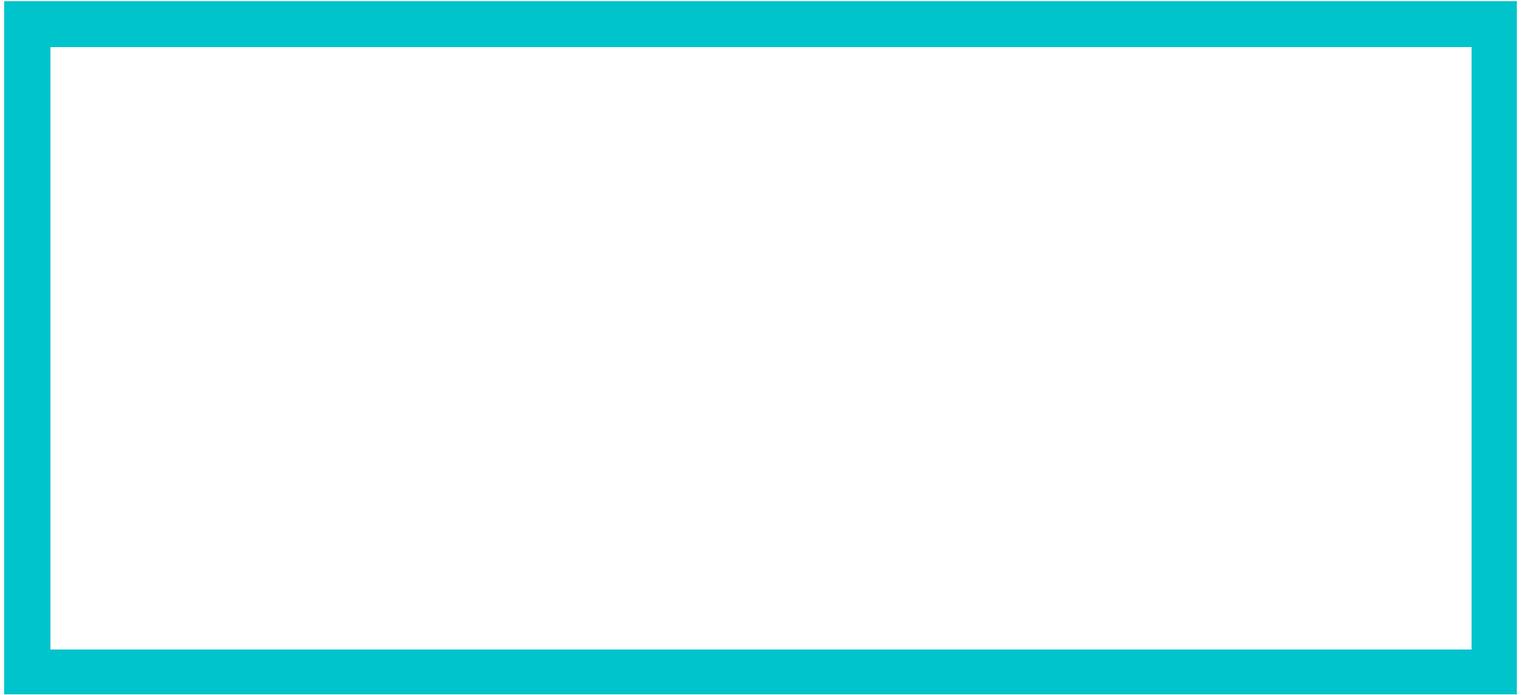
INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

What is your museum's history with institutional racism? Have people of color ever been denied entry? Does your museum have a collections policy which addresses the right of return/repatriation?

COLORBLIND RACISM

Does your museum ever use "race-blind" language when describing its space, policies or community? How would a focus on embracing difference be more beneficial and inclusive?

MY IDENTITY AND RACISM



MY MUSEUM AND RACISM



MICROAGGRESSIONS



"Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership."

Microaggressions invalidate and erase identity.

Micro-assault

Explicit or derogatory.

Example: Intentionally serving a white person before a person of color.

Micro-insult

An unconscious communication:

Example: Asking, where are you from? to someone who is non-white implying they must not be a "real American."

Micro- invalidation

Minimizing thoughts or feelings.

Example: When someone from an oppressed identity is told to calm down when they point out that someone has committed a microaggression.

NOTICING MICROAGGRESSIONS



**Watch the YouTube Video:
How Microaggressions are like
Mosquito Bites.**

**Everyone commits Microaggressions.
Having seen this video, what can you do to
notice them and unlearn this behavior?**

MICROAGGRESSIONS IN YOUR MUSEUM



Does your museum have policy or language that supports challenging and addressing microaggressions when they happen? How might you and your fellow educators begin to do this work together?

