

DEGREES OF INTIMACY

Activity adapted by Elan Interculturel based on existing resources (see under references)



OVERVIEW

Exploring how social identities may affect the way individuals can experience intimacy.

LEARNING CONTEXT

This activity can be done online, offline with social distancing, and offline with physical contact.

DURATION

45-60 minutes



PARTICIPANTS

Adaptable for any number of participants



MATERIALS

Prepare the “intimacy scale cards”: about 10 sentences of manifestations of intimacy printed, one sentence per piece of paper

Empty pieces of paper where participants can write their own sentences about intimacy

Pens / markers for everyone to write



OBJECTIVES

- Developing subjective definitions of intimacy
- Exploring possible overlaps to find a consensual definition



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INSTRUCTIONS STEP BY STEP



1. Create groups of 3 participants. Offer them about 10 “intimacy scale cards”** and a few empty cards.
2. Invite them to use the empty cards to write 1-2 sentences that reflect their ways or moments or situations of intimacy.
3. Tell them to read all the cards (silently for themselves) and think individually what they would consider “most intimate” and “least intimate”. Make sure participants understand there are no right or wrong answers. The exercise is subjective; an answer is “right” to the extent that they find it authentic for themselves.
4. Invite them to share in the small group and see if they can arrange the cards according to degrees of intimacy: starting from the least to the most intimate.
5. Now ask the small groups to create their own definition for intimacy.
6. Invite each group to choose a spokesperson to share the two most and the two least intimate cards listed on their group’s scale and explain their choice.
7. In a second plenary round share the definitions the small groups have proposed. Check if there is one definition that everybody can accept as a working definition.



*Some examples for card sentences:

- Going to a restaurant
- Sharing your personal beliefs and opinions
- Touching the arm of your partner
- Kissing your partner
- Sending messages to each other every day
- Talking during sex
- Sharing your feelings
- Cuddling your partner
- Holding hands with your partner in public

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- Saying what you like and don't like (sexually)
- Introducing your partner to your parents and/or friends
- Talking about your parents / family
- Having a conflict with your partner
- Sharing your dreams, needs and desires
- Talking about sexual fantasies
- Talking about STI
- Talking about contraception
- Showing up in your underwear
- Sending each other erotic messages
- Kissing and caressing each other
- Kissing your partner in the neck



DISCUSSIONS AND DEBRIEFING



Use the activity to acknowledge the diversity of our experiences of intimacy: some situations are intimate for some people, but not at all for others. Explore the consequences of this observation on intimate encounters: what happens if two people with different expectations and representations of intimacy try to get intimate?

Reflect on social identity: to what extent our identities determine how we experience intimacy? Invite participants to think of some possible examples, based on their own experience.

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THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE



This activity can be done online, making breakout rooms (3 participants in a group) and using Jamboards (each group has a different Jamboard to work on) to write intimacy sentences on Post-its and to rate the “intimacy scale”.

THEORY



To create this activity, we have used two sources:

- <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2017-CALM-Consent-1-French.pdf>
- http://rse.fpv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Activity-7-8_8.2.pdf