

TMI

A Methodological Journey Exploring Identity, Intersectionality, and Inclusive Data—from Experiential Inquiry to Computational Analysis

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Abstract

TMI (Too Much Information) explores identity as lived experience and operationalizes intersectionality as an analytical framework through an innovative methodological approach. Initially conceived as a qualitative inquiry, the study evolved in response to the complexity and scale of the data, leading to the development of TMI-WEB—a novel, custom-built, data analysis ecosystem that uses graph-based querying to uncover relational structures within identity data.

This methodological journey resulted in a three-phase mixed-methods research design. Phase 1, an exploratory (auto)ethnographic field study using immersive participant-observation, revealed systemic exclusions and refined the study's guiding research questions. Phase 2 involved large-scale qualitative data collection through open-ended identity narrative surveys conducted in 2023–2024. These narratives were analyzed through iterative qualitative coding and thematic analysis. In Phase 3, conducted in 2024–2025, computational augmentation was introduced when the scale of unstructured data exceeded the capabilities of traditional approaches and surpassed cognitive load thresholds for analysis. This prompted the development of TMI-WEB, a novel software ecosystem designed to model, visualize, and explore identity experiences through graph-based queries.

The primary contribution of TMI lies in its operationalization of intersectional analysis through interactive graph-based technology, offering a scalable, relational approach to studying identity as lived and interconnected experience. While initial analysis and findings focused on coping mechanisms individuals use to navigate identity-based experiences within systems that prioritize dominant values and status quo, the TMI dataset supports a wide range of future discoveries beyond this initial focus.

This research contributes to expanded mixed-methods approaches, design research, computational social science, and intersectionality theory by demonstrating how inclusive data practices, data modeling, and graph-based techniques can be used to explore complex, emergent identity structures.

The evolving sociopolitical landscape between 2023 and 2025—marked by polarization, severe DEI rollbacks, shifting social climate, and trauma—provides important context and delimitations for interpreting both the data collection and analyses phases.

Keywords: Identity, Intersectionality, Mixed Methods, Computational Social Science, Graph Theory, Qualitative Research, Design Research, Belonging

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Chapter 1 Introduction

TMI (Too Much Information) was an emergent, adaptive, mixed-methods and computationally augmented research project that explored identity as lived experience and operationalized intersectionality as an analytical framework. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991), *intersectionality* refers to the ways multiple, overlapping systems of oppression—including racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, and class discrimination—interact to shape individual and group experience. Rather than analyzing social categories in isolation, an intersectional approach examines how identities are co-constituted, intertwined, and embedded within broader power structures.

Guided by a set of initial research questions—*How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of (intersectional) identity in social scenarios? In what contexts do individuals experience exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate? How can emergent findings from this research inform the creation of design prototypes or interventions that support, activate, or amplify pro-social experiences?*—the TMI project sought to understand how people define, express, and negotiate identity in everyday social contexts.

The study was informed by the lived experience and reflexive stances of TMI's PI, Jess Westbrook, a nonbinary and disabled design researcher, and TMI's software engineer, Coraline Ada Ehmke, a queer and transgender woman. Their identities and lived experiences shaped social inquiry and grounded the study's ethical, human-centered technology commitments. In this work, pro-social aspirations refer to interpersonal or environmental conditions that support dignity, empathy, kindness, recognition, inclusion, and belonging.

This paper is structured in four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the project and describes its phased research design. Chapter 2 explores concepts and related literature. Chapter 3 presents the methodology. Chapter 4 details the analysis and findings. Together, these chapters tell the story of an emergent, adaptive, mixed-methods and computationally augmented research journey.

Phase 1 Introduction: Exploratory Autoethnographic Field Study — Observing Identity, Presence, and Power in Social Scenarios

The study began with an exploratory autoethnographic field phase. Dr. Westbrook engaged in informal participant-observation across a range of organized social contexts, including events in the arts, business, education, government, and healthcare sectors. Through immersive participation and reflexive journaling, Westbrook investigated how identity was perceived, constrained, or expressed in real-world social settings, with specific attention to dynamics of power, hospitality and etiquette, and practices of inclusion or erasure. This phase offered foundational insights into how social environments often prioritized dominant cultural norms, reinforcing homogeneity, conformity, and status quo.

In response to these insights, Westbrook experimented with small, intentional interventions, including a spoken positionality statement—introducing themselves with their pronouns and disclosing their disability status. This public act of self-disclosure served as a deliberate disruption of normative expectations. Reactions included silence, discomfort, and at times, expressions of pity. While pronoun sharing was occasionally reciprocated, disability disclosure, outside of specific affinity group events, was ignored entirely, reinforcing social stigma and the cultural norms that silence or erase disability as an acceptable or empowering identity.

These early findings shaped the next stage of the research and prompted the formulation of additional guiding questions: *What coping mechanisms do individuals rely on when experiencing exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate in social scenarios that prioritize dominant cultural norms and maintain the status quo?* and *What emotional or psychological states emerge from identity-based experiences?*

Phase 2 Introduction: Focused Survey Study — Collecting Large-Scale Qualitative Identity Data

Building on the insights and emergent questions from Phase 1, the study progressed into a second phase of data collection using an open-ended survey titled *My Identity in My Own Words – How Individuals Describe Their Own Identity*. This phase aimed to capture large-scale, participant-defined qualitative data reflecting how individuals articulate, navigate, and negotiate identity.

The survey invited reflection across multiple identity dimensions, including age, class, disability, gender, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodivergence, pronouns, race/ethnicity, and religion. The final question invited participants to engage conceptually and reflectively: *“Identity is a complex interplay of empowerment and vulnerability. What would you like to add to a conversation about identity?”* This intentionally broad prompt encouraged both personal and cultural interpretations of identity’s meaning and relevance.

The primary dataset consisted of responses from 319 participants at a large, urban university in the Midwest, reflecting diverse social identities and experiences. As responses accumulated, an analysis was initialized, the unstructured qualitative dataset revealed profound complexity and nuance—exceeding the practical limits of traditional thematic analysis workflows. The scale and intersectionality of the narratives created a cognitive and methodological saturation point for the PI, limiting the capacity to meaningfully trace relational patterns using manual methods alone.

In response—and aligned with the study’s broader inquiry into how research might inform pro-social design interventions—the project entered a third phase centered on computational augmentation, data modeling, and innovative analysis.

Phase 3 Introduction: Data Modeling, Software Engineering, Graph-Based Queries – Operationalizing Intersectional Analysis with a New Innovative Computational Framework

Phase 3 marked a methodological shift toward the development of TMI-WEB, a custom-built, open source computational ecosystem designed to support graph-based exploration of identity narratives and intersectional identity dimensions. Built using graph theory and the Neo4j graph database platform, TMI-WEB enabled the organization, querying, and visualization of relationships between identity descriptors, experiences, and coping mechanisms – at scale.

In this phase, querying became both a method of data retrieval, and a tool of discovery. The process of iteratively writing and running graph queries revealed emergent patterns and hidden connections—expanding the study’s analytical capacity beyond what could be observed through traditional thematic coding or statistical analysis alone. Rather than treating identity as a fixed set of categories, the graph-based approach modeled it as a dynamic, networked, relational structure shaped by social context and experience.

By modeling identity as a system of interconnected experiences, this phase operationalized intersectional analysis with a computational framework. The graph infrastructure allowed for both granular and holistic investigations into how identity dimensions interact, co-form, and evolve—offering new insight into the affective, behavioral, and structural dimensions of identity.

Research Questions

This section outlines the inquiries that shaped and guided the TMI project. From its inception, the formulation of research questions—and the graph queries that followed—unfolded through an iterative and emergent process. These questions structured an exploration of how individuals and groups experienced and navigated identity in social scenarios, responded to lived experiences, engaged in self-preservation, and interpreted the concept of identity. Throughout the project, the research agenda remained flexible and responsive, and open to discovery.

Central Research Question

1. **How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of (intersectional) identity in social scenarios?** This central question framed the exploration of how identity was lived, expressed, and negotiated across diverse social contexts. It guided the investigation into patterns of inclusion, exclusion, assimilation, and resistance—considering how individuals engaged with dominant cultural norms, power structures, and interpersonal expectations

Supporting Research Questions

2. **In what contexts do individuals experience exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate?** This question examined the situational and systemic conditions under which identity-based exclusion occurred. It helped identify patterns across social settings, institutions, and cultural practices, highlighting the structural, environmental, and interpersonal forces that shaped exclusion.
3. **What coping mechanisms do individuals rely on when experiencing exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate in social scenarios that prioritize dominant cultural norms and maintain the status quo?** This question explored how individuals preserved identity, resisted marginalization, or

protected well-being in challenging environments. It considered strategies like assimilation, avoidance, resistance, humor, advocacy, and self-care as possible modes of self-preservation.

4. **What emotional or psychological states emerge from identity-based experiences?**

This question examined the affective dimensions of navigating identity, exploring how affirming and distressing emotional responses shaped self-concept, mental health, and social belonging.

5. **How does privilege manifest through language, attitudes, and social interactions?**

This question investigated how power and advantage were expressed and reinforced—both explicitly and implicitly—through communication, behaviors, and group dynamics.

6. **How do individuals define and describe the concept of ‘identity’?** This question centered participants’ conceptualizations of identity, recognizing it as interpretive, fluid, context-dependent, and co-constructed. It examined the language, metaphors, and models participants used to articulate meaning.

Emergent Research Questions

7. **How can emergent findings from this research inform the creation of design prototypes or design interventions that support, activate, or amplify pro-social experiences?** This question considered how identity research could inform intervention design, tool development, or creative applications. It explored the potential for interactive, data-driven, or participatory frameworks that promote belonging.

8. **What kind of discoveries can be made through data modeling and graph-based queries, and how do they compare to conventional thematic analysis findings?**

This question explored what is discoverable through computational analysis that may not be evident in traditional qualitative coding. It examined where computational and manual analysis aligned, diverged, or generated new research pathways.

Chapter 1 Conclusions

The *TMI* project offers key contributions combining intersectionality theory, qualitative inquiry, and computational social science.

Theoretically, *TMI* advances the application of intersectionality in research, data modeling, and software engineering, by refusing reductive categorization and embracing fluid, emergent complex identity dimensions and descriptions. Methodologically, it demonstrates how research designs can be adaptive and responsive, how data practices can be inclusive, and how tools can embody theoretical and ethical commitments. Practically, the development of *TMI-WEB* provides a replicable, open source infrastructure for researchers and designers engaging with complex social questions through open-ended, narrative-rich data.

By operationalizing intersectional analysis as a computational framework, *TMI* addresses the limitations of single-axis or static coding approaches, resists collapsing individuals into variables or groups into demographics, and enables a dynamic, relational understanding of how identity is lived, negotiated, and experienced across social experiences. *TMI* models the integration of theory with computational techniques. When grounded in critical frameworks, computational methods can surface nuanced experiences of marginalization and generate actionable insights which may lead to the design of trauma-informed or justice-oriented prosocial knowledge and interventions.

It must be noted that the *TMI* project unfolded during a time of increasing social, cultural, and political distress in the U.S. At the project's outset, national discourse around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) had not yet entered its current defensive stance. While systemic inequality was well documented and sociopolitical polarization clearly growing, the severe backlash—and eventual formal dismantling of DEI initiatives across sectors, including active federal mandates to erase Black, Brown, LGBTQIA+, disabled, and neurodivergent people from public life, had not yet begun (The Heritage Foundation, n.d.; The White House, 2025). As the political climate intensified, the *TMI* project was carried out under increasingly hostile conditions and psychological distress, revealing just how urgent and precarious this work had become. In this sense, *TMI*, like the individuals whose identities and experiences it sought to respect and learn from, was forced to cope within a social landscape shaped by aggression, discrimination, and erasure. All this said, the project remains guided by curiosity and hope. By capturing the nuanced interplay of identity, experience, and coping through an intersectional lens—and by designing and sharing open source tools to explore the relational, messy, affective, and dynamic realities of lived experience—*TMI* resists essentialism and affirms joyful complexity. Its contributions are both practical and aspirational:

Belonging and Social Policy – Recognizing lived experience as a powerful force, holding space for complexity, and informing strategies for inclusive and pro-social models.

Inclusive Data, HCI, and Critical Design – Developing approaches, interventions, and tools that value and amplify diversity.

Computational Social Science – Demonstrating how graph-based analysis can operationalize intersectionality and enable large-scale, relational studies of identity and related experiences.

In this spirit, *TMI* represents creativity and methodological innovation, the power of original research, the use of ethical technology, and the possibility of a more informed and compassionate future.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review critically examines theoretical and methodological approaches to identity and intersectionality, highlighting key gaps that constrain existing research and analysis. It introduces key concepts, and underscores the need for innovative computational frameworks that move beyond static, additive models and toward multidimensional, relational, and scalable approaches to the study of identity.

The Evolution of Identity Study and the Need for Intersectional Approaches

The study of identity has undergone transformation, evolving from a primarily philosophical concern to a central focus across disciplines including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and, more recently, data science. This evolution reflects identity's inherent complexity: it exists in tension between sameness and difference, stability and change, and fluidity and fixity. As conceptualizations of identity have expanded, the methodological approaches to how to define, capture, and analyze it must keep up.

Contemporary thinkers increasingly understand identity as inherently intersectional—shaped by overlapping systems of oppression, privilege, and power (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

Intersectionality provides a framework for analyzing identity as relational rather than discrete, emphasizing how social categories for identity dimensions—as in age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexuality—interact dynamically to structure social positioning, inclusion, and exclusion. Despite its widespread theoretical adoption, intersectionality remains difficult to analyze methodologically. Conventional approaches often rely on small samples or fixed demographic categories that fail to account for the fluid, contingent, and relational dimensions of identity, limiting the ability to represent lived experience in its full complexity. Emerging methodological inquiries (Bentley et al., 2023) suggest principles for studying intersectionality, moving beyond the reductive categorical classifications toward more inclusive, relational, and dynamic models of identity analysis – but stop short of offering tools to do this type of analysis.

As identity research evolves, computational social science (CSS) is a pathway for expanding both theoretical and methodological approaches. By integrating computational tools like graph-based modeling and dynamic querying systems, researchers can operationalize intersectional analysis in ways that transcend conventional methods, addressing critical gaps in scale, complexity, and the interdependence of identity structures.

The TMI research agenda is motivated by pressing social imperatives, including the need to respect and affirm both individual and collective identities without reducing them to fixed classifications. The TMI research agenda combines emerging strategies for studying intersectionality using computational social science approaches. The TMI research agenda seeks to advance the broader goal of supporting inclusion and belonging, a necessary endeavor in an era marked by increasing political polarization, economic disparity, social fragmentation, and alienation.

Identity

The term *identity* originates from the Latin *identitas*, meaning “sameness,” derived from *idem*—“the same” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). In early metaphysical discourse, identity was central to debates on the persistence of *entity* over time (Martin & Barresi, 2006). When introduced into the English language in the late 16th century, the term retained these abstract connotations, often referring to the essential condition of an entity remaining *identical* with itself (Williams, 1976).

By the 19th and 20th centuries, *identity* moved beyond philosophical inquiry to become a focal point in psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Scholars reconceptualized *identity* as a dynamic, social, and context-dependent phenomenon, shifting the emphasis from fixed essence to lived experience and relational meaning-making (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This expansion of *identity* studies prompted new theoretical and methodological approaches that position *identity* as an ongoing negotiation shaped by individual and collective experiences.

Identity Paradox

As research on *identity* has evolved, it has come to embody a fundamental paradox: *identity* simultaneously signifies similarity and difference (Buckingham, 2008; Gleason, 1983; Jenkins, 2014). This tension reflects identity's messy nature. On one hand, *identity* offers continuity and coherence, grounding a sense of belonging within social groups. On another hand, it provides a basis for differentiation, enabling both individuals and groups to assert uniqueness and distinction. These attributes mean *identity* is neither singular nor static—but rather a fluid, active, and living process that is continually (re)negotiated in response to psychological, relational, and contextual factors.

Identity Lenses

Given its layered complexity, scholars use a range of lenses to examine *identity* across psychological, social, cultural, and institutional domains. These include: personal identity (Erikson, 1959; McAdams, 1996), social identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), gender identity (Butler, 1990; Erickson-Schroth, 2014; Halberstam, 2018; Stryker, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987), disability identity (Clare, 2009; Erevelles, 2011; Garland-Thomson, 1997; Linton, 1998), role identity (Burke & Stets, 2009; McCall & Simmons, 1978), collective identity (Melucci, 1995; Polletta & Jasper, 2001), cultural identity (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996), ethnic identity (Nagel, 1994; Phinney, 1990), organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and national identity (Anderson, 1983; Smith, 1991). There are more. Emerging areas of inquiry—like online identity and digital afterlife (Donath, 2014; Kneese, 2023), as well as genomic identity (Bliss, 2018; Reardon, 2017)—further expand the field into new and evolving contexts.

Identity Research: From Theory to Practice

The study of identity spans a wide range of methodological traditions, from philosophical inquiry, and arts-based research (e.g., performance, theater, cinema, literature), to all manner of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches. This methodological diversity reflects the breadth of identity as a research interest—and underscores the need for approaches that respect the nuance, fluidity, and intersectional entanglements of identity.

Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Identity

Qualitative methods provide rich, contextualized understandings of identity by exploring lived experiences and interpretations. Qualitative researchers recognize and utilize positionality and reflexivity throughout their processes. Common qualitative research methods include interviews, participant observation, descriptive analyses, and open-ended surveys. These techniques allow researchers to capture identity formation and expression, emphasizing depth over breadth. By focusing on personal narratives and social interactions, qualitative research reveals the unique, fluid, and relational nature of identity.

Quantitative Approaches to the Study of Identity

Quantitative methods offer structured, measurable approaches to studying identity, enabling researchers to analyze identity-related phenomena across populations. These methods include closed-ended surveys, psychometric assessments, neuroimaging techniques (e.g., eye tracking, fMRI), and controlled experimental or quasi-experimental research studies. By generating numerical data, quantitative approaches utilize statistical analysis, allowing researchers to identify patterns, correlations, and potential causal relationships across samples. The ability to generalize quantitative findings is valuable for uncovering broad trends, behavioral patterns, and can be used to produce predictive models that inform theoretical frameworks and applied interventions.

Mixed-Methods Approaches to the Study of Identity

Mixed-methods research integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches—alongside expanded and emergent strategies—to offer methodological flexibility in the study of identity. This integration allows researchers to combine the depth and nuance of qualitative insights with the breadth and generalizability of quantitative findings. Moreover, mixed-methods designs

support iterative adaptation, enabling researchers to refine questions or modify methods as new patterns and inquiries emerge during data collection and analysis. In the context of identity research, this adaptability is especially valuable, as it allows for a responsive engagement with the complex, evolving nature of lived experience.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a critical analytical framework that examines how individual and group experiences are shaped by the interaction of multiple social categories and the power structures in control. The lived reality of intersecting oppressions has long been recognized and felt by marginalized communities. In *The Combahee River Collective Statement* (1977), Black feminist thinkers and activists explicitly described how race, gender, sexuality, and class interlock to structure systemic inequality—laying crucial groundwork for what would later be called *intersectionality*.

The formal and scholarly conceptualization of *intersectionality* emerged later through the work of legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991), who built on the activist insights to critique dominant legal and sociopolitical frameworks. Crenshaw argued that traditional models of discrimination analysis were insufficient because they treated social categories (like race and gender) as separate experiences, completely failing to account for how category interactions don't simply add-up, they produce unique forms of dynamic, compounding distress and harm.

As Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013) explained, the use of an intersectionality lens challenges additive approaches to oppression (and discrimination analysis), instead highlighting the structural interdependence of social hierarchies (p. 790). Recognizing and building on all of these foundations, Bentley et al. (2023) note that intersectionality has arrived and, “the vocabulary and concepts of intersectional thought have been adopted by disciplines across the humanities, social sciences and medicine, enabling the analysis of lived experience, social relations and inequality” (para. 11).