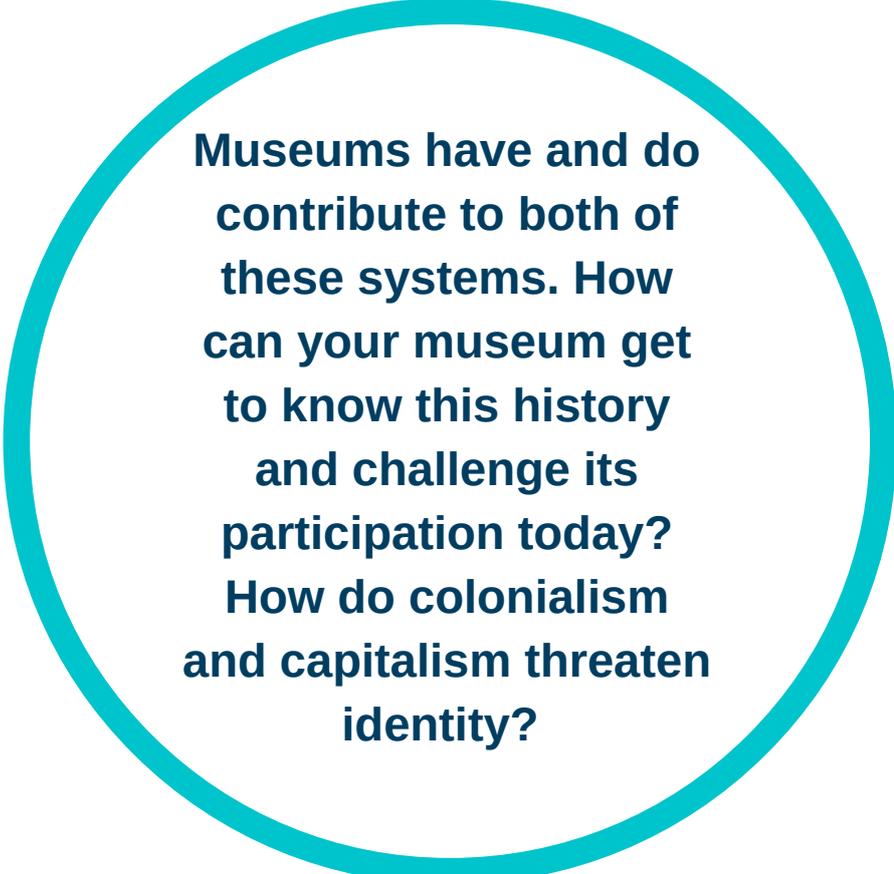
Read: Native Interpreters at Living History Museums Experience Racial Microaggressions: on Washington.edu's website.

COLONIALISM AND CAPITALISM



COLONIZATION IS THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH INDIGENOUS BODIES, LAND AND POSSESSIONS HAVE BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE APPROPRIATED BY SETTLERS FOR THEIR OWN USES. THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH INDIGENOUS BELIEFS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES ARE CRIMINALIZED AND OUTLAWED. DECOLONIZATION CAN BE DEFINED IN SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND PERSONAL TERMS.

CAPITALISM IS AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM IN WHICH A COUNTRY'S TRADE AND INDUSTRY ARE CONTROLLED BY PRIVATE OWNERS FOR PROFIT, RATHER THAN BY THE STATE.



**Museums have and do contribute to both of these systems. How can your museum get to know this history and challenge its participation today?
How do colonialism and capitalism threaten identity?**

COLONIALISM AND CAPITALISM



WHOSE LAND IS YOUR MUSEUM ON?

Where is the indigenous community today? Were they forcefully relocated or pushed out in another way? How did your organization contribute to this? If not present during the removal, what cultural resources did the researchers, scientists, archeologists and anthropologists at your museum acquire without consent?

HOW IS YOUR FAMILY HISTORY CONNECTED TO COLONIALISM?

Is your family or a part of your family a contributor or a victim of colonialism and imperialism? How might you find out? Note that this does not mean that you are those actions. You can, however learn from them so that history does not repeat itself.

SELF-REFLECTION SPACE



DECOLONIZING YOUR MUSEUM

What does decolonization look like in your museum space?



