



# Cultural Identity

**Educate & Motivate!**

**Social Justice Conversation Cards**

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension



Questions in this deck were adapted from an exercise in:  
Klug, B. & Whitfield, P. (2003). *Widening the circle*. (pp.26-27). New York, NY:  
Taylor & Francis Group

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### **Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

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**4H1078A September 2017**

**Do you sometimes feel like you don't have a culture or roots?**

**Yes or No?**

**Why or why not?**



What is the difference between culture and ethnicity?

Your ethnicity is based on where you and/or your ancestors are from geographically on the planet.

Your culture can be experiences, beliefs, values, behaviors, and perceptions that are common to a particular group with which you identify. In some instances, culture may be chosen. Culture refers to differences that make a difference. The coming together of many different identities within the same individual makes up that person's unique cultural experience and identity. This original cultural identity shapes how people understand the world around them. It is their primary lens to view themselves and others.

Share your ethnic and/or other cultural background(s).

Refer to the back of this card for a hint.

Examples of cultural identities include but are not limited:

- Urban/rural background
- Language(s) spoken
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Religious affiliation
- Age/generation
- Military/veteran status
- Socioeconomic status
- Ability/Disability Status
- Country/region of origin
- Educational background
- Immigrant/first generation American
- Ethnic and racial identification
- Professional experience: blue collar/white collar

Depending on where you grew up geographically, how might your culture be different than that of someone who lives in another region?



**“Culture is anything that can be learned.”**

**True or False?**

# True.

Culture consists of values, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors commonly held as truth within a group.

If a group of people are White, there cannot be much “diversity” within the group.

**True or False?**

# False.

Diversity refers to anything that makes us different. When there are two people in the same room together, there is diversity. This difference can be a source of conflict or celebration. It's a choice.

When did you first become aware of your culture or the cultures you identify with?



What were you taught about your culture  
while you were growing up?

Who taught you these things?



How did your teachers, peers, and other adults treat you in school and in the community based on what culture you came from?



**When you were growing up, remember a time when the cultural background of another person was made fun of. Describe the situation.**

**How did you feel then and now about what happened?**



As a child, what or who helped you develop a sense of pride in who you were?



**As a child, were you ever afraid of being called names because of the way you looked or the family you came from?**

**Describe the situation, how it felt, and what it feels like to you now.**



**Were there cultural traditions that you participated in as a child that were different from those of your peers?**

**If so, what were they?**



**Have you ever visited parts of other countries or regions that were the homes of your family and/or ancestors?**

**Describe what this was like. If you have not done so, would you like to go?**

**Please explain your answer.**



What different ethnic or cultural traditions take place in your family or community?

What time of year do they happen?

What family members are there?



What special events are celebrated in your family or community?

How do these events take place?

What makes them special?



When people in your community hold on to traditional ways from their culture or continue to speak their native language, how are they perceived and/or treated?



What foods are eaten and prepared in your community?

What cultures do these meals come from?



**Have you ever felt confused about your  
cultural background?**

**Why or why not?**



Did your parents come from the same culture and/or ethnic background or different backgrounds?



Have you ever felt like you had to choose one parent over the other because you didn't feel like you could come from both cultures?



What is something that is challenging about being from your specific cultural or ethnic group?



Do you sometimes feel like people may make wrongful assumptions about you because of the way you look to them?



**Do you ever feel like your racial, cultural, or ethnic background may be misunderstood by others?**

**Why or why not?**



What is something about your cultural or ethnic background that many people may not know?



**What is something about your culture that you are proud of?**

*(Examples: education, ethnic background, being from a farm family, being a Midwesterner, etc. ...)*



What is one thing you can do to help young people feel proud of their cultural background?



If you had a wish for your own children or grandchildren (or other persons) regarding their feelings about their own ethnic heritage or cultural background, what would it be?