At its core, intersectionality rejects single-axis analyses that treat race, gender, class, and other social categories as separate or independent variables. Instead, it recognizes identity as dynamically co-constituted through relationships, histories, and power structures (Hankivsky, 2014). This co-constitution is shaped by interlocking social forces that must be examined in

relation to one another—not in isolation (Collins & Bilge, 2020; D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020; Hankivsky, 2014).

Intersectionality challenges the dominance of categorical hegemony and single-axis logic, instead embracing complexity as foundational to understanding social experience. This includes an attention to non-linearity, interdependence, emergence, and entanglement—features more often found in complex systems theory than in traditional social science (Crenshaw, 1989; Gkiouleka et al., 2018; May, 2015; McCall, 2005; Scottish Government, 2022).

By situating identity and power within what Patricia Hill Collins (2000) describes as a matrix of domination—a structure of intersecting systems of inequality—intersectionality offers a transformative lens through which to analyze social hierarchies and lived experience. In doing so, it calls for analytical frameworks that are capable of grappling with multiplicity, relationality, and dynamic interplay—signs of complexity in both theory and method.

Intersectional Identity

Intersectional identity refers to the ways in which multiple social identity dimensions interact to shape individual experience within systems of power. This concept simply recognizes that identity exists as an interconnected web of lived realities. It highlights how individuals navigate complex social contexts in which overlapping forms of marginalization or privilege produce unique challenges, constraints, and opportunities that are always contingent on situational, cultural, and structural conditions.

Intersectional Identity Research: From Theory to Practice

Identity Data

Identity categories are not naturally occurring. Categories are reductive constructs—designed to organize and impose structure on the complexity of human experience. Categories have no objective reality outside of the historical, social, and political contexts through which they are constructed and reinforced (Bowker & Star, 1999; Omi & Winant, 2015). Categories are active agents in the reproduction of social constraints and hierarchies—frequently reinforcing systems of privilege and marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). While identity categories may be useful for articulating shared experiences, building collective understanding, or mobilizing for social justice at times (Collins & Bilge, 2020), they run the risk imposing rigid boundaries on

identity, obscuring its intersectional, fluid, and evolving nature (Guyan, 2022; McCall, 2005; Hankivsky, 2014).

Demographics are measurable classifications, widely used in research and policy. Like categories, they are reductive constructs that reduce the richness of identity to simplified, quantifiable attributes. These classifications flatten contextual, relational, and lived dimensions of identity into standardized metrics, often treating markers like race or gender as static, objective facts (Benthall & Haynes, 2019; Sen, 2007). This process of reification—transforming social constructs into fixed realities—frequently results in essentialism, where identities are assumed to be static, discrete, universal, and mutually exclusive (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). While demographic data can reveal broad disparities across groupings (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000), conventional systems often fail to reflect non-binary, emergent, or intersectional demographics. As a result, they may reproduce dominant norms rather than disrupt them, sustaining and reinforcing exclusionary forms of knowledge production (Hoffmann, 2021; Ruberg & Ruelos, 2020).

Inclusive Data

Despite increasing recognition of the need for inclusivity or sensitivity in data collection, conventions persist in how identity data is gathered, analyzed, and applied in research (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020). Data collection methods—closed-ended survey questions and forms—typically constrain participants to predefined categories or a limited set of options, failing to account for hybrid, fluid, emerging, or evolving identities (Scheuerman et al., 2020). These conventions create multiple problems. Individuals or groups may be erased, aggregated, or further marginalized, if their identities do not conform to the available categories and rigid classifications, reproducing epistemic injustice—the systematic exclusion of certain groups from the production of knowledge (Fricker, 2007). Individuals or groups may also be put in harm's way. In theory, inclusive data practices help ensure that marginalized communities are not just available in datasets but actively recognized, respected, and valued in research and decision-making processes (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020; Hoffman, 2021). In practice, individuals, groups, or communities can be put in danger if a particular category is locked, politicized, or flagged, and the data can be triangulated.

The absence of representation has profound real-world consequences. When individuals and groups are either misrepresented, omitted, or made targets through data practices, social

research and policy-making become distorted (Benjamin, 2019; Guyan, 2022; Onuoha, 2018). Incomplete or inaccurate data can contribute to policy blind spots, misallocation of resources, and reinforcement of systemic inequities (Broussard, 2018).

To move toward more equitable, inclusive, and progressive data collection, researchers must adopt critical, open, and flexible practices that prioritize self-identification, relational context, and individual agency (Hoffmann, 2021; Sen, 2007). This requires rethinking – even reimagining – data collection, developing intersectional data frameworks, and/or implementing participatory approaches that allow individuals to define, express, and manage their identity data. By challenging the limitations of traditional data collection, intersectional identity research can capture the complexities of lived experience, supporting more nuanced, ethical, and socially responsive knowledge production.

Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Intersectional Identity

Qualitative research is a foundational approach to studying intersectional identity due to its alignment with social theories and its adaptability in data analysis. As a theory-driven and interpretive approach, qualitative research provides the flexibility needed to engage with the complexities of intersectional identity. Scholars utilizing qualitative methodologies recognize that intersectionality can “illuminate and dissect the complexities of minds and bodies as sites of intersectional oppression” (Abrams et al., 2020, para. 8). The compatibility between intersectionality and qualitative research is evident in the methodological emphasis on reflexivity, disclosure, and critical engagement with bias and power dynamics. Qualitative methods allow for deep engagement with individuals' identities, lived experiences, and social intersections. Furthermore, qualitative data analysis can capture the nuanced interplay of identity, relationships, and context, making it an effective tool for examining the ways in which power and marginalization manifest in everyday life (Abrams et al., 2020).

Despite the advantages, qualitative research presents some limitations. Its slow pace and small-N study design limit the number of cases or considerations that can be analyzed, restricting its capacity to discover patterns. This raises a critical methodological question: how many intersections can meaningfully be examined within a single qualitative study? (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Lutz, 2002; McCall, 2005; Phoenix, 2006). While qualitative research offers depth and richness, it cannot fully account for the scale and variability of

intersectional experiences across diverse individuals and groups, not with traditional qualitative methods alone.

Qualitative Limitations: Depth Over Scale

Qualitative methods are useful for capturing the richness, nuance, and emotional texture of lived experience. However, they face structural constraints that limit scalability in intersectional research. Deep engagement with complex, multi-layered identity narratives demands significant time and researcher involvement, which naturally limits the number of participants a study can feasibly include (McCall, 2005). Additionally, because intersectional experiences are highly contextual, qualitative findings are not necessarily generalizable beyond the immediate participant sample, making it difficult to draw broader conclusions or inform large-scale policy decisions (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Lutz, 2002). Also, the process of coding and interpreting qualitative data is extremely labor-intensive. In large-scale intersectional studies, where multiple identity dimensions and social contexts intersect, this labor can become prohibitively demanding of time and attention (Abrams et al., 2020).

In addition to the stated constraints, the emotional and psychological toll of working with narratives of lived experience can result in secondary trauma, vicarious distress, and burnout (Devilley et al., 2009; Dickson-Swift et al., 2008; Rauvola et al., 2019). Unlike quantitative methods, which provide analytical distance through abstraction and standardization, qualitative research requires intimate, raw, emotionally engaged labor (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008). As such, trauma-informed research practices, peer debriefing, and self-care are essential for the sustainability of intersectional qualitative inquiry (Rauvola et al., 2019).

Quantitative Approaches to the Study of Intersectional Identity

Conventional statistical methods fail to engage with critical social theories or to integrate themes like power, oppression, and lived experience. As a result, quantitative methods tend to reinforce fixed, categorical conceptions of identity—conceptions that do not capture the fluidity, interdependence, and complexity of intersectionality.

Emerging critiques from Critical Quantitative Studies (CritQuant) and Quantitative Critical Race Theory (QuantCrit) highlight the limitations. These fields point to the origins of statistical methods in eugenicist and norm-reinforcing frameworks—frameworks that privileged linearity, categorization, and generalization over relationality, emergence, and context (Frisby, 2024). In

this way, conventional approaches often reproduce the very hierarchies and harms intersectionality seeks to recognize and dismantle. Several entrenched methodological norms further illustrate quantitative limitations. A priori hypothesis testing constrains exploratory inquiry by requiring pre-specified variables, limiting the ability to surface emergent patterns (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Rigid demographic categories force individuals into mutually exclusive identity groups, flattening intersectional experiences (Hillsburg, 2013; Hankivsky, 2014; McCall, 2005). And data aggregation, central to large-scale quantitative studies, tends to obscure the distinct realities of multiply marginalized individuals, and disregard outliers (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Diggs & Heckler, 2025; Phoenix, 2006).

Despite the limitations, quantitative approaches offer strengths that qualitative approaches alone cannot easily achieve— scale, speed, and the ability to identify population-level patterns. Some scholars make a case for quantitative approaches to intersectional complexity.

Multiple regression models with interaction terms, allows researchers to explore how identity categories combine to shape social outcomes (Bauer, 2021; Scottish Government, 2022). Multivariate linear models examine multiple dependent variables simultaneously, while moderated mediation models explore how identity categories both influence and condition broader systemic processes (Else-Quest & Shibley, 2016). Meta-analytic techniques can incorporate moderators to compare intersectional effects across datasets, and MAIHDA (Multilevel Analysis of Individual Heterogeneity and Discriminatory Accuracy) offers promising tools to measure intersectional inequalities in statistically precise ways (Bauer, 2021; Gross & Goldan, 2023; Merlo, 2018).

In addition, Generalized Additive Models (GAMs) allow for nonlinear relationships between variables, enabling researchers to model non-additive interactions between identity categories with greater flexibility (Hastie & Tibshirani, 1990; Bauer, 2021). Latent Class Analysis (LCA) and Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) uncover hidden identity subgroups within a population by identifying shared response patterns. These methods help surface intersectional clusters that may be obscured by traditional categorical frameworks, providing a more dynamic and data-driven view of identity (Collins & Lanza, 2010; Bauer et al., 2019). Bayesian Multilevel Models represent another powerful tool. By incorporating prior knowledge and modeling hierarchical structures, Bayesian approaches improve estimation even in small-N studies or when dealing with uneven demographic distributions. This is particularly useful for capturing the

nuanced effects of intersectionality across structurally underrepresented or multiply marginalized populations (Gelman et al., 2013; Goldstein, 2011).

Taken together, these emerging quantitative techniques represent a useful shift toward statistical methods that can accommodate the nonlinearity, interdependence, and heterogeneity that define intersectional identity.

Quantitative Limitations: Scale Over Complexity

Quantitative methods offer efficiency, scalability, and the ability to model population-level trends. However, these same strengths often become limitations when applied to intersectional identity. Traditional demographic classifications tend to impose rigid, mutually exclusive labels on participants, erasing the fluid, hybrid, or evolving nature of lived identities (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015; D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020). Moreover, statistical models often rely on single-axis assumptions, analyzing identity variables in isolation rather than exploring how they interact in relational and nonlinear ways (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016; Bauer, 2021). In large-scale studies, aggregation practices prioritize generalizability, but this often comes at the cost of specificity—especially for multiply marginalized individuals whose experiences are rendered statistically insignificant or reduced to outlier status (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Lutz, 2002).

In addition to the stated constraints, quantitative intersectional research requires advanced statistical fluency and skills. Researchers must navigate theorems, assumptions, tests, and statistical interpretation of results. These technical requirements can become barriers to entry—especially for researchers whose expertise and sensibilities lie in critical theory, social analysis, or community-based methods.

Bridging the Methodological Divide: Computational Social Science, Critical Data Studies, and Articulation Mindset

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are shaped by constraints that limit their capacity to fully engage with the complexity of intersectional experience. One response to this challenge is intentional inter/transdisciplinary collaboration. When scholars working in critical theory, statistics, computation, and design come together, theory, methodological innovation, and ethical accountability could be aligned. Another response is the development of new approaches and tools capable of holding the richness of lived experience while enabling dynamic data analysis. Computational Social Science (CSS) offers possibilities.

As an inherently interdisciplinary field, CSS integrates social theory, big data, and computational techniques to examine complex social phenomena at scale (Bailey et al., 2019; Bastian et al., 2009; Bentley et al., 2023; Lazer et al., 2009).

TMI takes a CSS approach, pairing graph-based methodologies, and interactive, networked representations of identity and experience. These relational structures allow for the visualization of fluid, context-sensitive connections between identities and experiences within and across dimensions. Rather than choosing between narrative and number, depth and scale, or clarity and complexity, graph-based CSS bridges methodological divides with new forms of analysis that enable flexible modeling and iterative querying. Researchers can refine inquiries and ask more questions as new patterns or pathways emerge. These approaches are particularly well-suited for navigating structures of marginalization, exclusion, or privilege that may be obscured by manual coding or statistical aggregation (Hanna et al., 2020).

Critical Data Studies provides an essential complement to both intersectional thinking and computational social science. As an interdisciplinary field, it explores the social, political, and epistemological dimensions of data production and use—emphasizing that data is never neutral, objective, or context-free (boyd & Crawford, 2012; Iliadis & Russo, 2016). While qualitative research has long emphasized reflexivity, including critical attention to researcher bias and positionality (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Pillow, 2003), computational fields must extend this reflexive practice to include the data infrastructure itself. This means interrogating not only who is asking the research questions and research intents, but also how data is shaped by institutional power, algorithmic design, and the social conditions under which it is produced or captured. Without this kind of critical engagement, computational approaches and data models risk reinforcing bias and essentialist views (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018; Hanna et al., 2020; Noble, 2018).

In a significant contribution to these evolving fields, Bentley et al. (2023) critically examine how intersectionality is engaged within computational research. Through a discourse (meta) analysis of 172 journal articles explicitly referencing intersectionality, they identify methodological shortcomings and call for a shift toward what they term an articulation mindset in data science.

Drawing on Patricia Hill Collins' (2019) relationality framework, Bentley et al. categorize computational approaches to intersectionality into three modes: additive thinking, articulation, and co-formation. *Additive thinking* treats identity categories as separate, linear variables. While

methodologically convenient, this framework reinforces compartmentalized understandings of identity and often relies on regression models that isolate identity variables or examine them through simplistic interaction terms—approaches that fail to capture the relational and fluid dynamics of social positioning. In contrast, *articulation* recognizes that identity categories are co-constructed and shaped by broader structures of power. *Co-formation* extends and builds on articulation, conceptualizing identity as emergent and interdependent, continuously produced through historical, institutional, and affective forces.

Despite the growing recognition of intersectionality's importance, Bentley et al. found that most computational studies continue to treat it as a secondary modifier rather than as a guiding paradigm. This means intersectionality is often added onto existing methods rather than used to rethink them. To address this gap, Bentley et al. propose three core practices of an articulation mindset: historical contextualization, systemic and integrative thinking, and researcher reflexivity and positionality. Yet, even as they outline recommendations, they acknowledge that few concrete strategies currently exist for operationalizing articulation or co-formation computationally—an opening for methodological innovation.

TMI-WEB: A Critical, Ethical, Computational Social Science Approach to Operationalizing Intersectional Analysis

TMI-WEB is a groundbreaking open-source computational ecosystem developed to operationalize intersectionality. It models identity as a relational system—a network of interdependent connections shaped by social contexts, structural forces, and power dynamics. The platform integrates qualitative thematic analysis, quantitative frequency analysis, sentiment analysis, and optional AI-enhanced coding suggestions, but its most distinctive innovation is its graph-based querying infrastructure—a feature specifically designed to support a lived-experience data model, and relational identity analysis.

By structuring identity data as an interconnected system rather than a set of independent variables, TMI-WEB aligns with Crenshaw's (1989) foundational framework of intersectionality and directly addresses the methodological challenges articulated by Bentley et al. (2023). It enables researchers to explore identity as an interdependent and non-hierarchical construct—capable of shifting, interacting, and producing complex forms of meaning.

TMI-WEB's methodological innovation allows researchers to engage identity interactively, using relational mapping to uncover emergent patterns that remain obscured in conventional, additive

approaches. Graph-based querying supports real-time, dynamic analysis of identity-based experiences, surfacing structural inequalities and relational dynamics across large, diverse datasets. In doing so, TMI-WEB demonstrates that intersectionality can be operationalized as a computational framework, rather than simply theorized or approximated.

TMI-WEB is also an intentional sociopolitical and ethical intervention. Most analysis software and sensemaking platforms are dominated by proprietary tools that impose financial barriers, restrict customization, and operate within closed-source infrastructures. Similarly, many computational approaches in social science rely on opaque machine learning models and centralized data systems that reinforce epistemic hierarchies, limiting access and engagement from marginalized communities.

TMI-WEB challenges these paradigms by embracing Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) principles to promote transparency, accessibility, and collective ownership of the research process. Developed using Neo4j for graph-based querying, the platform is designed to be auditable, adaptable, and extensible—allowing researchers to refine and expand its capabilities in alignment with social research projects and intersectional research values.

Its open-source foundation supports collaborative innovation, enabling scholars, designers, and community members to co-create more inclusive and adaptable computational methodologies. These practices resist extractive models of knowledge production and instead position computational research as a relational, participatory, and ethically accountable endeavor.

TMI-WEB proves that intersectionality is not only conceptually vital—it is also computationally possible. By embedding equity into its infrastructure, and by making identity analysis both accessible and relational, TMI-WEB offers a new model for ethical, critical, and community-informed computational social science. These commitments position computational research as a relational and ethical endeavor—not just a technical one.

Implications for Future Research

This research integrates social inquiry, inclusive data practices, human-centered design, computational social science, and open-source software to advance the study of identity and the operationalization of intersectional analysis. Beyond enabling robust analysis of intersectional identities and lived experiences, this work seeks to contribute to research that supports belonging and social connection.

Belonging is a relational and affective process shaped by social, cultural, and political structures. It influences how individuals and groups experience identity, inclusion, and community. Yuval-Davis (2006) distinguishes between the *politics of belonging*—which determine inclusion and exclusion in national and social spaces—and *emotional belonging*, which supports security, acceptance, and interpersonal connection. Contemporary challenges—including political polarization, economic disparity, and declining institutional trust—have intensified social divisions, prompting scholars to describe an emerging crisis of belonging (Juan-Torres González, 2024). In addition, the rise of authoritarian populism and exclusionary discourse has entrenched “us vs. them” dynamics, deepening alienation, particularly for marginalized communities.

While belonging can emerge through shared identities, collective experiences, and inclusive practices, it is also actively contested and withheld through systemic inequities (Yuval-Davis, 2006; May, 2011). The status quo refers to dominant norms, institutional practices, and entrenched power structures—often preserved through inertia, tradition, or authority. Within the context of identity, the status quo tends to privilege normative categories such as whiteness, cisnormativity, heterosexuality, able-bodiedness, neurotypicality, patriarchy, and middle- or upper-class status (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). It operates through binary classifications and reductive frameworks that obscure the complexity and interdependence of lived experiences. By presenting itself as neutral or objective, the status quo often reproduces itself (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013).

As a result, individuals whose identities deviate from these normative categories—by race, class, gender, disability, immigration status, or other axes—frequently experience precarious belonging, exclusion, alienation (Wood & Waite, 2011). Research in psychology and social science links this belonging uncertainty to emotional distress, social withdrawal, and decreased well-being (Allen, 2020; Allen et al., 2021).

To address these challenges, future research can reimagine identity and belonging as fluid, participatory, and actively negotiated—not as fixed attributes defined by historical privilege or exclusionary politics. By advancing computationally augmented approaches, this project offers tools to study identity and belonging as emergent, relational, and context-dependent phenomena.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

This review has examined key concepts along with theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of identity and intersectionality, while identifying critical gaps in research methods. Qualitative approaches offer depth and contextual nuance, they face limitations in scalability. Quantitative methods provide breadth and statistical rigor but often reduce intersectionality to fixed demographic variables, overlooking relational complexity. Even mixed-methods research, though flexible, encounters challenges in effectively integrating scale with intersectional nuance.