Does your museum invite indigenous peoples to regain access to cultural resources? Does your museum invite indigenous peoples to engage in and approve educational work being done by your organization? Are indigenous peoples included in the narrative and present in your collections? Are there indigenous educators, staff and volunteers at your museum? Does your museum address or acknowledge the contributions it has made and continues to make to colonization against indigenous peoples? Does your museum have human remains and if so, has this been addressed as being potentially problematic? Are there collections managers, registrars or other curatorial staff you can work with on this?

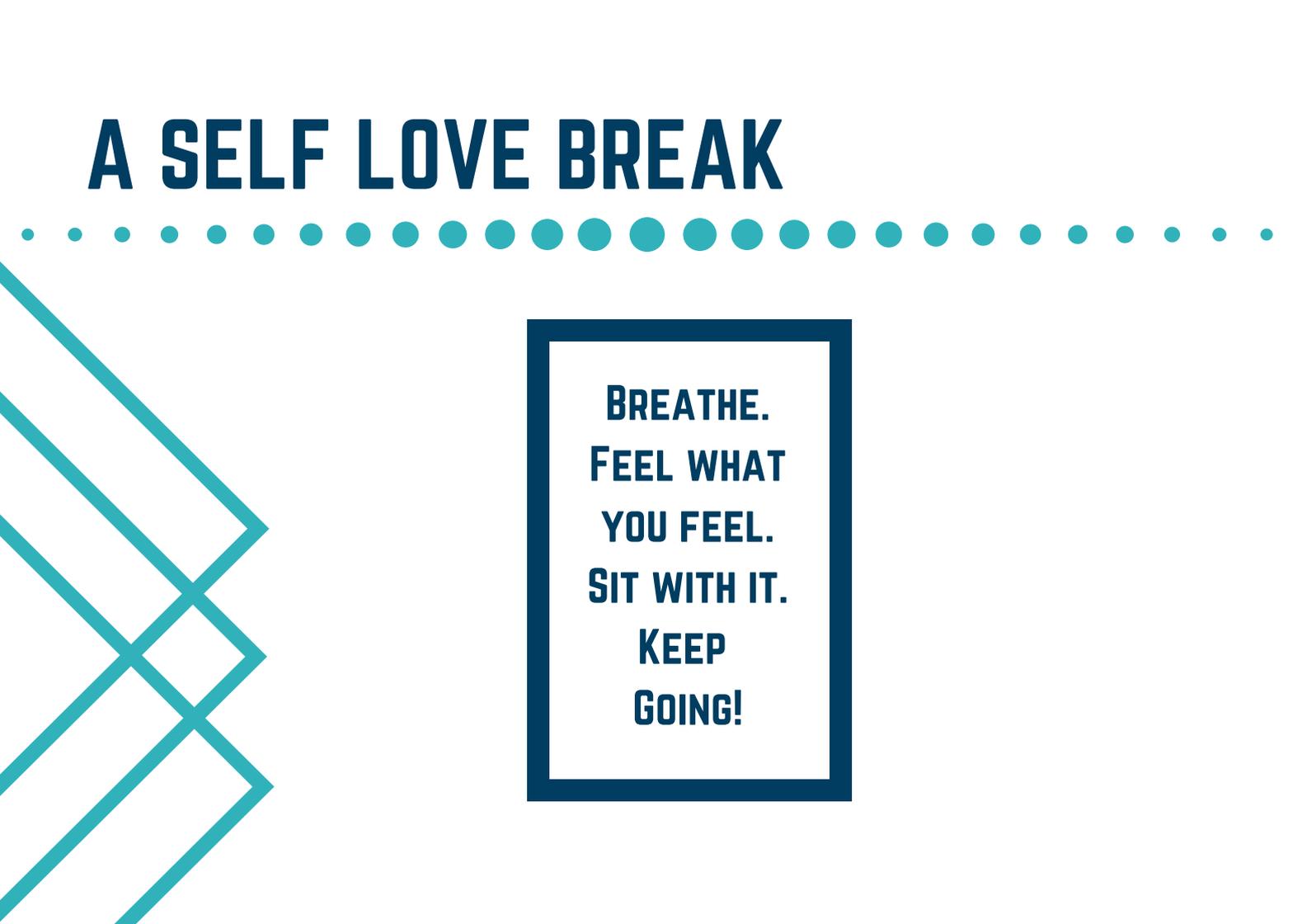
EXERCISE: DECOLONIZE REFLECTION



Locate an exhibit, gallery, program or outdoor space that is connected to indigenous peoples in or around your museum and sit with the questions: What are guests told when they enter or interact with this space? How can I work to decolonize the information presented or available? Who am I and how does my identity relate to this space?



