

### Notice and Wonder: Building Identity Portraits

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**SUMMARY:** In this session we will explore the intersecting layers of our identities and build layered self-portraits that reflect both seen and unseen personal identity markers

**GOALS:**

- Facilitate relationship building
- Encourage participants to explore the different aspects of their personal identities
- Empower participants to show up as their full and diverse selves in camp spaces

**AUDIENCE:** This program can be run with either staff or campers, amongst peers. An even number of participants is ideal.

**TIMING:** 60 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

- Clear binder sheets (1 per participant) ([link](#))
- Transparent paper (1 per participant) ([link](#))
- Glue sticks
- Elmer's Glue
- Hot Glue Sticks
- Hot Glue Gun
- Colorful paper
- Recycled magazines
- Multicolored permanent markers (3 per participant)
- Scissors
- Googly eyes
- Buttons
- *My Dog is As Smelly as Dirty Socks* by Hanoch Piven ([link](#))
- Identity Quotes listed in write up and at this [link](#)

**SET-UP:** Tables with chairs for each participant in a circle, facing each other. At least one table behind the circle for materials. Large space preferable, so that participants can explore working on the floor or elsewhere.

## SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Welcome and Introductions
- 00:05-00:20 – Portrait #1 Activity
- 00:20-00:35 – Portrait #2 Activity
- 00:35-00:55 – Portrait #3 Activity
- 00:55-01:00 – Wrap Up Discussion

## SESSION OUTLINE

### 00:00-00:05 – Welcome and Introductions

Session leader introduces session topic and leads group in a round of introductions (name, pronouns, camp). The group creates a set of group norms.

### 00:05-00:20 – Portrait #1 Activity

Partner Portraits

1. Participants partner with someone new to them
2. Introduce yourself to your partner. Include any information that you feel comfortable sharing, that makes you who you are.
3. As partner 1 introduces themselves, partner 2 should remain silent. While listening, partner 2 should begin drawing a portrait of partner 1 using the **back side of the clear sleeve**. Portraits should represent what partner 1 *shares*, not how they look.
4. Partner 1 and Partner 2 switch.
5. Continue getting to know your partner. In a dialogue between both partners, ask any questions that you still have. As you ask questions, use this time to add anything you feel must be included in the portrait.

### 00:20-00:35 – Portrait #2 Activity

1. Choose the quote about identity that most excites or resonates with you from the following (which you should print and distribute around space) and go stand by that prompt
  - “Who are you? Do you answer with your name? Or where you are from? Or where your parents or grandparents were born? With what you love? With your superpower?” *Taboo, A Kids Book About Identity*
  - “Whenever two people meet, there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is.” *William James*
  - “Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.” *George Bernard Shaw*
  - “Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else’s opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.” *Oscar Wilde*
  - “You are what you do” *Carl Jung*
  - “Self-identity is inextricably bound up with the identity of the surroundings.” *Lars Fr. H. Svendsen, A Philosophy of Boredom*
2. With the other people in your chosen group, discuss the following questions (8 minutes):
  - Why did you choose this prompt? What about it interested or resonated with you?
  - What, if anything, does this quote indicate about your own personal relationship with identity? With yourself? With the world around you?
  - Do you agree with this quote? Why?

3. Find a partner from a different prompt group. Discuss “What are the different factors that interact to create *your* identity? Are some factors more important than others?” While you discuss, use the materials provided to find images that represent your identity and create a collage portrait of yourself on the **clear paper insert**.

#### **00:35-00:55 – Portrait #3 Activity**

1. Read excerpt from [\*My Dog Is As Smelly As Dirty Socks by Hanoch Piven\*](#)
2. Insert Portrait #2 (clear paper insert) into Portrait #1 (clear plastic sleeve)
3. Consider what about you doesn’t come across on paper? What is important about you that is not yet represented in your portrait? Make a list.
4. Using your list as inspiration, explore the available materials (or elsewhere - nature, trash, etc.) On the **front side of the clear sleeve**, complete your portrait using 3 dimensional objects that represent parts of you – either representationally like Hanoch Piven or otherwise.

#### **00:55-01:00 – Wrap Up Discussion**

The session leader facilitates a gallery walk of final layered portraits. Any takeaways or reflections can be shared of a dialogue can be encouraged using the following prompts:

- Did you learn anything new about yourself during this activity?
- What aspects of your identity stand out to you as traits that separate “you” from “not you”?
- Which parts of your identity do you bring with you to camp with you? How do they show up?
- Are there any parts that you feel you cannot bring with you to camp?

#### **BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP**

I encourage using as many natural and repurposed materials as possible to limit waste and model recycling.