These methodological limitations point to the need for innovative frameworks that can bridge qualitative and quantitative analysis while preserving the complexity, fluidity, and interdependence of identity-based experiences. Computational social science, particularly when engaged in graph-based methodologies, offers a scalable and relational approach to intersectionality—one capable of modeling how identity shapes experience within broader systems of power.

This research introduces TMI-WEB, a novel open-source ecosystem that operationalizes intersectional analysis using inclusive data and computational social science. Moving beyond static or additive models, TMI-WEB provides a dynamic, query-driven framework for mapping identity relationships across multiple levels of analysis. As an ethical, accessible, and participatory tool, it addresses both methodological and epistemic gaps in the field—promoting data justice, transparency, and inclusion in computational research.

As the study of identity, intersectionality, and belonging continues to evolve, the adoption of computational, graph-based, and open-source methodologies will be essential for advancing socially accountable research. TMI-WEB represents a methodological and ethical shift that expands the study of identity, and provides a scalable, relational, and inclusive framework.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the study's emergent, iterative, mixed-methods approach to researching intersectional identity. Recognizing identity as a multidimensional and relational construct, the methodology is designed to balance qualitative depth with quantitative scalability and

computational innovation. The following sections present the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the research, detail the design of its multi-phase structure, and describe the specific approaches used for data collection and analysis.

Justification for Research Design

Understanding identity as intersectional, dynamic, and relational requires moving beyond fixed categorical models toward a methodological framework that engages complexity. To meet this need, the TMI project uses an emergent, iterative, mixed-methods, and computationally augmented research design capable of engaging identity and identity-based experiences across multiple dimensions.

The research design blends qualitative, quantitative, computational, and design research approaches. Qualitative methods—including immersive ethnography, open-ended surveys, and iterative thematic coding—were used to collect identity and lived experience data.

Computational and quantitative strategies, including data modeling, graph-based querying, and data visualization, were introduced to reveal patterns and relational structures embedded within the data. These methods were supported by design research methodologies, which guided the iterative development of TMI-WEB, a custom-built, open-source data analysis ecosystem designed specifically to model and query intersectional identity experiences.

Through this integrated and iterative approach, the study links individual narratives with broader structural and systemic dynamics, offering a context-sensitive, relational, and interactive framework for the study of intersectional identity, embracing non-hierarchical, complexity-informed methods.

The research design is explicitly iterative and open-ended, allowing findings to develop in response to insights, discoveries, and theoretical dynamics. This flexibility aligns with the commitments of postnormal research, which recognizes the need for transdisciplinary approaches, and adaptive research strategies in times of social, cultural, and epistemological flux (Sardar, 2010; Montuori, 2023).

Phase 1 Introduction: Exploratory Autoethnographic Field Study — Observing Identity, Presence, and Power in Social Scenarios

The first phase of this research began as an exploratory (auto)ethnographic study focused on observing how identity, presence, and power unfold within real-world social scenarios. Dr. Westbrook (they/them), a nonbinary and disabled design researcher, conducted immersive participant-observation across a variety of organized settings—including events in the arts, education, healthcare, government, and business sectors. Through reflexive journaling and critical analysis, they documented how identity was expressed, constrained, or erased across contexts.

Observations centered on unspoken norms and cultural scripts that governed participation and belonging. Across environments, dominant cultural expectations frequently limited authenticity and reinforced conformity, particularly for individuals whose identities fell outside normative bounds. Pro-social practices such as pronoun sharing, access cues, or inclusion signals were absent or inconsistently applied, even in spaces that outwardly espoused values of diversity or inclusion.

To engage these dynamics, Westbrook introduced a series of intentional micro-interventions, including a brief spoken positionality statement—sharing their pronouns and disability status when introduction opportunities arose. These interventions served as subtle but deliberate disruptions of normative scripts, inviting reciprocal vulnerability and modeling inclusive presence.

Phase 1 primed sensibilities and provided critical groundwork for the broader study. It revealed how systemic norms shape everyday social interactions and underscored the need for participant-centered approaches to studying identity complexity. These early insights directly shaped the study's design and helped surface several guiding research questions, including: *What coping mechanisms do individuals rely on when experiencing exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate? And What emotional or psychological states emerge from identity-based experiences?*

Phase 2 Introduction: Focused Survey Study — Collecting Large-Scale Qualitative Identity Data

Building on the insights and research questions that surfaced during Phase 1, the study transitioned into a large-scale qualitative data collection phase aimed at capturing expansive, participant-defined narratives of identity. This phase sought to move beyond rigid demographic categories by prioritizing open-ended, self-described reflections—offering a more flexible and inclusive model for representing identity.

The core instrument was an open-field survey titled *My Identity in My Own Words*, which invited individuals to describe a range of identity dimensions including age, class, disability, gender, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodiversity, pronouns, race/ethnicity, and religion. The final prompt encouraged broader reflection, asking participants what they would add to a conversation about identity—offering space for both personal and cultural insights into identity’s complexity, fluidity, and social significance.

Thematic analysis of the resulting dataset revealed five emergent insight areas: contexts, emotional and psychological states, behavioral coping mechanisms, role of relationships and community, and manifestations of privilege. These themes captured both the depth and diversity of identity experiences while surfacing patterns across social scenarios.

However, the scale and relational complexity of the dataset quickly exceeded the limits of traditional qualitative coding. Manual methods struggled to hold the intersectional entanglements embedded in the data, prompting a critical shift in methodology. To meet this challenge—and in alignment with the study’s guiding interest in pro-social design—the research entered a third phase focused on computational augmentation. This transition marked the invention of TMI-WEB, a custom open-source data analysis ecosystem developed to model identity as a dynamic, relational structure.

Phase 3 Introduction: Data Modeling, Software Engineering, Graph-Based Queries – Operationalizing Intersectional Analysis with a New Innovative Computational Framework

Phase 3 marked a significant methodological shift from manual thematic analysis to computational exploration. In response to the analytical limits of traditional qualitative tools—particularly their inability to hold the full relational complexity of intersectional data—this phase introduced TMI-WEB, a custom-built, open-source data analysis ecosystem designed for graph-based identity research.

Built on the Neo4j graph database platform, TMI-WEB enabled identity data to be modeled as a dynamic, interconnected system. Rather than treating identity dimensions, experiences, and contexts as isolated or additive categories, this phase represented them as networked nodes linked by relationships derived from participant responses and thematic codes. This approach allowed identity to be analyzed relationally and iteratively, revealing co-occurring identity descriptors, shared experiences, and emergent social patterns.

In TMI-WEB, querying became an active component of the research process—supporting scalable, flexible exploration rather than fixed analytical endpoints. Through graph-based querying and visualization, researchers were able to surface both dominant patterns and underrepresented connections without flattening complexity. This allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how identity is co-formed, navigated, and expressed within social scenarios.

By operationalizing intersectional analysis with a computational framework, Phase 3 advanced both the methodological and theoretical aims of the study. It demonstrated how large-scale qualitative data could be explored through a query-driven, ethically grounded model—one that centers participant voice while expanding the analytic possibilities of intersectional identity research.

Philosophical Foundations

This methodology is grounded in philosophical foundations that include complexity theory, intersectionality, and postnormal research. These foundations provide the necessary flexibility to study identity as a relational, emergent, and context-dependent phenomenon. The study's mixed-methods and computationally augmented approach reflects these foundations.

Complexity theory

This study conceptualizes identity as a complex and emergent phenomenon (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014; Morin, 2008; Cilliers, 1998). Whereas traditional identity research often relies

on fixed, categorical models that treat identity as stable, singular, and individually held, complexity theory offers an alternative. It characterizes identity as nonlinear, relational, and dynamic—operating across multiple scales that link individual experiences to institutional and societal systems. From this perspective, identity is not a standardized classification but an adaptive system of interconnected experiences and relationships, continuously shaped by internal reflection and external conditions. This framing justifies the use of iterative, flexible research methods capable of responding to emergence and variation. Rather than imposing fixed categories, the study recognizes identity as a shifting, contextually embedded process that invites ongoing transformation and methodological adjustment.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) serves as the primary analytical framework for this project, shaping how identity is conceptualized, operationalized, and explored across methods. Intersectionality challenges single-axis approaches by emphasizing that identity dimensions are not discrete or independent, but rather interdependent and co-constructed. Power structures shape identity-based experience, influencing access, exclusion, and belonging in ways that are not adequately captured by conventional demographic models.

In this project, intersectionality guides both the qualitative design and the computational methodology. Rather than treating identity categories as isolated variables or aggregating them through additive models, the research uses graph-based querying to reveal their relational and systemic interconnections. This approach aligns with the articulation mindset proposed by Bentley et al. (2023), which argues for computational practices that reflect the co-formation and relationality of identity and power.

Postnormal Research

This study is also informed by postnormal research (Sardar, 2010; Montuori, 2023), which recognizes the epistemological uncertainty, instability, and paradox inherent in studying identity in times of social, cultural, and technological transformation. Postnormal research holds that traditional methodologies may reinforce outdated assumptions or fixed models that fail to account for emergence and instability. Within this framework, identity is understood to be in flux—resisting linear explanations or categorical containment.

In response, the study adopts methodological openness, emphasizing adaptability, iteration, and reflexivity over rigid research pathways. By engaging identity as an unfolding, uncertain, and often contradictory process, the study embraces a postnormal approach that is both responsive and critical—refusing closure in favor of curiosity and emergence.

The philosophical foundations of this study—complexity theory, intersectionality, and postnormal research—offer a flexible, dynamic lens for exploring identity as relational, emergent, and context-sensitive.

Methodology

Iterative Mixed-Methods Research Design

To engage the relational and multiscale aspects of identity, this study uses an iterative mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Kara, 2017). The research integrates qualitative methods (ethnographic observation and open-ended surveys) to gain depth and context-rich understanding of identity expression and experience. Quantitative approaches including frequency analysis, some sentiment coding, and data visualization —support pattern recognition and the identification of broader trends. Computational methods, especially graph-based querying and interaction, enable scalable and networked analysis of relational identity structures.

This mixed-methods design is intentionally iterative. Findings from each stage informed the development of subsequent research tools, coding frameworks, and analytical directions. New insights shaped evolving lines of inquiry, while the integration of multiple forms of analysis allowed for movement between narrative depth, structural patterning, and computational augmentation. This approach ensured that the study was not constrained by a singular epistemology or closed analytical framework, but could instead adapt in real time to the emergent properties of data and insights.

Computational Intersectionality: TMI-WEB as a Methodological Innovation

A key methodological contribution of this research is the development and implementation of TMI-WEB, an open-source computational data analysis ecosystem designed to operationalize intersectionality. Traditional approaches to identity analysis typically rely on static demographic

categories and additive models. These methods often reduce complexity, failing to account for how identity dimensions interact dynamically and relationally.

TMI-WEB was developed to address these limitations. Built using Neo4j, the system allows for interactive graph-based querying that models identity as a networked and interdependent system. Through this infrastructure, identity relationships are visualized as non-hierarchical, scalable patterns—capable of revealing emergent intersections and clusters that are obscured in conventional thematic analysis or statistical modeling. TMI-WEB supports exploratory, iterative research, allowing the researcher to generate new questions and adjust hypotheses dynamically in response to discoveries made during the querying process.

By combining qualitative, quantitative, and computational strategies, TMI-WEB advances a methodological approach that is both scalable and relational. This innovation challenges the reductive tendencies of conventional identity-oriented research and expands the analytical possibilities for studying intersectionality through open-ended, participant-defined data.

Researcher Positionality & Reflexivity

Research is never neutral. The perspectives, lived experiences, activity, commitments, and practices of the researcher inevitably shape the framing of inquiry, methodological choices, data interpretation, and participant interactions. In this study, positionality is explicitly acknowledged as an ethical responsibility and a methodological imperative.

Researcher Positionality: Dr. Jess Parris Westbrook, social research, critical design
As a genderQueer, nonbinary, disabled researcher and designer, my engagement with intersectional identity is theoretical and deeply embodied. In addition, my lived experience as a T1D cyborg, intimately tethered to an ML-enabled insulin pump, informs my understanding of identity as relational, adaptive, vulnerable – and in my case deeply entangled with technology and AI. My commitments to critical design research, disability justice, and emerging forms of transdisciplinary practices like computational social science situates my position and connection to this work at the intersection of social theory, data ethics, and emerging technologies.

Researcher Positionality: Coraline Ada Ehmke, founder, author, ethics and engineering

I come to this project with the perspective and lived experience of a queer and transgender woman living in an increasingly hostile world. Throughout my career I have tried to balance the complexities of technological progress with the complexities of civil society, in the process developing a strong sense of how identities form, evolve, and express themselves in techno-social contexts. I am committed to the ethical pursuit of a deeper understanding of identity and related phenomenon, and in particular exploring ways that technology can help contribute to this essential line of research.

These positionalities influence methodological design in several key ways. First, the study amplifies experience in its priming phase, then prioritizes participant agency and voice, ensuring that identity is self-defined rather than externally imposed. The open-ended, qualitative structure of *My Identity in My Own Words* was designed to allow individuals to articulate identity on their own terms, rejecting reductionist demographic categorization. Second, our work in critical design and ethical engineering informs the development of TMI-WEB, a computational tool explicitly designed to reimagine and enable complex human-centered identity modeling. Finally, our collective lived experiences within marginalized groups along with our transdisciplinary approaches to research and practice underscores the importance of methodological flexibility—adapting to emergent insights rather than imposing rigid analytical structures.

At the same time, we recognize that while our positionalities support certain insights, they also create blind spots. We approach this research with the awareness that intersectionality, as both a lived reality and an analytical framework, exceeds any one individual's experience. As such, we have sought to foreground participant voice, engage in reflexivity, and integrate collaborative research processes to mitigate bias and epistemic limitations. This study does not claim to “speak for” intersectional identities, but rather to create the conditions for identity complexity to emerge as a networked, relational, accessible phenomenon.

Ethical Reflexivity & Accountability

Ethical reflexivity of the research extends beyond research protocols; it requires an ongoing interrogation of power, representation, and responsibility. Who gets to define identity? Who

benefits from this research? What are the risks and potential impacts of computational approaches?

A core ethical commitment of the research is questioning assimilation, resisting the reinforcement of status quo, dominant culture, and imposed assumptions and identity categories, and amplifying inclusive experiences like belonging. Traditional data science practices often impose fixed classifications on individuals, reinforcing exclusionary epistemologies. By contrast, this research nudges identity research towards a recognition of complex relations and contexts through graph-based modeling and TMI-WEB, allowing identity to be explored dynamically and contextually rather than as a set of predetermined variables.

Another critical consideration is data accessibility and responsible computational analysis. As computational methods scale, they introduce new ethical concerns—particularly in how identity data is stored, queried, and interpreted. TMI-WEB has been designed with an explicit commitment to open-source, ethical use of AI, and transparency in data processing. Unlike proprietary tools that obscure analytical processes behind paywalls and black-box algorithms, TMI-WEB remains auditable, adaptable, and accountable to research communities. This extends to the usability being sought in further iterations of the design of TMI-WEB, ensuring that engagement is intuitive, flexible, and accessible to diverse learners and practices.

This study approaches reflexivity and accountability as central methodological principles. Positionality shapes how research questions are asked but also who gets to participate in knowledge production. By embedding reflexivity and accountability throughout—this research seeks to honor and foreground the lived realities of intersectional identity.

Research Phase 1: Exploratory Autoethnographic Field Study — Observing Identity, Presence, and Power in Social Scenarios

Phase 1 Introduction

The first phase of the study focused on qualitative ethnographic observation and experimental interventions designed to explore how identity is expressed, constrained, or reinforced in social contexts. This exploratory phase investigated how dominant norms and power structures shape identity-based interactions and informed the design of subsequent research phases.

During this period, Dr. Jess Parris Westbrook (they/them)—a nonbinary and disabled researcher—engaged in immersive participant-observation across a range of organized social scenarios. By assuming relevant social roles, observing their own identity presentation alongside others, and critically reflecting on the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, Westbrook examined how identity, presence, and power were negotiated in diverse settings.

Rather than beginning with formal hypotheses, this informal, discovery-driven phase allowed emergent insights to guide the broader study. Westbrook asked: Who is here, and what can I know about them? What is invited, permitted, and what is constrained? How do social norms enable or restrict people from bringing their whole, multidimensional selves into a space? These early reflections shaped the inquiry that followed, establishing the importance of studying identity-based experiences and self-preservation strategies at scale.

Phase 1 Methodology

Phase 1 combined exploratory field research with experiential ethnography, emphasizing immersion and reflexivity to examine how identity is shaped by context, institutional structures, and social norms. Westbrook adopted a participant-observer role, actively engaging in real-world social environments while maintaining critical awareness of their own positionality as a nonbinary disabled individual. This reflexive orientation was central to the methodology, allowing for situated insight, comparative analysis, and iterative interpretation.

The selection of research sites was ad hoc and opportunistic, unfolding over approximately twelve months. Settings were chosen based on accessibility, relevance, and availability—factors that shaped where Westbrook could meaningfully participate and observe without disrupting or overburdening the space. Data collection methods included observational field notes and reflective journaling, focused on documenting moments of tension, belonging, power, or exclusion. No interviews were conducted, and no participants were identified. The study prioritized systemic and contextual observations over individual analysis.

Ethical considerations shaped all aspects of the design. To minimize risk and maintain naturalistic conditions, Westbrook refrained from disclosing their role as a researcher and avoided direct documentation of individuals or conversations. Observations remained focused on environmental norms, relational dynamics, and affective atmospheres, rather than individual behaviors. The aim was to generate insight through reflection, not through extraction.

Phase 1 Settings and Contexts

Observations occurred across a wide range of social scenarios, reflecting the diversity of environments where identity is enacted, negotiated, and constrained. These included professional settings (classrooms, workplace meetings, government committees), community and recreational spaces (fitness centers, community centers), healthcare contexts (medical appointments, emergency rooms), cultural and religious events, and academic conferences (both in-person and virtual). While most fieldwork took place in Chicago and its surrounding suburbs, online settings expanded the geographical and cultural scope of analysis, offering a glimpse into identity performance in digital and hybrid environments.

Phase 1 Observational Focus

Observations were guided by attention to several key domains:

- Norms and rules: observable social expectations, stated or unstated guidelines, and cultural scripts
- Expressions and boundaries: gestures, self-presentation, and the visibility or suppression of identity
- Inclusivity practices: the presence or absence of invitations, permissions, accommodations, and hospitality
- Structural dynamics: how participants were introduced or acknowledged (e.g., name tags, pronoun use, access cues)
- Atmosphere: the affective tone or ‘vibe’ of the environment—whether it felt open or closed, activating or oppressive

Phase 1 Emergent Insights

Three core insights emerged across sites and settings, revealing consistent patterns of structural exclusion:

Reinforcement of the Status Quo

Across scenarios dominant cultural norms were upheld. Many environments operated on assumed expectations about who belongs, who speaks, and who leads—leaving little room for deviation from traditions and normative scripts.

Absence of Pro-Social Practices

Despite increased discourse around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in recent years, pro-social practices were often missing. Simple signals of recognition—such as pronoun-sharing, land acknowledgments, or accessibility information—were missing. Notably, pronoun-sharing had declined since the height of the pandemic. Disability was never acknowledged beyond assumptions in affinity spaces.

Exclusion of Marginalized Voices

Recognition of marginalized identities was largely confined to niche or affinity spaces (e.g., Queer meetups, disability gatherings), leaving most general contexts devoid of active inclusion efforts. Public and professional environments often reflected a flattening of identity complexity rather than an engagement with it. Alternative modalities/platforms for expanded engagement are rare outside zoom meetings with chat enabled.