A SELF LOVE BREAK



**BREATHE.
FEEL WHAT
YOU FEEL.
SIT WITH IT.
KEEP
GOING!**

Remember, we are not systems. Racism, colonialism and capitalism are all around us. They are all an inarguable part of everyday experience and while *impacted by the system* you are *not the system*. You are a person who can decide you are not going to support systems that keep people bound up in oppression because of what they look like, who they love and other ways society has defined us as "other" to divide us.

IDENTITY IS



A PART OF PLACE.

**IN OUR FINAL
SECTION WE COME
BACK TO OUR
MUSEUM SPACE.**

**HOW ARE YOU
CONNECTED TO IT?
HOW CAN YOUR
IDENTITIES BENEFIT
ITS FUTURE?**

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2006). A Place for All: A guide to Creating an inclusive workplace <http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/pdf/publications/aplaceforall.pdf> Accessed, May 08, 2018.

“Why Intersectionality Can’t Wait” Washington Post sept 24th, 2015. Accessed June 3, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b677e11dfbed.

Diversity in the Classroom, (2014). UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development.

Ferber, Abby; Jimenez Christina M.; Samules, Dena R.; O’Reilly Herrera, Andrea. (2009). The Matrix Reader: Examining the Dynamics of Oppression and Privilege. McGraw Hill, New York, NY.

Kovach, Margaret. (2009). Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts. Toronto: UT Press.

Lonetree, Amy. (2012). Decolonizing museums: representing native America in national and tribal museums. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

McIntosh, P. (2003). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In S. Plous (Ed.), Understanding prejudice and discrimination (pp. 191-196). New York, NY, US: McGraw-Hill.

Sampson, Edward E. Celebrating the Other: A Dialogic Account of Human Nature. (2008). Taos Institute: Chagrin Falls, Ohio. 4.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. (2001). Wisdom ways: introducing feminist biblical interpretation. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.

**A MUSEUM
EDUCATOR'S
IDENTITY TOOLKIT
PART V: YOUR
MUSEUM AND
YOU**

"I think about museums often. There are things that I want museums to do that they often don't. For me, I like it when there's a system within the museum that can continuously change - whether it's a museum that is nomadic or one that's designed so the building can shape-shift. I like restless spaces, and I want to be engaged."

Doug Aitken, Artist

PART V: YOUR MUSEUM AND YOU

The final section of our toolkit addresses what it means to be deeply connected to a place and how our identities are a catalyst for our museums past, present, and future.

EXERCISE: RETURNING TO PLACE



Visit the favorite spot or area you shared in your story circle at the beginning of our toolkit experience. In this section we will come back to the power of identity, memory, story and pedagogy and consider how each benefit and transform our museum. Just as stories come full circle, our identities and our work, do too.



**In your space
consider and
reflect on:**

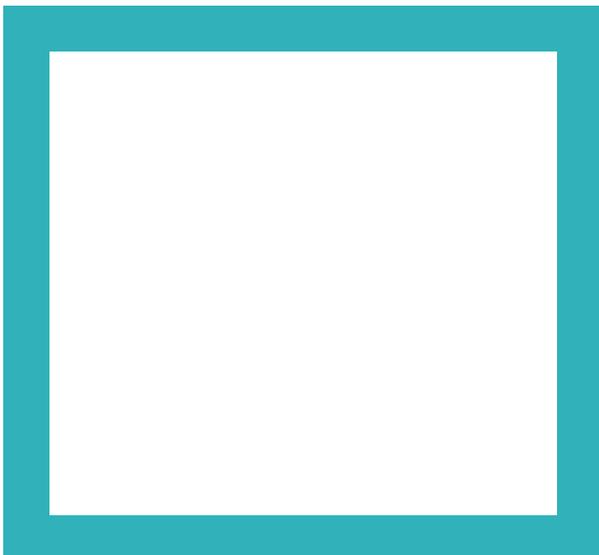
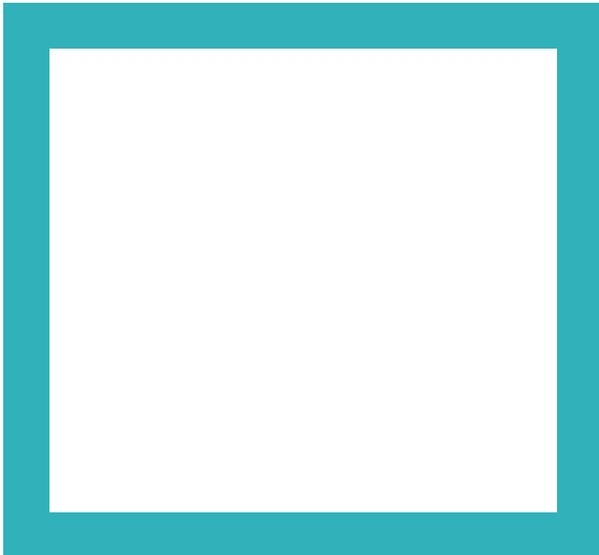
- What do you love here?**
- Can you hear the hum of what is present with you?**
- What do you see, feel, hear, smell?**
- What can you touch?**
- What emotions come up?**
- Do you connect with one or many of your identities here?**

