

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: A springboard to support the exploration of Identity within practice.

*'Understanding identity is key to inclusion'*

*'Turning the gaze to reflect on our positionality is central to change '*

Prof Hartha Kathard Royal College of Speech and Language conference 2021

## **Background:**

This resource grew out of feedback from clinicians and people who use Alternative and Augmentative communication (AAC). They wanted to explore identity and how that interplayed with their AAC systems and support they received.

For example they thought it important;

- that a communication aid reflects a person's identity
- that personalisation and intersectionality e.g. race, disability, culture, religion, gender, are considered ,
- to considered assumptions, consider our own biases, listen and learn.

A group of people worked together from March 2021 to explore how to help address this need. This group is made up of people from a range of organisations and with a range of lived experiences of diversity including people who use a communication aid to help them communicate.

The initial feedback from practitioners was that discussing complex issues like Equality, Diversity and Inclusion can be difficult. For example, people may not always feel comfortable having these conversations or they may feel scared about saying the wrong thing so it was decided the first step was to develop a resource that could act as a springboard for having these conversations. Going back to the words of Prof Kathard to helps *'us turn our gaze inward and explore our positionality within our own practice.'*

This resource was developed, tested with practitioners working in a variety of settings. The resource was changed as a result of the feedback. Practitioners commented that the resource was helpful to reflect on broader issues and that it could be used in much wider clinical practice situations not just in AAC e.g. it was used with young people with language delay in schools, aphasic patients in hospitals

Practitioners said using the resource helped;

- understand and reflect on own biases and challenge default assumptions
- consideration of wider aspects of identity that were not routinely thought about
- stimulate ideas about different questions to ask
- provide a safe platform for staff to open up
- holistic thinking by encouraging seeing clients in a wider context
- address your own anxieties as a professional about getting it wrong and fear of "putting your foot in it".



A short video funded by Central London Community Health Trust has been produced that can be found [here](#)



The video introduces you to the resource and its impact. This can be viewed alongside the Talking Mats Equality, Diversity and Inclusion symbol set and Glossary.

The resource uses the Talking Mats framework, and it is recommended that to get the best out of using this resource you understand the Talking Mats principles and have completed their foundation level training.

**This tool focuses on the topic of Identity.**

Below is a glossary of what is meant by the terms and the symbols developed to link with them. Developing symbols is always a challenge and we are aware that we will not have captured all aspects of diversity however they went through a rigorous development process, and we tried to capture as many aspects as possible whilst still trying to keep the visual image clear so that it can support understanding.

<p>Identity (Topic)</p> 	<p>Every person has their own unique identity, just like they have their own unique fingerprint.</p> <p>Lots of different characteristics make up our identity. This is what makes us different from other people.</p> <p>Sometimes we may share some of these characteristics with other groups of people, which can also be part of our identity.</p> <p>Identity is about how we see ourselves and how the world sees us.</p>
<p><b>Here are some of the different aspects of Identity:</b></p>	
<p>Voice</p> 	<p>The voice you use to communicate with others is part of who you are.</p> <p>You may be using some of your own vocalisations and speech alongside a voice on your communication aid. The synthetic voice on your aid may be a pre-installed voice or a voice that you/someone you know has banked for you.</p> <p>The following can be reflected in your voice and can, therefore, be part of your identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• personality</li><li>• language(s)</li><li>• dialect</li><li>• accent</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age</li> <li>• softness</li> <li>• loudness</li> <li>• pitch</li> <li>• how quickly words are spoken</li> <li>• how clearly words are pronounced</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Race</p> 	<p>We all belong to the human race, but society has grouped us into different racial groups e.g. Asian, Black, Chinese, White.</p> <p>These groups may share some external physical features such as skin colour, facial features, hair texture.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Disability</p> 	<p>Disability can also be part of our identity. Most people will experience some form of disability at some point in their life, whether temporary or permanent.</p> <p>There are different ways to look at disability.</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as the physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do everyday activities.</p> <p>The social model of disability says that it isn't a person's impairment but the barriers in society that limit a person's ability to do everyday activities and participate in social interaction. These barriers can be physical (e.g. lack of wheelchair-friendly facilities) or may have to do with other people's attitudes (e.g. prejudice).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Gender</p>	<p>Gender is an abstract concept.</p> <p>A person's gender identity isn't necessarily linked to the sex (male or female) that was</p>



assigned to them when they were born. It is a person's personal sense of whether they are male, female, both, neither or another gender.

Here are some types of gender identity:

- Cisgender (person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth correspond)
- Transgender (person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not correspond)
- Non-binary (person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary of male or female)

### Sexuality










Sexuality is a person's identity in relation to the gender(s) which they find emotionally and sexually attractive.

Sexuality is the same as sexual orientation but different to gender/gender identity.