Phase 1 Intervention: A Positionality Experiment

In response to patterns, Westbrook conducted a small-scale intervention by introducing themselves with a brief spoken positionality statement when introductions were had: *“Hi, I’m Jess. I use they/them pronouns, and my disability is Type 1 diabetes.”* This act served as a deliberate disruption—a subtle performance of vulnerability and non-normativity intended to open social expectations and model inclusion.

Responses to this intervention varied. In some contexts, pronoun-sharing was reciprocated, but this was uncommon. Disability disclosure was typically ignored. In formal or hierarchical settings, the use of non-traditional pronouns introduced tension or discomfort; references to disability sometimes elicited pity, reinforcing stigma and alienation. However, in affinity spaces that actively acknowledged shared marginalization, the statement was met with respect, contributing to moments of community and belonging.

Phase 1 Conclusions

The findings from Phase 1 established critical groundwork for the TMI study. They provided direct insight into Research Question 1 (*How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?*) by documenting the norms, structures, and erasure that shape identity in context.

In addition, observations helped surface early insights relevant to Research Question 4 (*What behaviors or coping mechanisms do individuals use in social scenarios?*), recognizing how individuals must perform, conceal, or adapt their identities in response to exclusionary conditions. The relational dynamics documented in Phase 1 also contributed to Research Question 5 (*How does privilege manifest through language, attitudes, and social interactions?*), demonstrating how invisibility, discomfort, and cultural scripts operate across space and role.

Finally, these insights informed Research Question 7 (*How can emergent findings from this research inform the creation of design prototypes or design interventions that support, activate, or amplify pro-social experiences?*), highlighting opportunities for low-barrier interventions—like positionality statements—that can disrupt status quo dynamics and model inclusion.

Phase 1 helped surface the need for a larger-scale, participant-centered inquiry capable of examining identity complexity across broader populations and contexts. It directly shaped the design of Phase 2's qualitative identity survey.

Research Phase 2: Focused Survey Study — Collecting Large-Scale Qualitative Identity Data

Phase 2 Introduction

The second phase of the study focused on large-scale qualitative data collection through the open-field survey *My Identity in My Own Words*. Building on exploratory insights from Phase 1, this phase broadened the scope to a wider empirical investigation of identity-based experience, self-definition, and encounters with bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Prioritizing participant-driven narratives, Phase 2 treated identity as a fluid, relational, and self-defined construct—moving beyond prescribed categories to capture complexity and nuance at scale.

The survey encompassed multiple identity dimensions, including age, class, gender, disability, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodivergence, pronoun use, race/ethnicity, and religion. The resulting dataset revealed both the diversity and the intricacy of identity, while also highlighting the methodological challenges of conducting qualitative research at scale. The volume and relational nature of the data ultimately necessitated new computational approaches, setting the stage for methodological innovation in Phase 3.

Phase 2 Methodology

This phase utilized a qualitative, survey-based methodology to elicit nuanced, participant-centered accounts of identity and lived experience. Survey questions were designed to invite open-ended responses, minimizing the imposition of rigid category labels and allowing individuals to articulate their identities in their own words. By structuring prompts around personal experience rather than predefined demographics, the study captured a more intersectional, authentic representation of identity and descriptions of identity experiences.

The instrument involved 20 text-based questions addressing both core identity dimensions and participants' experiences with identity in social contexts. Questions probed participants' interactions with structural barriers (bias, discrimination, exclusion) and their strategies for navigating complex social realities. This generated substantial textual data, supporting both depth and breadth of analysis.

Phase 2 Context & Population of Interest

The study was situated at a large, urban, private Catholic university in Chicago, IL, drawing participants from two colleges comprising approximately 6,700 undergraduate and graduate students. The site was selected for its diversity and for the relevance of identity negotiation in higher education—an environment where social inclusion, power, and belonging are salient.

Focusing on students allowed the study to capture identity formation during a life stage characterized by personal growth, exposure to new institutional structures, and evolving social roles. The target population was diverse and reflected a wide array of intersecting identities, creating an opportunity to examine how overlapping social dimensions structure experiences of inclusion, exclusion, and negotiation.

Phase 2 Sampling & Recruitment

A convenience sampling strategy was implemented via the university's research recruitment platform, relying on voluntary participation. Outreach occurred through posts, emails, classroom announcements, and institutional communications. Ethical considerations were foregrounded: participation was strictly voluntary, and the survey emphasized informed consent, confidentiality, and participants' right to skip questions or withdraw without penalty—crucial in research involving sensitive personal identity topics.

Phase 2 Study Protocol & Data Collection

The survey was administered online via Qualtrics. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (exempt status) was obtained in November 2023, affirming the study's non-invasive, anonymous character. Participants provided informed consent before beginning. Data collection occurred over a structured window, resulting in 319 participants completing three or more survey items—a dataset rich in narrative detail and diversity. Responses were anonymized, cleaned, and prepared for analysis, with attention to both participant voice and data integrity. The full consent form and survey items appear in the appendices.

Phase 2 Data Analysis

The dataset underwent a traditional qualitative thematic analysis to identify initial patterns and insights. This process involved manual coding, categorization, and thematic development, with an iterative approach that allowed emergent themes to shape analytical direction while ensuring that participant narratives remained central to the research.

As the analysis progressed, the dataset's complexity exposed the limitations of traditional qualitative analysis tools. Spreadsheet-based methods proved inadequate for managing the scale and intersectional depth of the data, while most Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) were either paywalled or not designed to operationalize intersectional analysis in a direct or meaningful way.

Additionally, while traditional qualitative methods provided valuable depth, they lacked the ability to explore the relational structures that underlie identity—how various identity dimensions co-form experiences. These methodological gaps highlighted the need for a computationally-augmented approach that could be used to explore identity as a networked, relational phenomenon. In response, the research team initiated the development of TMI-WEB, a custom-built, open-source data analysis platform, and launched Identity Research Lab (IDRL).

Phase 2 Formation of Identity Research Lab (IDRL)

Identity Research Lab was co-founded in 2024 by Dr. Jess Parris Westbrook and Coraline Ada Ehmke. IDRL is dedicated to studying intersectional identity through transdisciplinary approaches that integrate inclusive data practices, computational social science, and critical design. The lab's transdisciplinary research draws on diverse theoretical perspectives, including

identity theory, social identity theory, narrative identity theory, and postnormal theory, to explore how identity intersects with presence and power. IDRL's current work aims to operationalize intersectionality, contribute to the field of critical data science, and push the boundaries of traditional research methods.

Phase 2 Inventing TMI-WEB An Open-Source Data-Analysis Ecosystem

TMI-WEB emerged as a methodological response to the limitations of existing qualitative and quantitative research tools. Conceived as an open-source computational ecosystem, TMI-WEB enables the exploration of identity as a relational and intersectional phenomenon, leveraging graph-based modeling to surface hidden structures, connections, and emergent patterns in qualitative data.

By integrating qualitative narrative depth, quantitative description, and computational scalability, TMI-WEB bridges traditional methodological divides. Unlike proprietary or black-box tools, it is designed for accessibility, transparency, and ethical research. Its infrastructure enables dynamic, scalable query-driven analysis while maintaining the integrity and context of participant-defined identity narratives.

TMI-WEB advances the articulation and co-formation principles advocated by Bentley et al. (2023), operationalizing intersectional analysis through a living, relational structure rather than a fixed demographic overlay. The platform not only expands what is possible methodologically but also serves as an ethical intervention—ensuring that marginalized voices are neither erased nor essentialized by the analytic process.

Phase 2 Emergent Insights

Thematic analysis of the Phase 2 dataset revealed five key areas of insight, each reflecting how participants navigate, resist, and make meaning from their identity-based experiences in social scenarios. These themes emerged inductively from participant narratives, emphasizing both the richness of lived experience and the multidimensional nature of identity.

Theme 1 – Contexts: Participants described encounters with bias, prejudice, discrimination, and hate across diverse social scenarios. These ranged from interpersonal microaggressions to systemic exclusion in institutions such as education, employment, healthcare, and religion. This

theme mapped the environments where identity-based struggles most frequently arise, illuminating the structural contexts that shape experience.

Theme 2 – Feelings: Emotional and psychological responses to identity-based experiences were central to participants' narratives. Feelings of shame, fear, exhaustion, and distress coexisted with joy, pride, and peace. This theme captured the affective complexity of navigating social life through and with identity.

Theme 3 – Behaviors: Participants described a range of behavioral coping strategies, including code-switching, masking, avoidance, humor, and resistance. These behaviors reflected adaptive responses to systemic constraints as well as agency in maintaining self-integrity and safety in social environments.

Theme 4 – Relationships: Many participants leaned on community support, peer connection, and relational care to navigate identity-based hardship. Others emphasized the importance of lifting others up, especially younger or similarly marginalized individuals. This theme revealed the social and relational dynamics of coping, resistance, and solidarity.

Theme 5 – Privilege: Some responses demonstrated awareness—or lack thereof—of how privilege operates across social interactions and identity categories. This theme highlighted moments where dominant identities were either unacknowledged or explicitly named, surfacing tensions between recognition and erasure.

Collectively, these emergent themes demonstrate the value of open-ended, participant-driven inquiry in capturing the depth, nuance, and variability of identity experience. They also reflect the methodological tensions that led to the development of TMI-WEB. As participants articulated identities not as fixed categories but as lived, relational, and contextual processes, the need for analytical tools capable of capturing interdependence, intersection, and emergence became increasingly clear.

Phase 2 Conclusions

Phase 2 served as a pivotal stage in the study, generating a large-scale qualitative dataset that directly informs all of the research questions while also establishing the groundwork for computational analysis in Phase 3. By prioritizing open-ended, participant-driven identity narratives, this phase captured the complexity, fluidity, and relational nature of identity, exposing

the limitations of traditional categorical research methods and demonstrating the need for exploratory computational augmentation. The development of TMI-WEB and the founding of the Identity Research Lab (IDRL) reflect the project's commitment to advancing innovative, inclusive, and scalable methodologies around identity and identity experiences.

The data collected in this phase provides empirical insights that address Research Question 1 ("How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?") by documenting how participants describe their lived experiences, identity negotiations, and interactions within various social contexts. By capturing instances of exclusion, erasure, bias, prejudice, discrimination, and hate, this phase also responds to Research Question 2 ("In what contexts do individuals experience exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate?"), offering a wide-ranging account of how identity is constrained or affirmed across different environments.

The dataset further explores the affective dimensions of identity, directly addressing Research Question 3 ("What emotional or psychological states emerge from identity-based experiences?"). Participants' narratives reveal both distressing and affirming emotional responses, highlighting the impact of inclusion, exclusion, and systemic power structures on mental health, self-concept, and belonging. In response to Research Question 4 ("What behaviors or coping mechanisms do individuals use in social scenarios?"), this phase identifies a range of self-preservation strategies, including assimilation, resistance, avoidance, humor, advocacy, and self-care, demonstrating how individuals navigate identity-based adversity.

Through its extensive participant narratives, Phase 2 also sheds light on Research Question 5 ("How does privilege manifest through language, attitudes, and social interactions?"), uncovering how systemic advantages shape interpersonal exchanges, workplace dynamics, and social belonging. Additionally this phase directly addresses Research Question 6 ("How do individuals define and describe the concept of 'identity'?") by illustrating how participants conceptualize and articulate identity—not as a fixed or universal construct, but as an interpretive, context-dependent phenomenon.

Beyond responding to the core research questions, this phase informs the emergent research inquiries driving the computational augmentation in Phase 3. The rich qualitative data provides a foundation for Research Question 7 ("How can emergent findings from this research inform the creation of design prototypes or design interventions that support, activate, or amplify pro-social

experiences?"), supporting the potential for interactive, data-driven, or participatory interventions.

The breadth and depth of Phase 2 reinforce its central role in this study, not only capturing expansive, intersectional identity narratives but also driving the methodological innovation of the computational phase. By foregrounding participant voice and embracing qualitative complexity, this phase revealed the necessity of an analytical approach that moves beyond rigid demographic classifications toward a more relational, emergent, and networked understanding of identity. These insights set the stage for the computational augmentation in Phase 3, where graph-based modeling and query-driven analysis further illuminated the structures, interactions, and systemic patterns embedded in identity experiences.

Research Phase 3: Data Modeling, Software Engineering, Graph-Based Queries – Operationalizing Intersectional Analysis with a New Innovative Computational Framework

Phase 3 Introduction

Phase 3 marked a pivotal transition from manual thematic analysis to computational exploration. By introducing graph-based modeling and query-driven analysis, this phase enabled new insights into the relational and networked dimensions of social identity. This phase operationalized intersectionality computationally, moving beyond traditional narrative or demographic approaches to explore identity as a system of relationships and patterns. Rather than treating identity as a set of discrete, predefined categories, TMI-WEB allowed identity to be understood as a relational, networked phenomenon, where multiple identity dimensions interacted to form a more nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of lived experience.

Traditional qualitative approaches provided rich narrative depth but struggled with scalability and relational analysis, particularly when examining how multiple identity dimensions interacted to shape experience. Existing Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) tools, while useful, primarily relied on text segmentation and categorical coding, which limited their ability to model the dynamic, co-constitutive relationships between identity, experiences, and contexts—and prevented CAQDAS from fully connecting with and operationalizing intersectional analysis.

To address these methodological gaps, Phase 3 introduced computational analysis through graph-based modeling, enabling an iterative, exploratory, and scalable approach to intersectionality research. Instead of relying on segmented, coded text, TMI-WEB treated identity as a graph-based system, where identity categories, experiences, and contexts existed as interconnected nodes. This allowed researchers to explore how identity dimensions co-formed lived experiences, rather than being analyzed in isolation.

By structuring identity as a graph, this phase revealed patterns of identity negotiation and experience, demonstrating the power of non-hierarchical, computationally augmented identity analysis. The continuous, query-driven nature of this phase facilitated an adaptive research process, challenging static classification models and enabling new insights into lived experience.

Phase 3 Methodology

Phase 3 utilized data modeling and query-driven exploration to computationally structure and analyze identity experiences.

Data modeling was the process of structuring and organizing data in a way that represented relationships, patterns, and connections within a dataset. It was a fundamental sensemaking approach used in computational analysis, database systems, and knowledge organization, ensuring that complex information could be systematically explored, stored, and queried.

Query-driven exploration was a dynamic approach to data analysis that allowed researchers to iteratively explore relationships, patterns, and insights by writing queries that extracted meaningful connections from a dataset. Instead of following a fixed, predefined analytical structure, query-driven exploration enabled continuous refinement of research questions based on emerging insights, supporting an adaptive and flexible analysis process.

To prepare the dataset for computational analysis, qualitative data from Phase 2—including open-ended identity descriptions and coded experiences—was restructured using a graph-based data model. In this type of model, data was stored as nodes (entities) and edges (connections between entities).

Unlike traditional demographics, which imposed fixed categorical classifications, this graph-based approach preserved the fluidity and relational complexity of identity. Rather than

assuming identity categories were stable attributes, the graph-based structure allowed identity to emerge as an adaptive system of interconnected relationships, capturing how identity was shaped within social contexts.

Phase 3 Data Model

A data model is a conceptual representation of how data is structured, stored, and related within a system. Traditional databases, such as relational databases, store information in structured tables. While effective for structured, numeric, or categorical data, these models struggle to capture the flexible, interconnected nature of identity and lived experience. In contrast, graph-based data models represent information as nodes (entities) and edges (connections between them), making them ideal for exploring networks, relationships, and intersectional identities.

The TMI-WEB data model represented each survey study participant as a persona node, each participant's self-described identity descriptors as identity nodes (raw data), and each participant's lived experiences as experience nodes (coded data). Nodes were connected through edges representing relationships—specifically "identifies as" (linking personas to identity descriptors) and "experiences" (linking personas to their lived experiences). In addition to personas, self-descriptions, and experiences – identity dimension, categories, and themes were represented as nodes.

TMI-WEB Data Model

Nodes (circles in graph):

- Participants → **Persona nodes**
- Participant identity self-descriptions → **Identity nodes**
- Participant experience self-descriptions become → **Experience nodes**

Edges (relationship or connection lines in graph):

- Persona "**Identifies as**"
 - *connects persona node with identity descriptor nodes*
- Persona "**Experiences**"
 - *connects persona nodes to lived experience nodes*

By structuring data in this way, TMI-WEB enabled a non-hierarchical, networked analysis of identity, allowing researchers to trace relational patterns within identity narratives and explore how identity dimensions interact dynamically. See Chapter 4 Data Analysis for examples of nodes and edges in visualized graphs.

TMI-WEB Personas

In the TMI-WEB data model, survey participants were represented using personas. The concept of persona had deep historical, psychological, and design-based roots that suggested how identity was shaped, performed, and negotiated within social contexts. Originating from Latin (*persona*, meaning “mask”), the term was historically used in theater to describe the roles actors played on stage, a metaphor later extended into philosophy and psychology to explore selfhood and social performance. Carl Jung (1923) introduced *persona* in analytical psychology as the social mask an individual adopted to navigate external expectations, distinguishing it from the internal, private self. Later, Erving Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical model conceptualized identity as performance, where individuals managed impressions based on audience and context. These perspectives aligned with experiences described in this research, in which participants described masking, code-switching, and strategic self-presentation as necessary coping mechanisms for navigating social scenarios.

In design (UX) research, personas were used to create archetypal, abstract, or generalized representations of people often referred to as ‘users’ in industry – static fictional composites.

In TMI-WEB research, personas were data-driven, fluid, situational realities—representations of real lives, real lived experiences with power structures, social contexts, and relational dynamics. In the TMI-WEB computational model, identity was not a fixed attribute but an adaptive construct, shaped by contextual pressures and survival strategies. By incorporating personas as queryable, relational identity constructs, this model captured the complex interplay between self-expression, social adaptation, and systemic constraints. This approach acknowledged that individuals oscillated between self-protective, performative, and authentic personas, making identity navigation computationally mappable rather than categorically defined.

Phase 3 Data Queries

A query is a structured request for retrieving or analyzing data from a database. In computational research, queries allow researchers to extract specific patterns, relationships, or insights by defining how data should be filtered and connected.

The TMI-WEB graph database was built using Neo4j, a graph database management system designed to efficiently store and manage interconnected data. Unlike traditional relational databases that use tables and fixed schemas, Neo4j organizes data as a graph of nodes and edges—ideal for exploring complex, dynamic relationships.

TMI-WEB utilizes Cypher, the query language for Neo4j, to explore relational structures within identity data. Cypher is a declarative, pattern-matching language that allows researchers to specify patterns of nodes and relationships and to retrieve data based on those patterns. For example, while a traditional query might simply count how many participants identify, a Cypher query can traverse the network to uncover how that identity co-occurs with specific types of lived experiences. This dynamic traversal of the graph allows researchers to examine patterns, co-occurrences, and indirect relationships that would be difficult to detect using thematic approaches or statistical analysis methods.

Example Cypher Query in TMI-WEB

```
MATCH (p:Persona)-[]-(c:Code) WHERE c.name="masks" RETURN p, c
```

This query retrieves: all participants ("Persona") connected to an experience node labeled "masks"

Phase 3 Data Visualization

Data visualization transforms complex datasets into intuitive, visual representations, making patterns, relationships, and outliers more easily identifiable. In TMI-WEB, graph visualization served as both an analytical tool and an accessible, haptic way to explore intersectional identity networks.

Unlike statistical tables, charts, or traditional graphs, which often summarize data in aggregate form, TMI-WEB's graph-based visualizations provided an interactive, disaggregated, and relational view of identity and experience, allowing researchers to dynamically explore and manipulate identity connections.

Beyond Frequency: Visualizing Relational Significance

Traditional quantitative methods often prioritize high-frequency data points, assuming that more common patterns hold greater analytical value. In contrast, graph-based analysis values both common and rare relationships, shifting the focus from volume-based significance to experiential meaning.