PLACE IS...



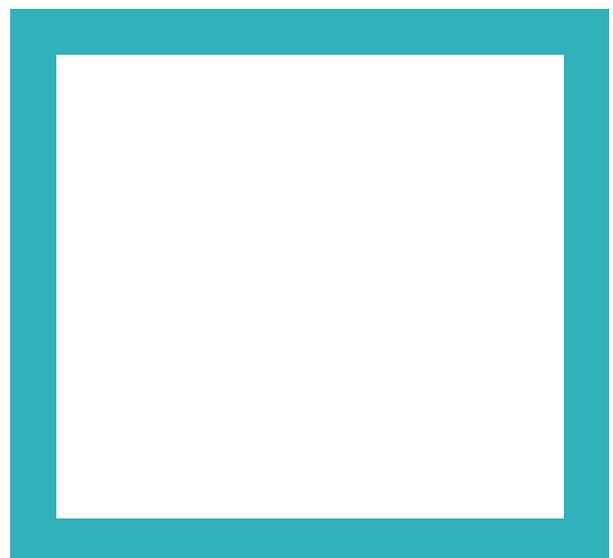
LOCATION

What are the benefits and non-benefits of your museum's location?



MATERIAL FORM

What is your museum composed of? Is there architecture that is significant to the history of your city/town? If so, *whose* history? What other histories can be included?



MEANINGFULNESS

What does meaningfulness mean to you? Where is meaning in your museum?

PLACE IS...



CHAOTIC/CALMING

What is your museum like on the busiest of days? How are moments of calm valued and utilized?

NATURE/LANDSCAPE

Is there nature connected to or attached to your museum? How is it utilized? If not, is there a way to bring nature to it?



SOCIETAL/CULTURAL

How is your museum in connection with other organizations and communities outside its walls? Is your museum well known? How do you make an impact beyond your museum's physical space?



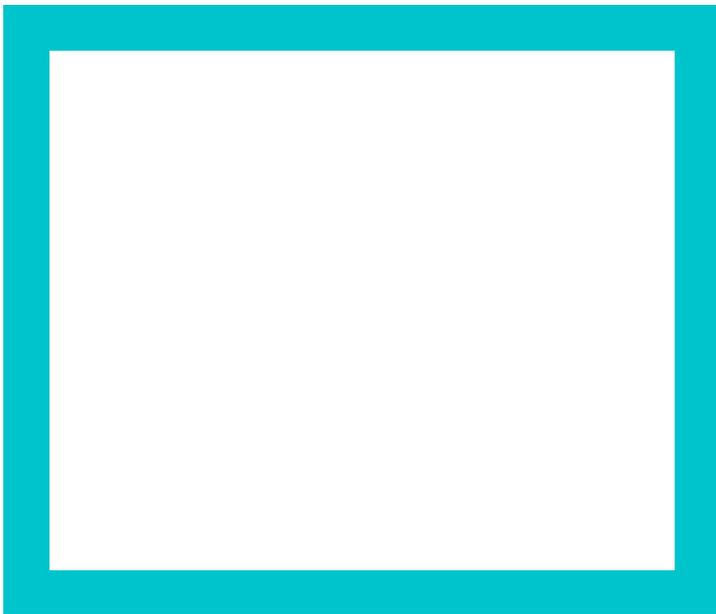
PLACE IS...



SPATIAL

Are the exhibits in
your museum open
and/or crowded?

Static and/or
changing?



RELATIONAL

What is most welcoming
about your museum?

What is not?



HOME

Is your museum a
gathering place? For
whom? If not, how
might it become one?
What makes a place
feel like *home*?

MY IDENTITY AND



DISCOVERY

What can you continue to discover about yourself? How can doing so give back to yourself and your community?

DREAM

What do you dream? If there were no limitations, what would you imagine for yourself? Does this include your museum?

