

# The Gems of Life Inc.

*Presents*

## Creating Inclusive Spaces of Belonging

Centering equity and inclusion in housing co-op communities

*CHF Canada - Annual Meeting Fredericton 2026*

CMC

### Participant Activity Workbook

Today's workshop is about creating spaces for belonging we will explore what it truly means to create spaces where people feel valued, respected, and have a genuine sense of belonging.

Name:

Date:

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### Understanding Belonging

What is Belonging

Why it matters

### What is the impact?

What happens to a community when people do not feel they belong?

### Group Activity

What can communities do to create more welcoming and inclusive environments?

### What Gets in the Way of Belonging?

What can make people feel excluded, overlooked, or unheard?

Who may experience barriers to participating fully in community spaces?

**Core Belonging Foundation**

Think about a time or place where you truly felt like you belonged.

*What made that experience feel welcoming, safe, or meaningful?*

Think about a time you felt excluded, overlooked, or unheard.

What did that feel like? What did you need?

**Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (EDIB) Equity**

Equality

Equity

Diversity	
Inclusion	
Belonging	

**Group Discussion Activity**

Where are we doing well creating fairness and access?

What are some barriers that may prevent inclusion or belonging in communities?

How can co-op communities intentionally create spaces where everyone feels valued and heard?

Whose voices are we missing?

## Culture, Identity, Intersectionality & Unconscious Bias

### Culture

The image below illustrates the many elements that make up culture. Reflect on how these elements show up in your own life and in the communities, you are part of.

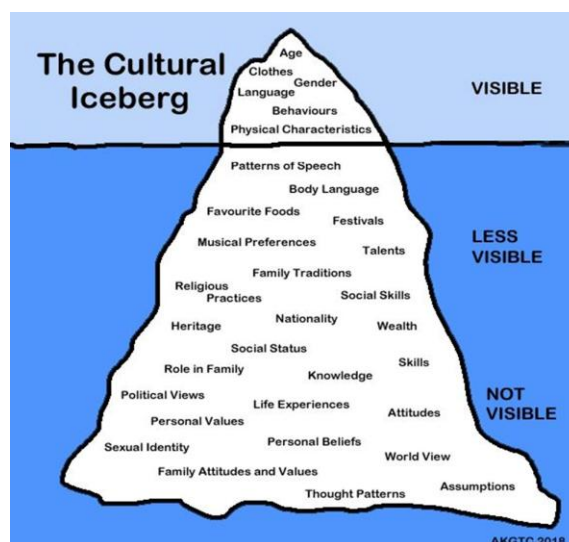


What are some things that shape a person's identity or culture?

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### Cultural Iceberg



What parts of a person's identity or experiences may not be immediately visible?

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How can assumptions be shaped by only what we see on the surface?

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### Group Discussion

What assumptions or unconscious bias impact relationships and community participation?

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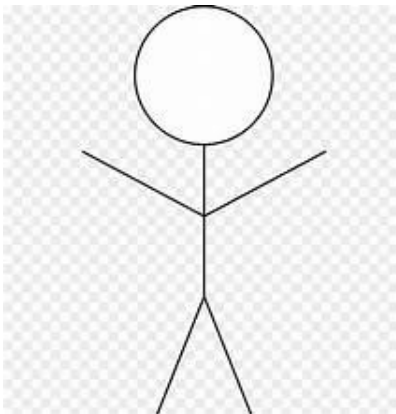
What can help create spaces where people feel safe sharing their experiences and identities?

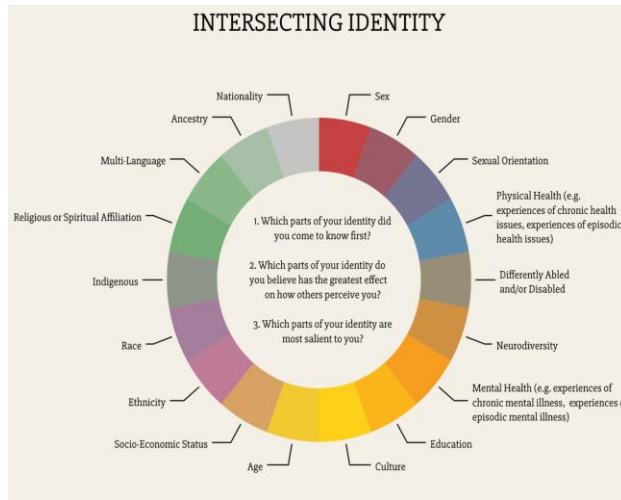
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How do communication styles, power dynamics, accessibility, culture, or past experiences influence participation?

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## Identity & Intersectionality





### Personal Reflection

Which parts of your intersectional identity/culture are most visible, and which are less visible?

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How does that change how others relate to you? How does that change how you relate with others?

### Group Activity

Who is likely to feel included here and who might feel left out or overlooked? How can communities better recognize and support diverse lived experiences?

What are some examples of comments, assumptions, or behaviours that may seem harmless but could make someone feel excluded or unwelcomed?

What assumptions do people sometimes make about others based on appearance, age, language, culture, ability, family structure, or background?

## Power, Privilege & Blind Spots

### Privilege

### Power

### Blind Spots

### Self-Reflection

What makes it easy for me? What are my privileges, power and blind spots?

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What might make it harder for someone else?

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**Group Activity**

What might be our blind spots?

**Unconscious Bias**

**What is unconscious bias?**

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What are some examples of comments, assumptions, or behaviours that may seem harmless but could make someone feel excluded or unwelcomed?

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What are examples of biases people may experience in community spaces?

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**Group Activity**

What can we do to reduce bias and create more inclusive spaces?

**Microaggressions**

**What is microaggression?**

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**Types of microaggressions**

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**Interventions to Microaggressions**

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What are some examples of comments, assumptions, or behaviours that may seem harmless but could make someone feel excluded or unwelcomed?

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**Conflict & Repair- Eliminate Harm**

What can we do as a co-op community when we witness or experience a microaggression to help create a more inclusive and respectful environment?

## Psychological Safety & Belonging

What does psychological safety mean to you?

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What helps people feel safe speaking up, sharing ideas, or participating?

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What actions or behaviours help build trust and respect within a community?

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## Practices That Foster Psychological Safety

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## Inclusive Strategies to Inclusion & Belonging

What can communities do differently to ensure people feel welcomed, valued, and safe?

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## Station Group Activity

**Instructions:** *Around the room, there are different stations each focusing on a part of co-op community life. Move from station to station, read the prompt at each station, discuss your ideas, and add examples or reflections.*

**As you rotate through the stations, consider:**

### Identify opportunities/changes/growth to be implemented

- What practices, behaviours, or spaces help people feel welcomed and valued?
- What changes could help create a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging?
- What actions or practices could strengthen participation, connection, and belonging for all community members?

### From awareness to action.

#### Identify gaps/ biases/blind spots/biases

- What barriers may exist?
- Whose voices may be missing?

## Personal Commitment

One thing I will start doing...

One thing I will pay more attention to...

One way I can help create belonging...

## Shared Agreement

**Creating belonging is ongoing work, and it belongs to all of us**

**Our co-op is a place where...**

- we listen to understand, not just respond
- we address harm with care and accountability
- we make space for all voices

## Closing Reflection

What surprised you?  
What challenged your thinking?  
What are your actionable takeaways?

*Your final thoughts:*

“We are all just walking each other home”. Ram Dass

*Thank you for your participation and commitment to building inclusive communities.  
Together, we can create inclusive communities where everyone feels respected, valued, and included.*