For instance, an outlier identity node with few connections—such as a unique self-description not widely shared by other participants—might be just as analytically significant as a frequently occurring identity-experience pair. This ensures that marginalized identities and underrepresented experiences are not diluted, flattened, or overlooked in the dataset simply because they appear less frequently.

Rather than forcing hierarchical importance onto data, TMI-WEB's visual approach enabled researchers to see identity as a dynamic, relational structure, highlighting both systemic patterns and unique individual perspectives. See Chapter 4 Data Analysis for sample graph visualizations.

Phase 3 Ethical Considerations for Computational Methods

The integration of computational methods into identity research raises important ethical considerations, particularly in ensuring that participant narratives remain intact, that power imbalances are not reinforced, and that the research does not unintentionally contribute to systemic biases. While TMI-WEB enables scalable and relational analysis, it also requires a careful, reflexive approach to maintain the integrity of identity representation. Throughout Phase 3, ethical safeguards were embedded in the research design to uphold interpretive responsibility, critically examine computational tools, and prevent algorithmic bias.

A primary challenge of computational identity research is the risk of reducing complex, nuanced lived experiences into rigid patterns or oversimplified outputs that obscure depth and meaning. To address this, TMI-WEB was designed as a relational mapping tool rather than a categorical classifier, ensuring that identity remained dynamic and context-dependent rather than being flattened into fixed labels. Computational findings were always interpreted alongside participant narratives rather than being treated as stand-alone, objective truths. This methodological approach prevented the system from imposing static classifications on identity and instead reinforced the lived, evolving nature of self-description and lived experience.

Another ethical concern in computational research is algorithmic bias, where dominant perspectives can become unintentionally prioritized, and less common experiences risk being overlooked. To counteract this, the research team was intentional about how queries were structured, ensuring that rare and underrepresented perspectives were not erased through frequency-based assumptions. Unlike traditional demographic studies that often prioritize high-frequency trends, TMI-WEB allowed researchers to explore both dominant and rare patterns, making space for the meaningful examination of marginalized identities and experiences.

While anonymity and data protection protocols were established in Phase 2's survey methodology, Phase 3 required additional ethical considerations regarding how computational methods interact with identity-based data. The research team remained attentive to how data modeling, query design, and visualization techniques could shape interpretations of identity, reinforcing the principle that computational tools should enhance, rather than replace, human-centered analysis. This study demonstrates that computational identity research must be designed with ethical reflexivity, ensuring that data analysis does not reinforce systemic biases or flatten lived experiences into static categories. By embedding ethical considerations at every stage of the research process, TMI-WEB was developed not only as a tool for studying identity but as a methodological approach that respects the complexity, agency, and diversity of the people it seeks to represent.

Phase 3 Emergent Findings

The graph querying process in Phase 3 was not just analytical—it was transformative. Unlike the linearity of thematic coding, the graph interface made identity relational, affective, and tactile. Nodes moved, collided, and repelled. As identity descriptors, experiences, and personas were dragged across the screen, a new form of analysis emerged—one that felt like holding and witnessing complexity in motion. The push and pull of the graph reflected the push and pull of identity navigation itself. This immersive interaction revealed the relational patterns across the dataset and the emotional and psychological labor embedded in those patterns.

Phase 3 Conclusions

Phase 3 demonstrated that computational identity research can effectively operationalize intersectionality, offering a relational, networked alternative to traditional categorical models. By

leveraging graph-based modeling and query-driven analysis, TMI-WEB revealed identity as an emergent, contextual, and interconnected phenomenon, rather than a static classification. This phase reinforced the value of computational augmentation in identity research, illustrating that relational patterns—rather than just frequency—shape lived experience. By shifting from a categorical framework to a dynamic, graph-based structure, Phase 3 captured how identity dimensions interact, co-form, and evolve within social contexts, moving beyond conventional demographic classifications.

Beyond its analytical contributions, Phase 3 underscored the ethical stakes of computational methods, emphasizing the need for responsible data modeling, interpretive reflexivity, and safeguards against algorithmic bias. Computational tools often risk reinforcing dominant perspectives and flattening marginalized experiences. To counteract these risks, TMI-WEB was intentionally designed as a transparent, query-driven, and non-hierarchical system, ensuring that identity remains fluid, relational, and participant-centered in analysis. This phase highlighted the importance of open-source, inclusive, and ethically grounded approaches in computational identity research, positioning TMI-WEB not just as an analytical tool but as a methodological intervention—one that challenges conventional data structures while bridging qualitative depth, computational scalability, and ethical data practices.

By enabling an exploratory, query-driven analysis, Phase 3 advances the study's methodological contributions to Research Questions 7 and 8. Specifically, it demonstrates how computational augmentation refines and extends traditional thematic qualitative analysis by uncovering hidden relational structures within identity narratives. Unlike manual coding, which is limited by human-scale pattern recognition, graph-based queries illuminate co-occurring identity experiences, nuanced coping mechanisms, and privilege dynamics that may not be discoverable through traditional qualitative methods alone. Additionally, by enabling iterative, hypothesis-driven analysis, this phase provides a scalable and adaptive framework for examining identity at multiple levels of complexity, addressing RQ 9 by comparing computational and manual qualitative approaches. Finally, the insights generated from computational modeling directly inform Research Question 7, supporting the design of future interventions, participatory tools, and pro-social applications that leverage identity data in meaningful, community-driven ways.

Through its integration of computational methodologies, intersectional analysis, and ethical reflexivity, Phase 3 demonstrates the transformative potential of graph-based modeling for

identity research. It offers a scalable, relational, and ethically grounded approach to studying intersectionality, paving the way for new forms of critical, participant-centered, and computationally augmented research. The findings from this phase establish a methodological framework that not only enhances qualitative research practices but also challenges conventional epistemologies of identity, opening possibilities for future applications in research, policy, and social impact initiatives.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

This study's methodology was designed to address a fundamental challenge in identity research: how to capture, analyze, and represent intersectional identity as a dynamic, relational phenomenon without reducing its complexity. By integrating qualitative inquiry, computational augmentation, and ethical reflexivity, the research advanced an alternative to traditional demographic classification methods, which often flattened lived experience into static categories.

The three-phased research design reflected an iterative, emergent approach that progressed from experiential observation to large-scale qualitative data collection, culminating in computational innovation.

Phase 1 explored identity, presence, and power in real-world social scenarios, revealing exclusionary structures that shape identity-based experiences. These insights informed Phase 2, which prioritized participant-driven narratives and allowed individuals to define, negotiate, and articulate their identities beyond externally imposed categories. The qualitative depth of Phase 2 laid the groundwork for computational augmentation in Phase 3, where graph-based modeling, query-driven exploration, and data visualization provided scalable, relational methods for analyzing intersectionality at scale.

Beyond its individual phases, the study introduced TMI-WEB as a significant methodological innovation in computational identity research. Traditional identity studies, whether qualitative or quantitative, struggled to account for the co-formation of identity dimensions—that is, how race, gender, class, disability, and other factors shaped one another rather than existing as separate, additive variables. By structuring identity data as a networked, interconnected system, TMI-WEB

enabled researchers to explore identity as lived, emergent, and context-dependent, rather than as a predefined, static construct.

A critical insight from this methodological approach was the importance of continuous, query-driven exploration, which allowed the research to remain adaptive, reflexive, and responsive to emergent findings. Unlike fixed coding schemas, which risked reinforcing pre-existing assumptions, TMI-WEB's graph-based modeling allowed for the discovery of hidden identity relationships and emergent social patterns. This methodological flexibility aligned with the study's commitments to postnormal research, intersectionality, and complexity theory, embracing uncertainty, non-linearity, and multi-scalar analysis as essential to understanding identity.

Ethical considerations remained central throughout the research. Computational methods introduced new risks—including algorithmic bias, the erasure of marginalized perspectives, and the potential for reductive interpretations of identity. To mitigate these risks, the study prioritized ethical reflexivity at every stage—from survey design and data collection to query structuring and visualization. By resisting frequency-based assumptions and ensuring that both dominant and underrepresented identity-experience relationships remained visible, the study demonstrated how computational identity research could be designed to amplify rather than overwrite lived experience.

Taken together, the methodological choices in this study contributed to an emerging paradigm in identity research—one that challenged static classification models, embraced complexity, and leveraged computational methods for relational, scalable, and ethically grounded analysis. By bridging qualitative depth, computational scale, and critical design methodologies, the research not only advanced the study of intersectional identity but also proposed new ways of conceptualizing identity itself—as fluid, networked, and embedded within broader systems of power and belonging.

Looking ahead, this methodological approach provides a foundation for future research, design, and implementation of computational tools for intersectional identity analysis. TMI-WEB is more than an analytical tool—it stands as a proof of concept for reimagining how identity can be studied through relationships, offering a scalable, inclusive, and reflexive framework for understanding identity at the intersections of language, presence, power, and lived experience.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents summaries of key thematic findings, graph queries, and corresponding graph data visualizations. Comprehensive theme findings—including all underpinning codes, categories, and detailed insights—are provided in the appendices, along with full-size versions of the graph visualizations.

Analysis Process: From Thematic Analysis to Computational Exploration

The analysis followed a multi-phase, multi-method approach, beginning with qualitative thematic coding and transitioning into computational, query-driven exploration using TMI-WEB. This integrated approach preserved the depth and interpretive richness of participant narratives while enabling relational analysis of identity-based experiences.

The initial phase used traditional qualitative methods: participant responses were inductively coded, grouped into categories, and organized into emergent themes. These thematic structures revealed patterns in how identity was expressed, constrained, or affirmed across social contexts. However, as the dataset grew in complexity and scale, the limitations of conventional thematic methods became apparent—particularly in their capacity to model intersectional and relational dynamics.

To address these limitations, the study moved into a phase of computational augmentation using TMI-WEB, a custom-built, open-source graph database designed for qualitative research. Through graph-based data modeling and query-driven exploration, TMI-WEB enabled the study to map identity as a system of interconnected descriptors, experiences, and strategies. This shift made visible the co-formative and dynamic relationships between identity dimensions and lived experiences—insights that were not easily surfaced through manual coding alone.

By integrating qualitative and computational methods, the analysis generated a comprehensive, multi-scalar view of intersectional identity and social experience. The remainder of this chapter presents selected thematic summaries, representative graph queries, and visualizations. Full

thematic content—including codes, categories, and interpretive insights—appears in the appendices.

Revisiting The Guiding Research Questions

1. How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of (intersectional) identity in social scenarios?
2. In what contexts do individuals experience exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate?
3. What coping mechanisms do individuals rely on when experiencing exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate in social scenarios that prioritize dominant cultural norms and maintain the status quo?
4. What emotional or psychological states emerge from identity-based experiences?
5. How does privilege manifest through language, attitudes, and social interactions?
6. How do individuals define and describe the concept of ‘identity’?
7. How can emergent findings from this research inform the creation of design prototypes or design interventions that support, activate, or amplify pro-social experiences?
8. What kind of discoveries can be made through data modeling and graph-based queries, and how do they compare to conventional thematic analysis findings?

Analysis: Theme Summaries

The findings were structured around six major themes, each of which addressed one or more of the study’s research questions.

- Theme 1: Identity-Based Experiences in Social Contexts
 - This theme is focused on the contexts in which individuals encounter bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate based on their identities. It explores how these experiences manifest in social scenarios, including workplaces, educational settings, public spaces, and personal relationships. The theme highlights the systemic and interpersonal challenges individuals face based on their identity.
- Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Responses to Identity-Based Experiences
 - This theme is focused on the emotional and psychological states generated by individuals’ identity-based experiences. It explores how self-acceptance, positive emotions, and negative emotions emerge in response to social scenarios, and

may influence well-being, self-perception, and belonging. The theme highlights the diversity of identity-related feelings individuals experience.

- Theme 3: Coping Strategies: Individual Adaptation, Assimilation, and Resistance
 - This theme is focused on inward-facing coping mechanisms participants use to navigate identity-related challenges and preserve their own well-being in social scenarios.
- Theme 4: Coping Strategies: Social, Relational, Network Supports
 - This theme is focused on outward-facing coping mechanisms participants use to navigate identity-related challenges and preserve their well-being in social scenarios.
- Theme 5: The Manifestation of Privilege in Identity Experiences
 - This theme is focused on how examined and unexamined privilege manifests in participants' perspectives and experiences.
- Theme 6: Identity Meanings
 - This non-interpreted theme captures the raw, in-vivo language, references, metaphors, and conceptual models participants used to articulate the meaning of identity. It reflects how individuals described identity as fluid, multifaceted, and shaped by social context.

Theme 1: Identity-Based Experiences in Social Contexts

This theme focuses on the contexts in which individuals encountered bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate based on their identities. It examines how these experiences happened in social scenarios, including workplaces, educational settings, public spaces, and within personal relationships. The theme highlights the systemic, interpersonal, and intersectional challenges individuals faced based on their identity. Theme 1 codes, categories, and insights are presented in the appendices.

Relevant Research Questions

- How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?
- In what contexts do individuals experience exclusion, erasure, or identity-based bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate?

Theme 1 addresses Research Question 1 (identity navigation) and Research Question 2 (contexts of exclusion) by showing how identity was continuously shaped and constrained by both structural forces and interpersonal dynamics. Participants described how dominant norms embedded in everyday social environments regulated identity expression—compelling individuals to self-censor, strategically assimilate, or quietly resist. These insights reveal persistent tensions between authenticity and societal expectation, exposing recurring patterns of marginalization and exclusion across multiple life contexts.

Theme 1 Summary

The research data show that identity was not experienced in isolation—it was negotiated within complex social contexts that imposed visible and invisible constraints. Across schools, workplaces, homes, and public environments, individuals described recurring experiences of identity-based exclusion. These were rarely tied to a single aspect of identity; instead, they emerged at the intersection of multiple dimensions, producing layered social pressures and sustained emotional labor.

Participants recounted how expectations around age, class, gender, disability, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodivergence, race/ethnicity, and religion shaped their daily interactions and decision-making. These expectations were often unspoken but felt—reinforced by institutional policies, cultural stereotypes, and social norms that prioritized conformity over authenticity. Many participants described performing emotional and behavioral labor to manage how they were perceived, disclosing aspects of themselves selectively, or suppressing traits entirely to maintain safety, stability, or inclusion.

Professional and educational settings were particularly fraught. Age bias shaped how competence was perceived. Class identity influenced access to opportunities and social belonging. Gendered and LGBTQIA+ challenges were compounded by heteronormative and patriarchal norms. Participants with disabilities and neurodivergent traits faced ableist assumptions and were routinely forced to mask, justify, or over-explain their needs. Public spaces, too, introduced constant negotiations—whether avoiding eye contact, removing cultural signifiers, or hiding religious symbols to reduce the risk of judgment, harassment, or violence.

Across identities, participants described a dual burden: navigating the world while managing how the world reacted to them. Some responded with strategic assimilation—modifying dress, voice, behavior, or personality to fit dominant expectations. Others leaned into

resistance—challenging norms, advocating for themselves and others, and claiming space where it wasn't offered. Yet the emotional and psychological toll of these adaptations was clear. Fear, anxiety, and exhaustion appeared across the dataset.

The findings affirm that identity-based struggles were not isolated or occasional—they were chronic, cumulative, and embedded within the very structures of social life. Institutions and interpersonal spaces alike reflected and reinforced dominant cultural norms, leaving marginalized individuals to do the work of adaptation. Authenticity often felt unsafe. Belonging was conditional. And coping strategies became essential tools for survival.

By tracing how inclusion and exclusion unfolded across contexts, Theme 1 mapped the conditions under which identity had to be negotiated. These insights deepened our understanding of where, how, and why identity-based harm occurred—and revealed the systemic and situational forces that shaped the lived experience of identity. While this theme focused on the contextual landscape, the themes that follow explore how individuals responded: the emotional toll these experiences took (Theme 2), the behavioral and psychological coping strategies they adopted (Themes 3 and 4), and the complex meanings they assigned to the concept of identity itself (Theme 6).

Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Responses to Identity-Based Experiences

This theme focuses on the emotional and psychological states generated by individuals' identity-based experiences. It explores how self-acceptance, positive emotions, and negative emotions emerged in response to social scenarios, and how they may have influenced well-being, self-perception, and belonging. The theme highlights the diversity of identity-related feelings individuals experienced. Theme 2 codes, categories, and insights are found in the appendices.

Relevant Research Questions

- How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?
- What emotional or psychological states emerge from identity-based experiences?

This theme addresses Research Question 1 (identity navigation) and Research Question 3 (feelings). The findings reveal that identity was not only a social construct but also an affective experience, shaped by external validation, systemic pressures, and personal resilience. Individuals processed and navigated their identities through a dynamic interplay of self-acceptance, positive emotions, and negative emotions. These emotional responses varied across identities and contexts, shaped by discrimination, microaggressions, and exclusion—as well as by affirmation, community, and personal growth. The findings highlight the emotional labor embedded in identity navigation and underscore how deeply psychological and emotional well-being were tied to structural and interpersonal dynamics.

Theme 2 Summary

The research data showed that identity-based experiences were closely intertwined with emotional and psychological states, shaping how individuals perceived themselves and their place in the world. Across workplaces, schools, public spaces, and personal relationships, participants reported a wide range of emotions—from self-acceptance and pride to fear, frustration, and alienation. These emotions were not fixed, but responsive to context, power dynamics, and social interaction, influencing how individuals coped with, resisted, or internalized identity-based challenges.

Self-acceptance emerged as a central strategy for navigating identity struggles. Across identity dimensions—age, class, disability, gender, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodivergence, race/ethnicity, and religion—participants described acts of authenticity and empowerment. Some “embraced gray hair and a unique look” or “signaled disability with a cane” to assert their presence in contrast to societal expectations. Others described “queering appearance,” “living open,” or “telling myself I’m more than my body” as ways to affirm identity without external validation. One participant shared that they “maintained integrity by not changing self for others,” while another “asked for help” and “asserted and communicated needs” pointing to self-worth.

In tandem with self-acceptance, many participants expressed positive emotional states when their identities were affirmed. These included joy, gratitude, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Participants reported that they “experienced peace” or “felt pride” in their racial, religious, or gender identities. Experiences of transformation—such as “escaping severe depression and anxiety by coming out” or having “cathartic transformation by finally understanding why I am the way I am”—underscored the healing power of self-discovery.

Others described how “learning a heritage language” or “participating in disability advocacy” generated connection and purpose through identity.

At the same time, negative emotional experiences were widespread, revealing the psychological impact of navigating exclusion, erasure, and hostility. Participants described feeling “disheartened,” “ashamed,” “disregarded,” “feared being fired because of disability,” or “felt resentment as a working-class person.” Many recounted how they “missed out on sports because of performance standards,” “avoided sounding direct to not be seen as aggressive,” or “hid LGBTQIA+ identity as needed” to avoid harm or judgment. In medical and professional settings, individuals encountered “dismissive doctors,” “gaslighting,” and “microaggressions,” all of which contributed to distress, exhaustion, and alienation.

Emotional suppression, avoidance, and self-regulation emerged as recurring strategies across identities. Some participants described how they “did not cope” or “used laughter and jokes to downplay how I truly feel,” underscoring the burden of invisibility. Others recounted “burying themselves in hobbies to cope,” or “retreating and holding opinions back” to manage emotional strain. One participant “hid scars from cutting,” while others shared they “feared for safety” due to their religion. These narratives reflected both protective instincts and the toll of sustained self-monitoring in unsafe or unsupportive environments.

The findings underscore that emotional and psychological well-being were inextricably linked to identity-based experience. Positive emotions reinforced authenticity, pride, and resilience, while negative emotions often signaled the psychological costs of systemic exclusion and misrecognition. Participants demonstrated powerful agency—through advocacy, self-expression, or community—but also illuminated the cumulative emotional toll of chronic adaptation. Some developed tools for emotional regulation; others reported that “no one can help,” highlighting feelings of despair.