DESIGN

Identity is ever changing and evolving. You are always changing! As the artist of yourself, what is the design of you? Now? Tomorrow? In the future?

DESTINY

Do you have a destiny? What can your future look like? How can your identities and your embracing these identities ignite your purpose?

SELF-REFLECTION SPACE



MY MUSEUM AND



DISCOVERY

What more can you discover about your museum? Its history, its secrets, its joys?

What can it discover about you? Does your museum have an archives? Has it ever done a retrospective exhibit on its own history?

DREAM

Do you have dreams for your museum? What do they look like?

DESIGN

How can your physical space be activated in new ways? Do you have moveable parts you can adjust to create something new?

DESTINY

Are museums a part of destiny for you? Does your current museum space have a destiny of its own?

SELF-REFLECTION SPACE



THE FUTURE OF YOUR MUSEUM



What about **my identity** makes me vibrant and successful?

What about **my museum** makes me vibrant and successful?

What are core factors that make my museum function at its best and without which it would no longer exist?

MY MUSEUM & IDENTITY



PERSONALITY

Do you feel like yourself when you are in your museum? Why or Why not?

ROLE

Think of the part of your museum you work most in: is it an office, a gallery? Are you connected to the work other members of your organization are doing? How can you learn more about what those in different roles do on a daily basis? How can they learn more about what you do?