Here are some types of sexual orientation:

- Lesbian (women who are attracted to other women)
- Gay (most often this term is used to describe men who are attracted to other men)
- Bisexual (people who are attracted to more than one gender)
- Asexual (people who don't feel any sexual attraction but may still experience romantic attraction)
- Pansexual (people who are attracted to all types of people, regardless of their gender or sexuality)

<p style="text-align: center;">Bilingualism</p> 	<p>Language is part of our identity as we use it to communicate with other people and it can shape our personality, thoughts and emotions.</p> <p>A person can be bilingual according to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origin: if they have learned two or more languages in their family and have used different languages from the beginning of their life</li> <li>• Language proficiency: if they master two or more languages equally well</li> <li>• Language function: if they need to/can alternate between two or more languages in most situations</li> <li>• Attitudes: if they see themselves as bilingual and are perceived as bilingual by others</li> </ul> <p>Bilingualism refers not only to verbal but also to sign language.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Neurodiversity</p> 	<p>Neurodiversity can also be part of a person's identity as it means that their brain works differently.</p> <p>Examples of neurodevelopmental conditions include Autism and Dyslexia and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Culture</p>	<p>Culture can give people a sense of belonging to a group that has shaped them into who they are.</p> <p>It is made partly of behaviours that we can see from the outside. For example:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food </li> <li>• Festivals </li> <li>• Clothes </li> </ul> <p>There is also a deeper side of culture that cannot be seen at first glance such as subconscious beliefs and values that underly these behaviours.</p> <p>There are many differences within a culture so no one person is the same.</p>
<p>Values</p> 	<p>A person's views have to do with their values e.g., being passionate about animals, the environment, disability rights etc.</p> <p>For some people, these views play a very important role in their life and may influence their relationships with other people and their politics.</p> <p>One way of expressing our views can be campaigning about things that are important to us.</p>
<p>Religion</p>	<p>For some people, religion can be part of their identity.</p> <p>There are many different religions in the world and most of them are linked to believing in a God or gods.</p>



Here are some of the religions that can be found in the UK:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Judaism
- Buddhism

### Personality



Our personality can be seen in the patterns of our thoughts, feelings and behaviours, as well as in the way we interact with others.

Here are some of the traits that may characterise people's personalities:

- Agreeable e.g. caring for others, feeling empathy
- Conscientious e.g., able to control impulsive behaviour, goal orientated
- Eager to please e.g. cooperative, passive
- Extravert e.g. assertive, emotionally expressive
- Introvert e.g. quiet, reserved
- Neurotic: worrying about things, getting upset easily
- Open e.g. creative, open to trying new things

### Family structure

There are many different family structures and the type of family that each person has experienced can also be part of their identity.

Families can be diverse in terms of identity.

Here are some examples that can be found today:

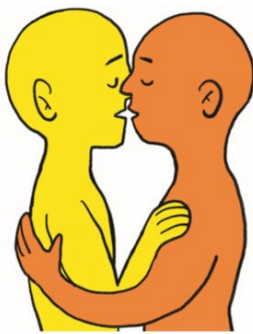
- Nuclear family: traditional type of family structure consisting of two parents and children





- Single parent family: consisting of one parent raising one or more children on their own
- Extended family: consisting of two or more adults who are related living together (this could be cousins, uncles etc.)
- Step family: two separate families merging into one new family that consists of the parents and their children from previous marriages or relationships

### Intimacy



Intimacy has been described as the ability to give and receive love, trust and care from another person without losing one's sense of self. It can be physical as well as emotional.

The way in which we feel connected and form close personal relationships with others can also be part of our identity.

### Connecting with others



Staying connected with our friends and social circle can be a very important part of our identity too. Thanks to technology and social media, we can now connect to people remotely which has opened up our world immensely.

## Spending time



This is about occupation and could be things we do for pleasure or because we need to e.g. it can be our work and or education.

A person can develop and express their identity through the things they spend time doing.

Here are some examples of different occupations:

- Student
- Dancer
- Teacher
- Mentor
- Gardener

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## The Talking Mats

The top scale that was found to work with this resource is

		
<b>Considered this a lot</b>	<b>Considered a bit</b>	<b>Not considered yet</b>



**Identity**



**Disability**



**Voice**



**Race**

**Gender**



**Sexuality**



**Bilingualism**



**Culture**



**Neurodiversity**



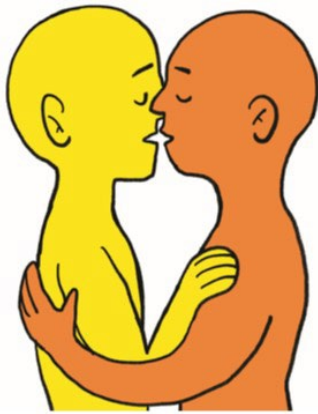
**Values**



**Religion**



**Personality**



**Connection and intimacy**



**Family structure**



**Spending time**



**Connecting with others**

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