Across identity categories, participants described a constant negotiation between resilience and distress. Intersectionality intensified emotional complexity, as individuals navigated multiple layers of marginalization—e.g., one participant “felt no one could help” while also describing being “adopted by a white family” and “struggling with multiracial identity.” The emotional labor required to manage visibility, resistance, or assimilation was often profound. As one person reflected on sexual harassment, they “prayed to be left alone.” Ultimately, this theme reveals

that identity was experienced as an emotional and psychological journey. Individuals constantly negotiated authenticity and safety, visibility and protection, pride and pain.

By exploring the emotional and psychological dimensions of identity, Theme 2 deepens an understanding of how individuals experienced and navigated intersectional identity—and what emotional or psychological states emerged from those experiences.

Theme 3: Coping Strategies: Individual Adaptation, Assimilation, and Resistance

This theme focuses on inward-facing coping strategies participants used to navigate identity-based challenges and preserve well-being in social scenarios. Theme 3 codes, categories, and insights are included in the appendices.

Relevant Research Questions

- How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?
- What behaviors or coping mechanisms do individuals use in social scenarios?

This theme addresses Research Question 1 (identity navigation) and Research Question 4 (coping mechanisms) by examining how participants responded to marginalization, exclusion, or erasure using both adaptive and maladaptive strategies. Participants described a rich set of coping behaviors aimed at protection, survival, self-expression, and empowerment. Some mechanisms involved aligning with dominant social norms—masking, modifying speech, concealing aspects of identity—while others centered on resistance, advocacy, and personal growth. These findings illuminate how individuals negotiated the ongoing tension between safety and authenticity.

Theme 3 Summary

The data show that identity-based struggles often demand a continual process of behavioral negotiation, where individuals assess whether to assimilate, resist, or withdraw. These decisions are shaped by social context, emotional readiness, and structural power. Coping behaviors emerged in response to real and anticipated harm and were used to manage bias, maintain psychological safety, and navigate environments that privilege dominant identities.

Many participants described assimilation and conformity as necessary coping strategies. These included masking traits, code-switching, modifying language and tone, and engaging in impression management to blend into dominant cultural norms. A neurodivergent participant reported “scripting exactly what to say” before conversations, while a disabled participant recounted “wearing hair down to cover hearing aids.” Others described behavioral shifts such as “toning down femininity at work,” “acting more masculine in a room full of boys,” or “passing as straight” to avoid stigma or scrutiny. Class-based impression management involved “buying designer knock-offs” or “curating alternative realities on social media” to fit in, project wealth or respectability.

Avoidance behaviors were widespread and often overlapped with assimilation. Participants shared examples like “avoiding public displays of affection,” “not wearing hijab while traveling,” “avoiding eye contact,” “avoiding loud places,” or “hiding face on Zoom calls.” Some described actively limiting their presence to reduce harm, saying they preferred to “be invisible” or would “stay in during flares.” Strategic privacy—such as “hiding Jewish details,” “avoiding gendered conversations,” or “not disclosing sexuality at work”—was a common tactic to protect oneself in unsafe or judgmental settings.

Despite these pressures to conform or disappear, many participants described acts of resistance that asserted identity and reclaimed power. These included “embracing gray hair and a unique look,” “queering appearance,” or “rejecting consumer pressure” as affirmations of self-worth. Others expressed resistance more vocally or structurally: “calling out ableism,” “challenging racist bosses,” “supporting wronged parties,” or “participating in LGBTQIA+ parades.” One nonbinary participant described shouting “fuck you from the rooftop” in response to social impositions and gender policing. These acts of defiance were often accompanied by self-affirming practices, such as “learning to not care what people think,” “refusing to hide,” or “living openly as myself.”

Reflection, learning, and growth emerged as powerful forms of adaptive coping. Many participants described how they “unlearned masking,” “gained class consciousness,” “challenged their own biases,” or “studied history and sociology” to reframe identity struggles as part of larger systems. A disabled participant described “working to end ableism through assistive tech design,” while others detailed personal journeys of “naming internalized racism,” “accepting mental health challenges,” or “aligning with principled people.” These reflective processes were often turning points that supported resilience, purpose, and self-acceptance.

Participants also used humor to cope with emotional strain, disrupt bias, or diffuse tense situations. Some reported “joking to get by,” and “mocking sexist comments.” For many, it functioned as both a shield and a release—a way to maintain connection while challenging norms.

While resistance and resilience were present, the data also highlighted the emotional toll of maladaptive coping, including withdrawal, emotional suppression, and internalized stigma. Participants described behaviors like “avoiding help even when needed,” “binge-watching TV to escape everything,” or “drinking to ease social anxiety.” Emotional suppression—“withholding thoughts,” “remaining silent,” or “guarding communication”—was a common theme, particularly among participants navigating multiple marginalizations. Several described “going nonverbal,” “engaging in maladaptive daydreaming,” or “isolating to decompress,” especially when environments lacked understanding or accommodation.

Across all identity dimensions, coping strategies reflected the tension between survival and authenticity. Some participants described carefully calibrating their presence depending on the space—being out in one context but deeply private in another. Others described growing tired of this performance, working to “no longer assimilate,” or “cut toxic people out entirely.” These actions reveal the emotional labor of managing identity in a world that too often demands legibility, conformity, and palatability from those who exist outside dominant norms.

Importantly, these findings underscore the blurry line between adaptive and maladaptive coping. In contexts marked by exclusion, harm, or erasure, behaviors that might traditionally be framed as maladaptive—withdrawal, self-suppression, emotional numbing—may in fact be strategic and protective. For many, there is no healthy way to fully show up in systems that are themselves unfair or toxic. What looks like avoidance or denial may be an act of survival. These complexities remind us that coping is not simply about individual choice, but about navigating conditions that often require trade-offs between safety, dignity, and self-expression.

By exploring patterns of assimilation, resistance, reflection, humor, and avoidance, Theme 3 deepens an understanding of how individuals navigate identity-based challenges and the adaptive behaviors and coping mechanisms they rely on. These strategies are not one-size-fits-all; they are dynamic, situational, and shaped by systemic power. This theme surfaces the vast range of intentional, resourceful, and deeply human behaviors individuals use

to survive, adapt, and assert themselves in contexts that too often fail to accommodate or affirm their full humanity.

Theme 4: Coping Strategies: Social, Relational, Network Supports

This theme focuses on outward-facing coping mechanisms participants use to navigate identity-related challenges and preserve their well-being in social scenarios. Theme 4 codes, categories, and insights are found in the appendices.

Relevant Research Questions

- How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?
- What behaviors or coping mechanisms do individuals use in social scenarios?

This theme addresses Research Question 1 (identity navigation) and Research Question 4 (coping mechanisms) by examining how individuals rely on interpersonal relationships, cultural ties, collective support systems, and advocacy networks to affirm identity, process marginalization, and build resilience. Participants described seeking validation, safety, or understanding through trusted relationships, and engaging in acts of care, education, and solidarity to empower others. These findings demonstrate the critical role of relational strategies in mitigating the psychological and social harms of exclusion, bias, and discrimination.

Theme 4 Summary

The research data indicate that social and relational support systems are central to identity navigation. Across identity dimensions, participants described turning to others for emotional grounding, identity affirmation, and safety. These support systems often included peers, family, friends, in-group communities, and coalitions rooted in shared values.

Participants coped by “talking to peers or family,” “venting with friends,” and “seeking safety or comfort in-group.” Many described building or maintaining trusted, affirming relationships to counter exclusion or trauma. One participant noted they “engaged with a support system of people who understand,” while another “surrounded [themselves] with positive people and queer people.” Cultural and intergenerational connection also supported well-being, as

participants described “connecting with [their] own culture,” “learning [their] mother tongue,” or finding strength in “intergenerational relationships.”

These social connections not only provided emotional refuge, but also enabled individuals to practice collective care and resistance. Several participants turned their attention toward uplifting others, describing acts like “taking care of a disabled friend,” “helping kids,” or “sharing clothes to help others with body dysmorphia.” Others used their roles or identities to act in allyship, saying they “practiced allyship at work and respected and supported religious holidays,” or “acted as ally” by using “progressive nongendered language” and “creating accepting environments.”

Advocacy was a core strategy across many narratives. Participants described “reporting age discrimination at work,” “attending protests for equity of all races/ethnicities,” and “speaking out in support of LGBTQIA+ people.” Some leveraged their positionality to intervene directly, like one who “used white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator.” Participants also engaged in reflective acts—“gave back,” “learned and shared,” “disarmed class expectations,” or “welcomed curiosity and questions”—that combined personal transformation with a commitment to collective growth.

These relational strategies not only helped participants cope with individual identity-related stressors, but also enabled acts of cultural resistance, mutual aid, and systemic challenge. Whether “educating others who hold harmful opinions,” “translating for [their] immigrant family,” or “keeping a fun friendship bubble of diverse and authentic people,” participants emphasized how relationships could be both protective and transformative.

Across identity categories, the data reveal that coping through relational and social means is not only about survival—it’s about solidarity, advocacy, and care. For many, connection was the foundation of emotional resilience. For others, empowering others was the mechanism through which they reclaimed agency and contributed to change. These findings affirm the powerful role of social bonds and relational action in navigating the psychological and structural challenges of identity-based exclusion, while envisioning more inclusive and caring futures.

By exploring patterns of support, solidarity, care, and advocacy, Theme 4 deepens an understanding of how individuals navigate identity-based challenges through relational strategies. Social connection served not only as a buffer against harm but as a mechanism for empowerment, resistance, and community-building. These strategies reveal that identity

navigation is not always an isolated act—it is often co-constructed through networks of trust, belonging, and shared struggle.

Theme 5: The Manifestation of Privilege in Identity

This theme focuses on how examined and unexamined privilege manifests in participants' perspectives and experiences. Theme 5 codes, categories, and insights are found in the appendices.

Relevant Research Question

- How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?
- How does privilege manifest through language, attitudes, and social interactions?

This theme addresses Research Question 1 (identity navigation) and Research Question 5 (manifestations of privilege) by examining how participants recognized—or failed to recognize—privilege within their own lives and social contexts. Across the dataset, individuals reflected on privilege in various ways: some articulated an active awareness of the advantages they hold (*examined privilege*), while others demonstrated assumptions, attitudes, or behaviors shaped by entitlement or ignorance (*unexamined privilege*). In some cases, participants explicitly rejected equity-related efforts, revealing how privilege can be weaponized to maintain power, deflect accountability, or resist social change.

Examined privilege refers to self-awareness and acknowledgment of unearned advantages one holds due to social position. Participants demonstrating this form of privilege recognized how their identity affords them access, safety, or opportunity, and often expressed a sense of responsibility, humility, or care in navigating this awareness.

Unexamined privilege refers to the absence of such awareness—often characterized by denial, defensiveness, indifference, or resentment. Unexamined privilege may surface through dismissive language, mockery, binary thinking, or active resistance to conversations about equity or systemic injustice.

Importantly, several participants used the term “woke” pejoratively, reflecting how the term—originally associated with Black activism and critical consciousness—has been co-opted and weaponized by some as a stand-in for perceived overreach or discomfort with social justice

discourse. The backlash to “wokeness” in this context reveals deeper tensions surrounding privilege, resistance to accountability, and the cultural politics of equity.

Theme 5 Summary

The research data show that privilege operates in both explicit and implicit ways across identity dimensions, with class, gender, race/ethnicity, and religion emerging as the most prominent areas where privilege was expressed, acknowledged, or denied. While some participants demonstrated critical reflection, others resisted equity discourse or mocked inclusion efforts, highlighting how privilege can distort understanding and reinforce dominant norms.

Examined privilege appeared in statements where individuals demonstrated awareness of social advantage and its implications. A participant who “recognized their own privilege” or “used white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator” illustrated how race or positionality could be mobilized to support others. Another reflected on class advantage by noting they were “able to take on unpaid career-related opportunities,” acknowledging how access is often dependent on hidden resources. Some attempted to mitigate harm by “not acting like a bratty rich kid,” “downplaying comfort,” or “disarming class expectations,” signaling sensitivity to socioeconomic disparities.

In contrast, unexamined privilege revealed itself in moments of avoidance, minimization, or outright resistance. Some participants “avoided money topics,” “performed as less affluent,” or “made fun of class discrepancies,” suggesting disengagement from conversations about wealth, equity, or systemic class barriers. Others voiced resentment, stating they “resent the DEI narrative” or “support class discrimination as a form of order,” reflecting hostility toward redistribution or inclusion efforts.

Gender-based privilege followed similar patterns. A few male participants acknowledged “experiences of male privilege,” but others expressed rigid, binary thinking—claiming “gender is not complex. Either you are male or female”—or revealed unchecked bias through comments like “finds jabs at women jokes funny” or “resents the concept of toxic masculinity.” These comments suggest both entitlement and a rejection of gender equity discourse.

Race and ethnicity insights further illustrate the tension between awareness and denial. Some white participants reflected critically, stating they “recognized own privilege” or “used privilege to advocate for others.” Others relied on colorblind rhetoric—“believes in meritocracy,” “does not

see color”—or denied racism altogether: “observes no racism.” In more extreme cases, participants expressed white grievance or supremacy, asserting “white people are victims of racism” or “resents woke culture.” These statements not only obscure systemic oppression but weaponize privilege to silence or dismiss calls for racial justice.

Religious identity insights revealed both empathy and dismissal. A participant who “benefits from privileges afforded to Christians in the U.S.” demonstrated awareness of dominant cultural norms. Another who “benefits from left-wing Buddhist values” pointed to how belief systems can offer both peace and social alignment. Others, however, judged or trivialized religious belief, stating that they “pity those who are religious.” In contrast, one religious participant stated that they “resent science.” Another participant twisted and conflated identity and ideology, claiming “sexuality a woke religion,” revealing how the term *woke* has been stripped of its origins in Black consciousness and weaponized as a catch-all for discomfort with difference or diversity.

Privilege relating to age appeared only once, when a participant acknowledged they “benefit from the technology advantages of youth,” suggesting generational positioning can shape access and comfort with tools, systems, and language in social and professional contexts.

No examined or unexamined privilege was identified in relation to LGBTQIA+ or neurodivergent identities. These identities were overwhelmingly associated with marginalization, struggle, or erasure rather than advantage. One participant reflecting on disability identity, however, revealed deep-seated ableism, stating that “presenting as disabled or amplifying disability themes is a flaw that encourages weakness and minimizes strength.” While not an expression of privilege, this sentiment demonstrates severe external biases that can shape social hierarchies even when unrecognized by those expressing them.

Taken together, these findings reinforce that privilege functions as both a personal and cultural force—one that influences how individuals experience identity, interpret social dynamics, and engage with difference. *Examined privilege* can lead to advocacy, empathy, and relational care. *Unexamined privilege*, by contrast, can perpetuate harm, silence others, or uphold oppressive systems. The weaponization of language—especially terms like *woke*—further illustrates the backlash that can arise when dominant groups feel threatened by sharing, or shifting power. Across identity dimensions, privilege shaped not only how individuals navigated social scenarios, but also how they *interpreted* those scenarios.

By exploring how examined and unexamined privilege shape identity navigation, Theme 5 deepens an understanding of how individuals engage with systemic power—whether by acknowledging advantage, resisting introspection, or reinforcing exclusion. Privilege emerged not only through individual attitudes but through patterns of denial, discomfort, and cultural backlash. These findings highlight that privilege is not merely about having power; it is about how people make sense of that power—through reflection, concealment, rejection, or weaponization.

Theme 6: Identity Meanings

This theme captures the language, metaphors, and conceptual models individuals use to define and describe the meaning of identity in their own words. Unlike previous themes grounded in formal coding or structured insights, Theme 6 retains participant voice in its raw form, resisting over-categorization in order to preserve the complexity, contradictions, and nuance embedded in each narrative. Loose categories and raw quotes are found in the appendices.

Relevant Research Question

- How do individuals define and describe the concept of ‘identity’?
- How can emergent findings from this research inform the creation of design prototypes or design interventions that support, activate, or amplify pro-social experiences?

Theme 6 Summary

The meanings of identity emerged as a complex interplay between personal self-concept, social dynamics, and broader cultural forces. The responses in this dataset reveal a profound diversity of perspectives, underscoring how identity can be empowering, burdensome, fluid, rigid, deeply individual, and collectively negotiated. Rather than adhering to a fixed definition, participants describe identity as contextual, relational, and continuously evolving—a site of both struggle and transformation.

For some, identity is affirming, offering a space of freedom and self-expression. It provides a sense of inclusion, realized through personal relationships, cultural heritage, or shared experiences. However, identity is not always a source of empowerment; participants also describe ways in which identity can be weaponized, commodified, or used as a basis for exclusion. Some experience identity as a burden, shaped by societal expectations,

misrecognition, misunderstanding, imposed constraints, or rigid categories that fail to capture the full complexity of lived experience. Others resist labels altogether, seeking autonomy from identity frameworks, while some describe identity as an absolute universal truth, framing it as an essential and non-negotiable aspect of self.

Adding complexity, intersectional identities complicate reality, language, perception, and acceptance. Participants express the tension of navigating multiple marginalized identities, describing how these intersections shape both internal self-understanding and external social recognition. The psychosocial dimensions of identity emerge throughout the dataset, particularly in the ways individuals reconcile their internal sense of self with how they are perceived by others—a negotiation that can be both empowering and alienating.

At its core, this dataset reflects the reality that identity is not a singular or stable construct—it is shifting, negotiated, and often contradictory, an endlessly unfolding process of meaning-making. By resisting reduction into static categories, this unstructured data approach invites a complex, dynamic, snapshot of humanity.

By surfacing the diverse meanings participants ascribe to identity—its contradictions, tensions, and possibilities—Theme 6 deepens our understanding of how identity is felt, formed, and expressed. These reflections demonstrate that identity is not merely a demographic category or fixed label—it is shifting, negotiated, and often contradictory, an iterative unfolding process of meaning-making. By resisting reduction into static categories, this unstructured data approach offers a complex, dynamic snapshot of humanity. Through their words, participants remind us that identity is not a problem to be solved—it is rich, exciting, and creative.

Synthesis of Thematic Findings

The thematic analysis uncovered a rich, multi-layered understanding of how individuals experience, navigate, and make sense of identity within a variety of social contexts. Each of the six themes offers a distinct lens on identity—together, they form a complex, interwoven narrative of self-preservation, power negotiation, social pressure, and possibility.

Theme 1 establishes a foundation by examining the contexts in which identity-based experiences occur. Across workplaces, educational institutions, public spaces, and personal relationships, participants described systems and scenarios where their identities were

questioned, constrained, or erased. These experiences were compounded by intersectional dynamics that intensified experiences.

Theme 2 deepens this understanding by exploring the emotional and psychological dimensions of identity-based experience. Participants reflected on both the pain and the affirmation that arise in response to bias, belonging, visibility, and erasure. This theme reveals the affective labor of identity navigation—the inner work of processing joy, peace, anger, shame, and fear, and of cultivating self-worth in the face of social feedback, psychological friction, and structural constraint.

Theme 3 shifts focus to the behavioral strategies individuals use to cope. It captures a wide spectrum of responses—from assimilation and masking to reflection and humor. This theme illustrates the strategic, performative, and at times subconscious acts people undertake to navigate exclusionary or hostile environments while protecting their sense of self and negotiating the tension between authenticity and safety.

Theme 4 foregrounds relationships and community as powerful sources of support, survival, and resilience. Participants described turning to friends, family, mentors, and affinity groups for validation and empowerment. They also shared stories of lifting others up, even while navigating their own struggles—offering a glimpse into identity as relational, co-constituted, and nurtured in shared space.

Theme 5 focuses on privilege and social interaction, capturing how dominant cultural norms operate through language, assumptions, and group dynamics. This theme reveals how some participants benefit from unmarked identities while others experience harm or hypervisibility. It invites reflection on the unspoken rules and silent advantages that shape who is heard, seen, believed, or dismissed.