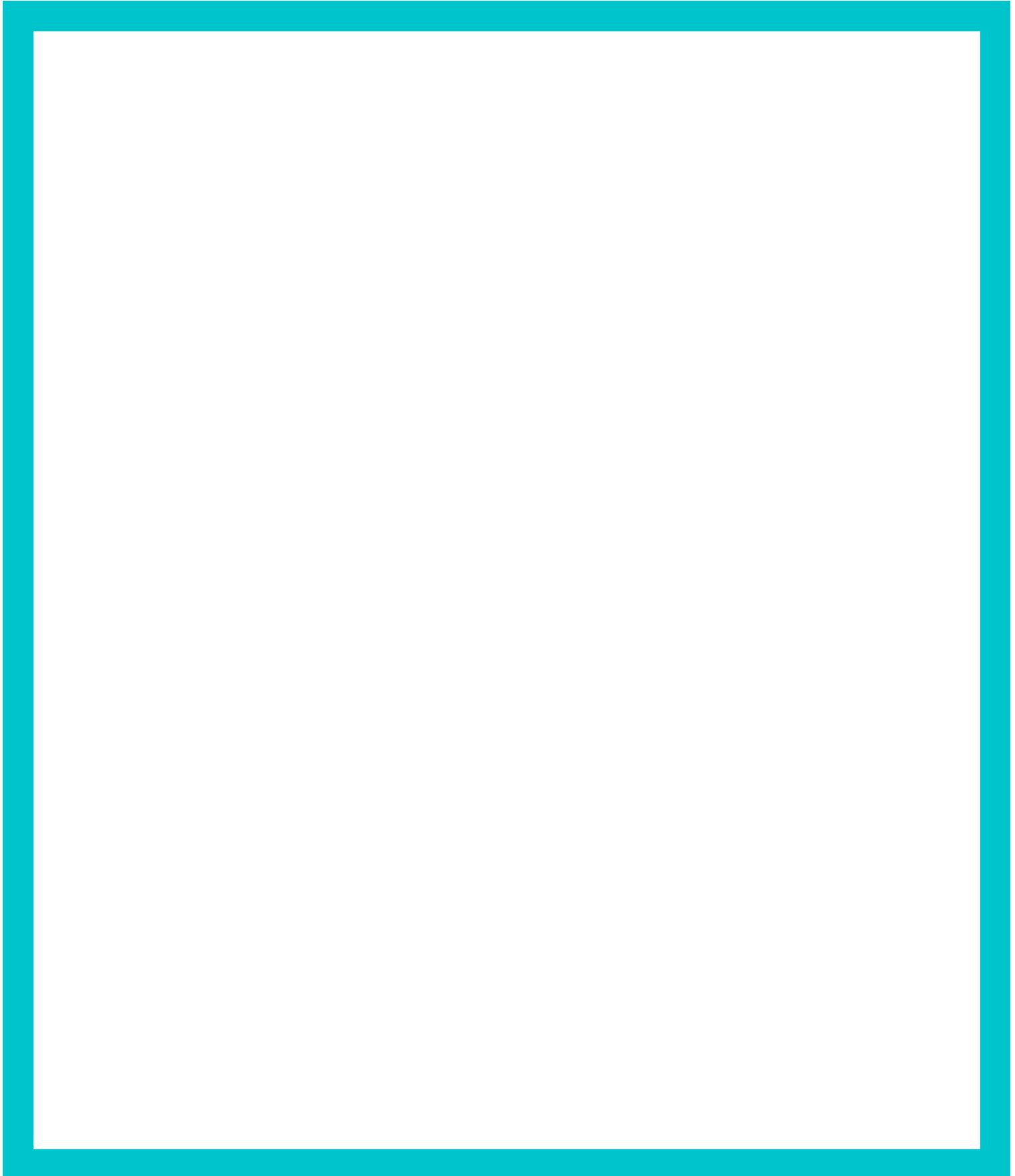
CONTRIBUTIONS

Why are you in the role that you are? How do the skills you bring contribute to your museum and its significance as *place*?

COMMUNITY

Reflect back on your identity groups. Is one of them your museum? Why or why not? If not, could it be? How might this strengthen a part of your identity?

MY IDENTITY AND MY MUSEUM

A large, empty rectangular frame with a thick teal border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for a drawing or illustration related to the title 'MY IDENTITY AND MY MUSEUM'.

EXERCISE: MY MUSEUM AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

What are the demographics of your museum community? Which identities are present? Which aren't? Spend some time in a part of your museum and record who is there and who might not be. How does this change throughout the week? Does your museum have an official report or way to gather these demographics you can review?

MY MUSEUM & MEMORY



EXERCISE: MEMORY SHARE

Get together with another educator and share a memory of your museum. What stands out to you? Where are you in your memory? What does the space look and feel like? Who is there? Who isn't? What are you doing and why? Why this memory? What emotions come with it? Where are your identities present? Are there any that are not?



MY MUSEUM & STORY

NEW STORY I'VE LEARNED ABOUT MY MUSEUM



HOW I CAN SHARE THIS STORY WITH OTHERS:



MY MUSEUM & PEDAGOGY



INCLUSIVE

How are you incorporating all possible identities into your teaching? Even when some identities do not appear to be present?

CONNECTED

What do you know about communities before they come to your museum? How would you guide someone who has never been there before, through your museum from memory? How do you connect with your content and present that connection to students/audience/guests?