Theme 6 returns us to the conceptual core of identity itself—how participants define and describe identity in their own words. Rather than reducing identity to fixed categories, this theme surfaces identity as fluid, negotiated, and creative—a site of contradiction, possibility, and truth. It offers a powerful reminder that identity is not only social, but also an individual act of reflection and meaning-making.

Across all themes, several patterns emerge:

- Intersectionality is not additive—it is multiplicative. Participants' experiences cannot be fully understood through single-axis frames. The interaction of multiple identity dimensions produces specific, layered challenges and necessary forms of care or resilience.
- Authenticity is often at odds with safety. Many participants described feeling unable to be fully themselves in professional, public, or even familial contexts, leading to self-constraint, standards performance, code-switching, or retreat.
- Coping mechanisms are diverse, complex, and context-dependent. Across social scenarios, individuals use a wide range of behavioral, emotional, and relational strategies to preserve dignity, manage psychological strain, access opportunities, and remain present in the face of exclusion.
- Power is rarely named but always present. It embeds itself in language, policy, relationships, and self-concept—continually shaping how identity is seen, silenced, or celebrated.
- Belonging is not a given. It is typically designed around dominant cultural norms—reserved for the privileged, or for those who can pass. For everyone else, it must be imagined, built, and defended, often against overwhelming odds.

Together, the themes offer a detailed portrait of where identity shows up, what identity feels like, how it is lived, and what it takes. These findings ground the next stage of analysis, where computational tools examine the relational structures, co-occurring patterns, and identity-based clusters emerging across the dataset.

Moving From Themes to Tactile Discovery

While the thematic analysis offered a detailed, interpretive account of identity-based experiences, its qualitative depth along with the large amount of data and resulting cognitive load, surfaced a critical challenge: how to systematically explore the relationships, co-occurring dynamics, and intersections across identity dimensions, across the dataset—without flattening its complexity. This challenge prompted the transition to computational augmentation, in alignment with the study's emergent, mixed-methods research design.

Where qualitative coding identifies patterns through thematic interpretation, graph-based queries, node relationships, and interactive visualizations enable a different kind of intersectional discovery. TMI-WEB maps individual and collective experiences and connections across identity dimensions.

Graph Query Syntax

The queries used in this project are written in Cypher, the query language for graph databases like Neo4j. Cypher allows researchers to search for patterns and relationships within a network of nodes (e.g., personas, identities, experiences) and connections (e.g., “IDENTIFIES_WITH,” “EXPERIENCES”). Each query begins with a MATCH clause that defines the pattern being searched for and may include WHERE filters to narrow results by keywords, combinations, or exclusions. The RETURN clause specifies what data to display.

See the neo4j Cypher reference for complete syntax details:

<https://neo4j.com/docs/cypher-manual/current/introduction/>

Graph Visualizations

The graph visualizations in this project are designed to offer an experiential and exploratory view into the dataset rather than a static or definitive representation of it. Each graph is dynamically generated based on the query parameters, which means that not all data is shown at once—only the subset of nodes and relationships relevant to a given query is visualized. In some cases, volume limits or filtering may further constrain what appears on screen. That said, volume limits can be modified as needed.

It’s important to note that the spatial placement of nodes is algorithmic, not meaningful in and of itself. The layout engine uses a force-directed algorithm to position nodes based on connection weight and repulsion forces. The layout is not semantically meaningful in terms of exact distance or placement. A node with a single connection may appear far from the rest of the network—not because it is less important, but because of how the layout engine spreads elements for visibility. Clusters of nodes that appear close in proximity do not necessarily reflect conceptual similarity or analytical closeness. In this way, the graph is meant to be navigated rather than read as a fixed or literal map.

Graphs help surface relational insights—how identities and experiences connect and intersect—while foregrounding the fluid, contextual, and emergent nature of identity itself.

Graph Queries: Identity Experiences in Social Scenarios

The following graph queries enable relational, behavioral, and context-sensitive representations of lived identity experience. This approach serves as both a methodological testing ground and an intersectional analysis proof of concept: graph querying can operationalize intersectionality in rich, nuanced ways, supporting both structured pattern analysis and discovery.

Designed to validate the underlying graph model and explore emergent insights, these exploratory queries begin with foundational visualizations (e.g., displaying all personas or all identity dimensions) and progressively build toward more complex intersections—highlighting patterns of experience through the lens of marginalized identities. In doing so, they demonstrate how graph-based methods can extend traditional qualitative research, making visible the co-occurrence, exclusion, and relational tension embedded in identity-based experiences.

This section presents the graph queries used to explore identity-based experiences within the TMI dataset. These queries are not just technical artifacts—they are part of the analytic method and epistemology of this research. By including the Cypher queries in the body of this paper, transparency, reproducibility, and interpretive accountability are foregrounded. Sharing the exact query structure also helps tell the story of what is happening computationally—how identity is being modeled, what relationships are being surfaced, and how patterns of marginalization, privilege, and resilience are being revealed through the graph.

Traditional qualitative methods can describe what people say and feel—but computational augmentation allows researchers to see how those experiences are connected: who shares what traits, which identities overlap with which challenges and coping mechanisms, and how systemic structures surface in identity-based lived experiences.

These queries are shared in their original form to:

- **Demonstrate methodological transparency** and offer insight into the logic of the analysis;
- **Support reproducibility** by allowing others to reuse, adapt, or build upon the query structures;

- **Highlight the interpretive labor** of computational analysis—not just what was found, but how it was found;
- **Validate the TMI-WEB data model** as a working example of scalable, queryable intersectional research;
- **Reveal emergent meaning** through exploratory querying, which allows identity data to “speak” relationally rather than through pre-imposed assumptions.

Query Sequence and Structure

The order of queries reflects both conceptual and technical priorities. The sequence begins with foundational queries that expose the structure of the dataset— personas, identities, dimensions, and coded experiences. From there, the queries become more layered and intersectional, exploring co-occurrence patterns, identity-based themes, privilege dynamics, and intersectionality. The structure moves from broad to specific:

1. **Dataset Structure** – Basic queries for displaying all personas, identities, experiences, and themes;
2. **Thematic Queries** – Queries tied to specific themes and categories, such as coping strategies or emotional responses;
3. **Identity Queries** – Queries that isolate experiences within or across specific identity dimensions (e.g., gender, race, class);
4. **Privilege Queries** – Queries that examine dominant identities, unexamined privilege, and relational power;
5. **Marginalization Queries** – Queries that surface patterns among multiply marginalized identities;
6. **Intersectionality Queries** – Queries that explore complex identity intersections and co-experienced challenges.

Each query is introduced with a plain-language description of its purpose, supporting accessibility and interpretability. The goal is to show what was done, and to invite others into the analytical process—making visible the infrastructure behind intersectional discovery. For larger images of the query-driven graphs see Appendix H: Query-Driven Graph Visualization Documentation Gallery.

Query All Personas

Displays all personas in the TMI project dataset.

- MATCH (p:Persona) RETURN p

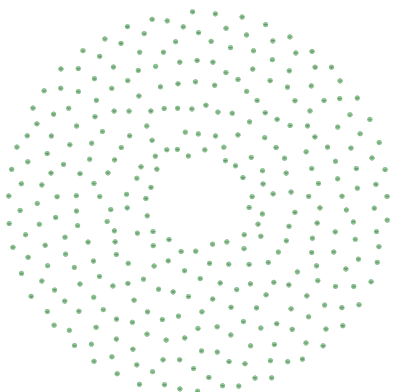


Figure 1. All Personas

Description: This graph shows all personas in the TMI dataset. Each node represents a unique participant (“persona”) who engaged in the open-ended survey. This foundational query helps validate the dataset structure and visualize its scope. No edges are shown, as this query returns only standalone persona nodes.

Query All Identity Dimensions

Displays all identity dimensions in the TMI project dataset.

- MATCH (i:Identity) WHERE i.dimension IS NOT NULL WITH DISTINCT i.dimension AS dim MERGE (d:Dimension {name: dim}) RETURN d

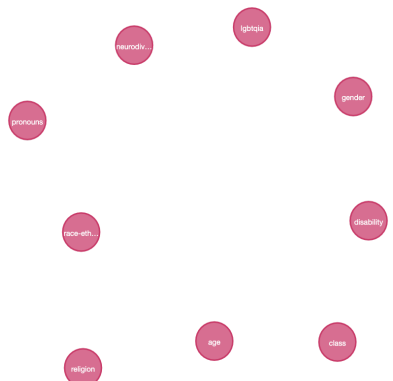
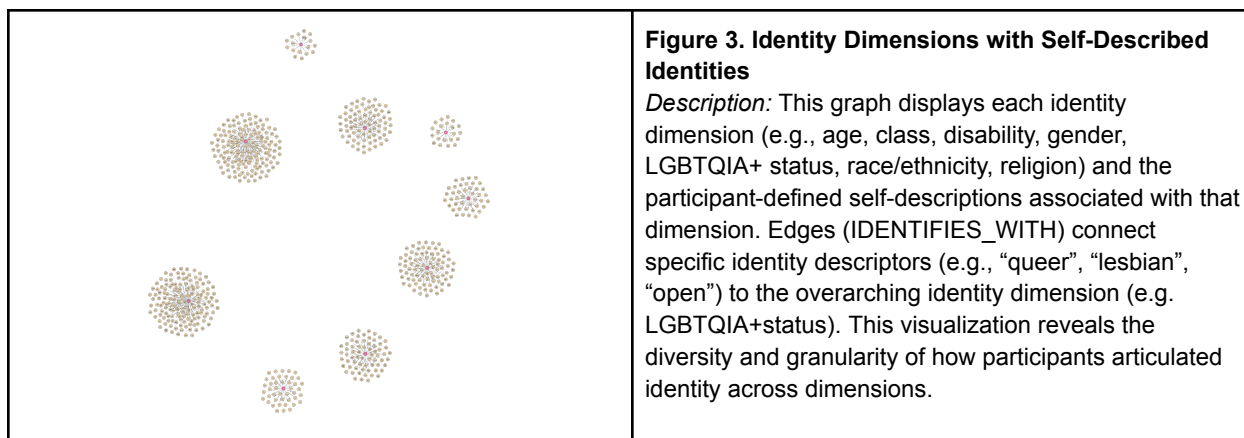


Figure 2. All Identity Dimensions

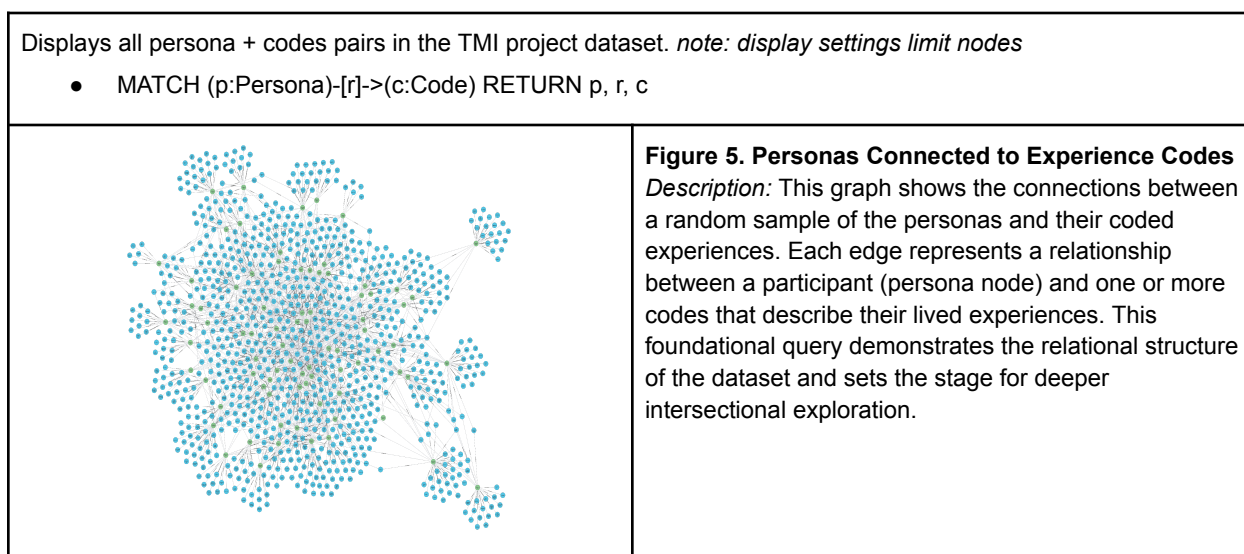
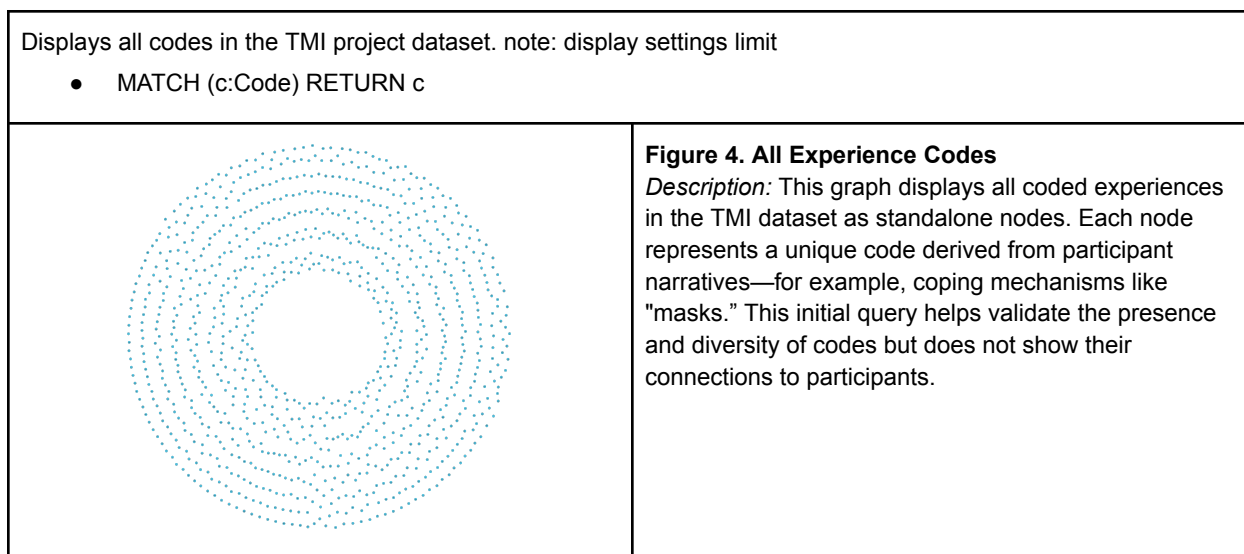
Description: This graph shows all identity dimensions represented in the TMI dataset (e.g., age, class, disability, gender, LGBTQIA+ status, race/ethnicity, religion). Each node represents a unique identity dimension. This basic structural query confirms the presence of all dimension types and sets the stage for exploring how identity self-descriptions and experiences relate to identity dimensions. No edges are shown, as this query returns only standalone identity dimension nodes.

Displays all identity dimensions and identity self-descriptions in the TMI project dataset.

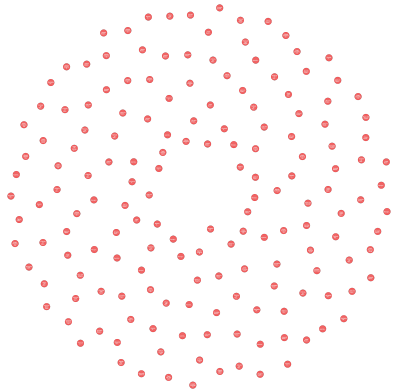
- MATCH (i:Identity) WHERE i.dimension IS NOT NULL MERGE (d:Dimension {name: i.dimension}) MERGE (i)-[:HAS_DIMENSION]->(d) RETURN i, d



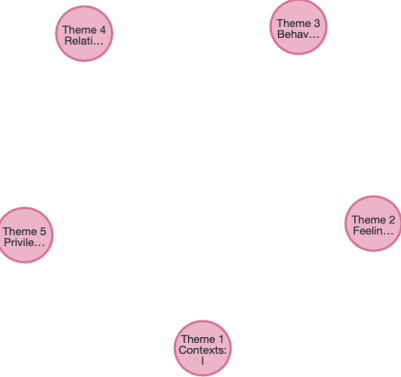
Query All Persona Experiences



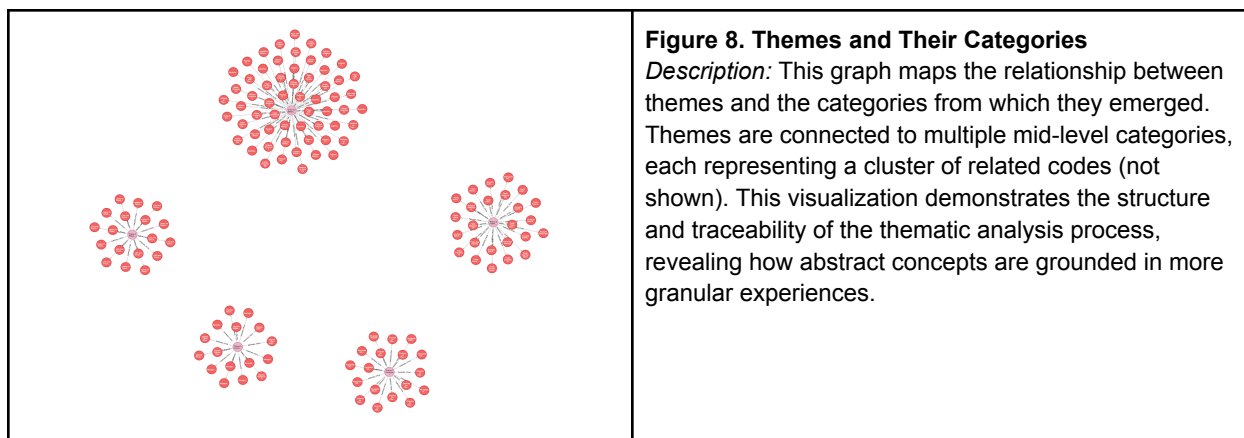
Query All Experience Categories

<p>Displays all the categories in the TMI project dataset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>MATCH (ct:Category) RETURN ct</code> 	
	<p>Figure 6. All Experience Categories <i>Description:</i> This graph visualizes all experience categories coded in the TMI dataset. Each node represents a distinct conceptual grouping of lived experiences. This query provides a categorical overview of how individual experience codes were clustered during the qualitative coding process, forming the building blocks for higher-level themes.</p>


Query All Experience Themes

<p>Displays all the themes in the TMI project dataset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>MATCH (th:Theme) RETURN th</code> 	
	<p>Figure 7. All Experience Themes <i>Description:</i> This graph shows each of the six major themes that structure the TMI dataset: identity-based experiences, emotional responses, individual coping, relational coping, privilege, and identity meaning. These themes represent high-level patterns derived from qualitative thematic analysis.</p>

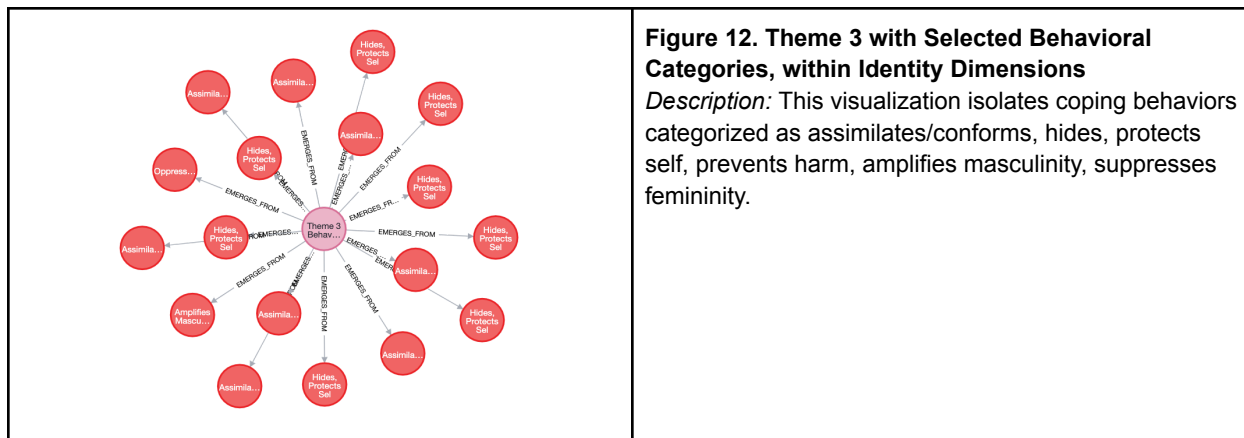
<p>Displays all the themes and their categories in the TMI project dataset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>MATCH (th:Theme)-[r:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) RETURN th, r, ct</code> 	
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Query Specific Themes

<p>Displays a specific theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>MATCH (th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 3 Behaviors: Copes Using Behavioral Approaches to Self-Preservation in Social Scenarios" RETURN th</code> 	
	<p>Figure 9. Theme 3: Behavioral Coping (Node Only)</p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph hones in on the node representing Theme 3 in isolation—"Copes Using Behavioral Approaches to Self-Preservation in Social Scenarios." It serves as a conceptual anchor for the categories and coping strategies that emerge from this theme.</p>

<p>Displays a specific theme and its categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 3 Behaviors: Copes Using Behavioral Approaches to Self-Preservation in Social Scenarios" RETURN th, ct</code> 	
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Query Specific Experiences Across Identity Dimensions

Displays a specific experience across identity dimensions

- MATCH (n) WHERE n.name CONTAINS "assimilate" RETURN n

Figure 13. Experience Node: “Assimilate”
Description: This graph shows the individual experience nodes labeled "assimilate." It serves as a searchable entry point into the dataset, representing a common behavioral coping strategy described by participants. No relationships are displayed in this query—it simply verifies the presence of a specific experience term across the dataset.