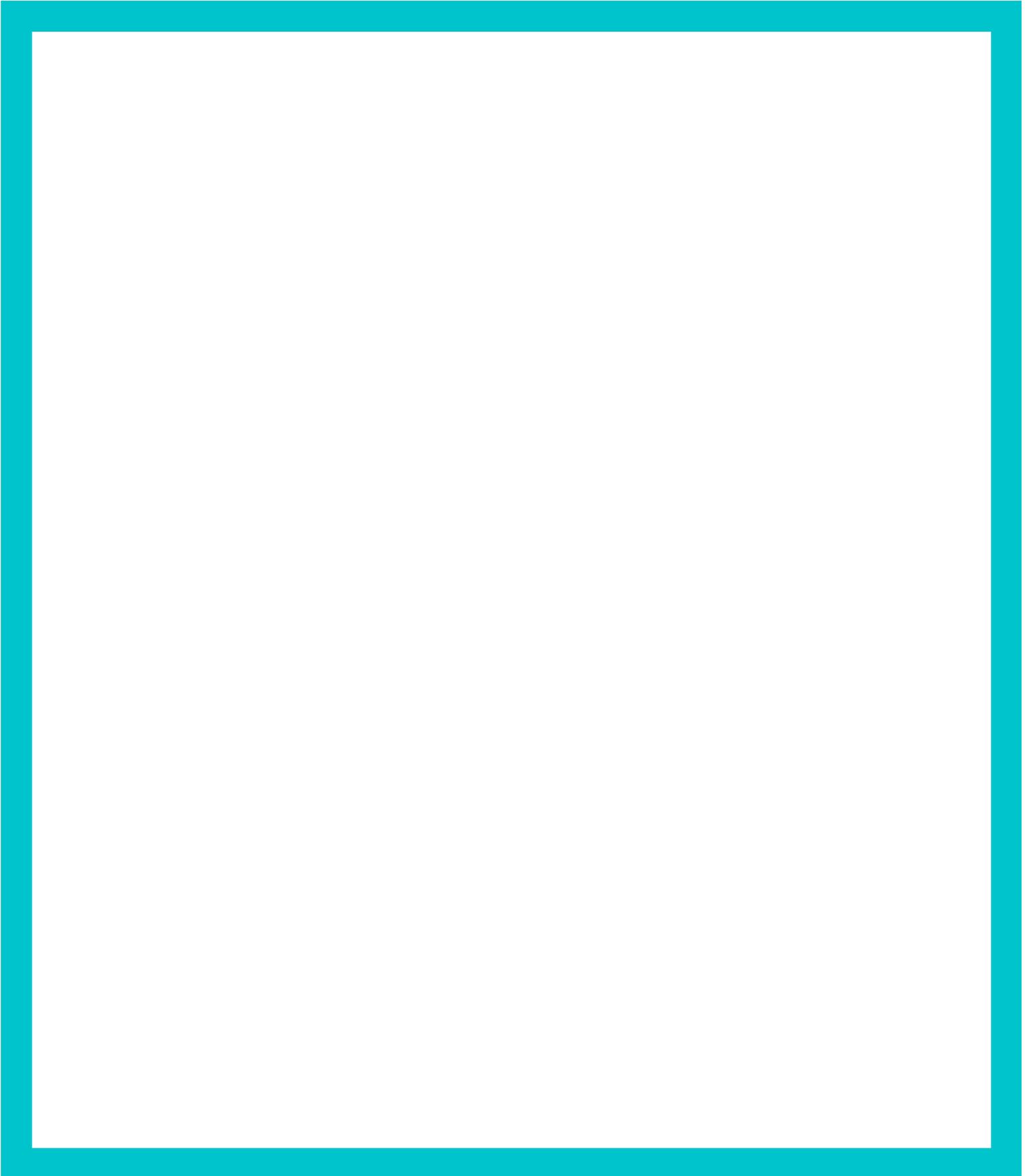
GROUNDED

How is your pedagogy grounded in reality and mindful of the experiences of others? What does it mean to create programming that is grounded in *space and place*?

MEMORABLE

Are the experiences your pedagogy provides available elsewhere? Does your museum have the resources or ability to create memorable lessons that connect directly to the identity of your space and place? How can and will this happen?

MY MUSEUM AND MY PEDAGOGY



ACTION STEPS



What can you do for your museum? Can you invite a community who has not historically been included to have a conversation in your museum? Put in a request to make an accessibility sign more visible? Challenge a microaggression? Share and gather stories about what makes your place important?

This week

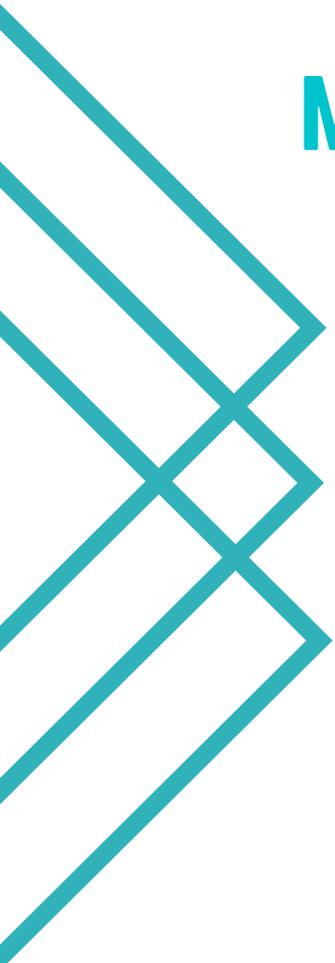
This month

This year

A THANK YOU



MUSEUM FAMILY,



**YOU AND THE WORK
YOU DO ARE
IMPORTANT. WHO YOU
ARE IS KEY TO THE
FUTURE OF YOUR
PLACE. LOVE, LEARN,
GROW, QUESTION AND
CONNECT.**

**THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU
ARE AND ALL THAT YOU WILL
BE!**

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES



Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (2007). Teaching for diversity and social justice (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Calderon, JLove. Runell Hall, Marcella.(2010). "Love, Race, & Liberation: 'Till the White Day is Done." Love-N-Liberation Press: New York.

Dixon, John, and Kevin Durrheim. (2004). "Dislocating Identity: Desegregation and the Transformation of Place." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 24(4) (December): 455–473.

Gaither, Joan and Genevieve Kaplan. "Speaking Out of the Norm: Meaning-making Within the Context of Everyday Museum Experience" in *Exhibitionist* vol. 32, no. 1

Gieryn, Thomas, F. (2000). "A Space for Place in Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology*: 26. 466-7.

Freire, Paulo. (2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed* /New York : Continuum.

Nina Simon: *The Participatory Museum*.(2010). Santa Cruz, CA: *Museum 2.0. MedieKultur: Journal of media and communication research*. 27. 10.7146/mediekultur.v27i50.5247.