Displays a specific experience, connected to personas, across identity dimensions

- MATCH (p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]-(c:Code) WHERE c.name CONTAINS "assimilate" RETURN c, p

Figure 14. Personas Connected to the Experience “Assimilate”
Description: This graph visualizes all participant personas who reported experiences related to “assimilation.” Each node represents either a persona or the experience node, and the edges reflect an “EXPERIENCES” relationship. This structure supports analysis of how widespread certain coping behaviors are and which participants they affect—laying the groundwork for more complex intersectional queries.

Query Personas Within A Specified Identity Dimension

Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension

- `MATCH (i:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p:Persona) WHERE i.dimension = "age" RETURN i, p`

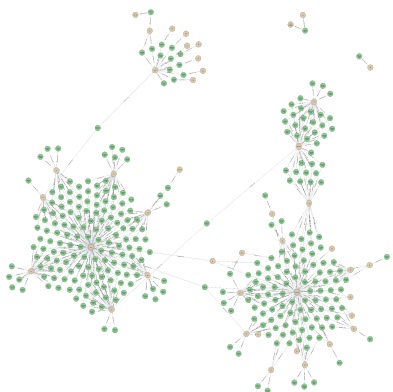


Figure 15. Personas Within the “Age” Identity

Dimension and Age Self-Descriptions

Description: This graph shows all personas connected to the “age” identity dimension. Each identity node (e.g., “millennial,” “gen z,” “gen x”, etc) is linked to one or more participant personas through an “IDENTIFIES_WITH” relationship. This query helps surface patterns of self-described age identities and provides a foundation for exploring identity-based intersections, and experiences, across the dataset.

Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description

- `MATCH (i:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p:Persona) WHERE i.dimension = "age" AND toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "millennial" RETURN i, p`

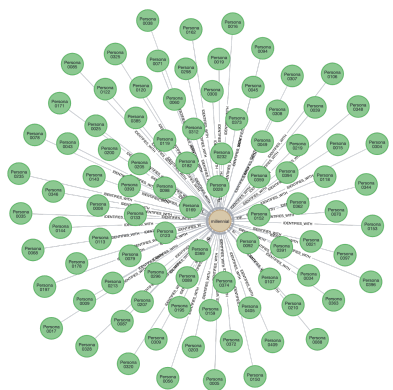


Figure 16. Personas Self-Describing as “Millennial” Within the Age Identity Dimension

Description: This graph displays all personas who self-identified using age descriptors that include the term “millennial.” It visualizes connections between participants and identity language in the age dimension, offering insight into generational self-identification patterns and potential for downstream relational queries.

Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experience (using keyword)

- `MATCH (i:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]-> (c1:Code) WHERE i.dimension = "age" AND i.name CONTAINS "gen z" AND c1.name CONTAINS "assimilate" RETURN i, p, c1`

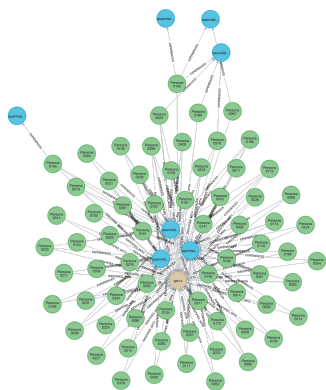
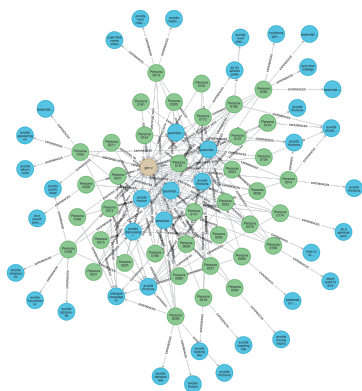


Figure 17. Gen Z Personas and Their “Assimilate” Experiences

Description: This graph shows all personas who self-identified with the “Gen Z” descriptor and who described experiences related to assimilation. By linking identities to specific behaviors or challenges, this query illustrates how relational graph structures can surface patterns of generational coping strategies and systemic pressure.

Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experiences (using keywords)

- ```
MATCH(i:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c1:Code),(p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c2:Code) WHERE i.dimension = "age" AND i.name CONTAINS "gen z" AND c1.name CONTAINS "assimilate" AND c2.name CONTAINS "avoid" RETURN i, p, c1, c2
```



**Figure 18. Gen Z Personas with Co-Occurring “Assimilate” and “Avoid” Experiences**

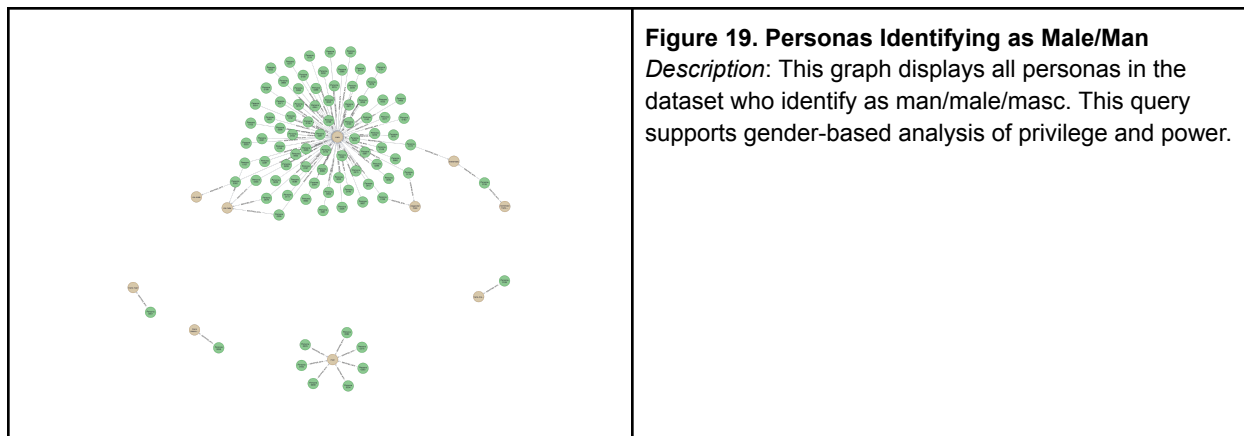
*Description:* This visualization identifies personas who self-identify as “Gen Z” and who reported both assimilation and avoidance as coping strategies. Each persona node is linked to both a Gen Z identity descriptor and at least two experience codes. This type of multi-experience query supports deeper analysis of behavioral complexity—revealing how individuals may navigate social scenarios using multiple strategies in tandem, which may reinforce or contradict each other. It illustrates the relational tension between conforming to norms and not.

## Query Privilege and Privileged Identity

Displays all personas who identify as male/man

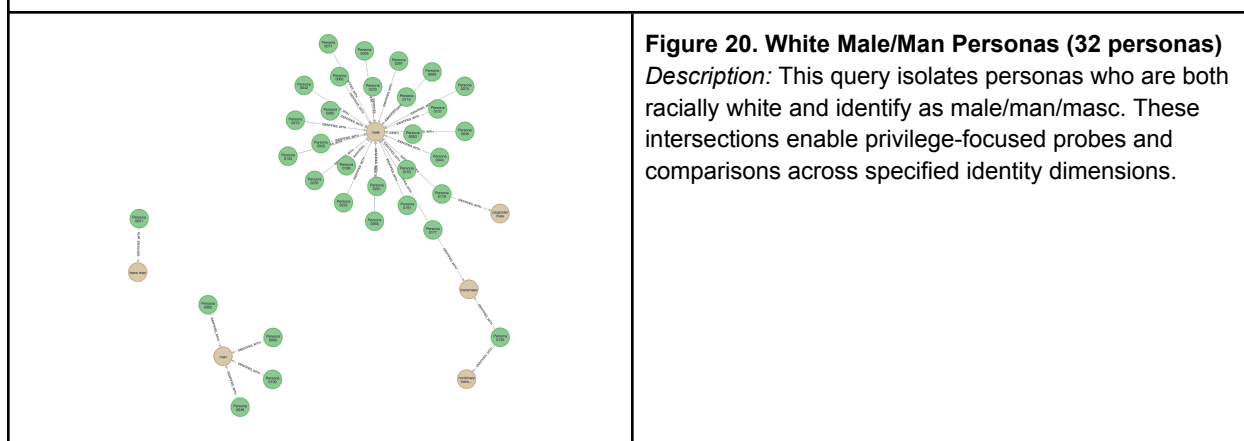
- ```
MATCH (i:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p:Persona) WHERE i.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "man" OR toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "masc") AND NOT EXISTS {MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(f:Identity) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman")}
```

 RETURN DISTINCT i, p



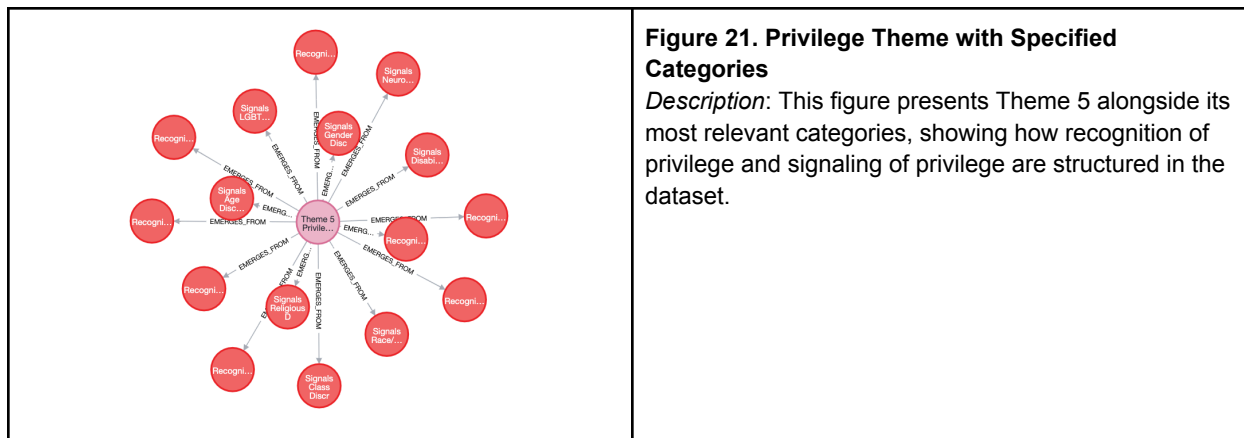
Displays all personas who identify as white male/man

- MATCH (i:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p:Persona) WHERE i.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "man" OR toLower(i.name) CONTAINS "masc") AND EXISTS { MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian")} AND NOT EXISTS { MATCH (f:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman")} RETURN DISTINCT i, p



Displays privilege theme and specified categories (using keywords)

- MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 5 Privilege: Demonstrates or Reveals Identity-Based Privilege" AND (toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "recognizes" OR toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "signals") RETURN th, ct



Displays all personas demonstrating or connected to privilege

- MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 5 Privilege: Demonstrates or Reveals Identity-Based Privilege" AND toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "recognizes" WITH th, ct MATCH (ct)-[:CONTAINS]->(c:Code) WITH th, ct, c MATCH (p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c) RETURN DISTINCT th, ct, c, p

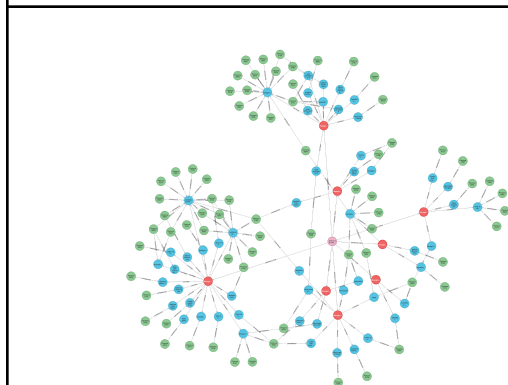
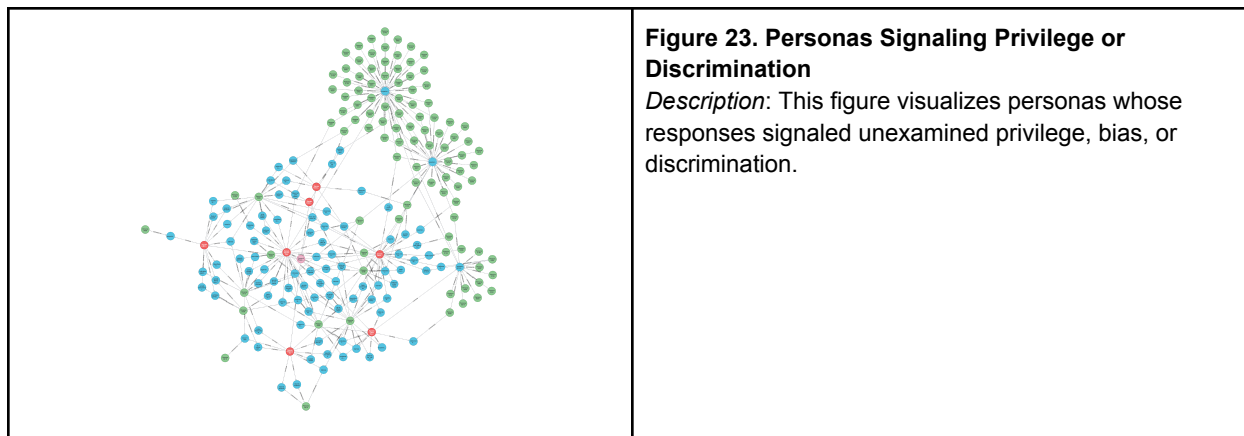


Figure 22. Personas Who Recognize Privilege

Description: This graph shows which personas explicitly recognized privilege within their narrative, as coded in Theme 5.

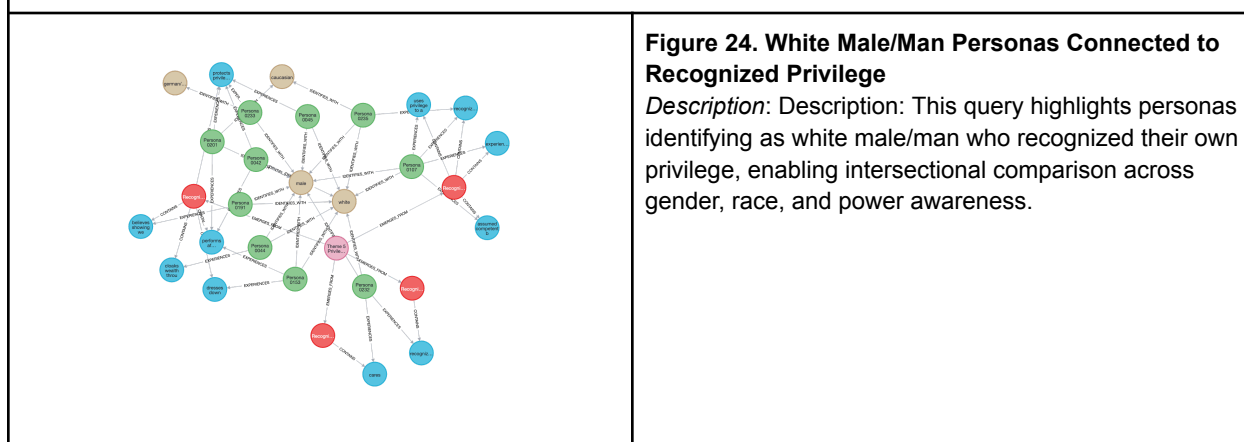
Displays all personas demonstrating/expressing discrimination

- MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 5 Privilege: Demonstrates or Reveals Identity-Based Privilege" AND toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "signals" WITH th, ct MATCH (ct)-[:CONTAINS]->(c:Code) WITH th, ct, c MATCH (p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c) RETURN DISTINCT th, ct, c, p



Displays all personas who identify as male/man/masc and white, and connect with privilege

- MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 5 Privilege: Demonstrates or Reveals Identity-Based Privilege" AND (toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "recognizes") WITH th, ct MATCH (ct)-[:CONTAINS]->(c:Code) WITH th, ct, c MATCH (p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c) WHERE EXISTS {MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "masc")} AND EXISTS {MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian")} AND NOT EXISTS {MATCH (f:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman")} WITH DISTINCT th, ct, c, p OPTIONAL MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(g:Identity) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") OPTIONAL MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(r:Identity) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") RETURN DISTINCT th, ct, c, p, g, r



Displays all personas who identify as white male/man and connect with privilege

- MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 5 Privilege: Demonstrates or Reveals Identity-Based Privilege" AND (toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "signals") WITH th, ct MATCH (ct)-[:CONTAINS]->(c:Code) WITH th, ct, c MATCH (p:Persona)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c) WHERE EXISTS {MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man")} AND EXISTS {MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian")} AND NOT EXISTS {MATCH (f:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman")} WITH DISTINCT th, ct, c, p OPTIONAL MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(g:Identity) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") OPTIONAL MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(r:Identity) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") RETURN DISTINCT th, ct, c, p, g, r

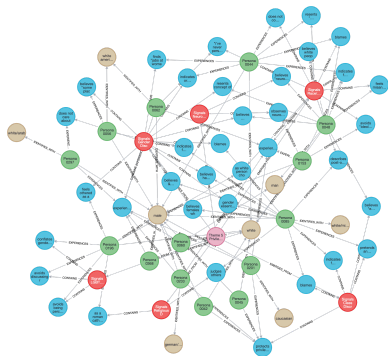


Figure 25. White Male/Man Personas Signaling Privilege, Bias, Discriminatory Attitudes

Description: This figure visualizes personas who expressed privilege-related bias or dismissal, supporting critical insights into identity-based power structures.

Displays all personas who identify as white male/man and use coping mechanisms

- WITH ["assimilates", "acts", "adapts", "avoids", "blends in", "camouflages", "chameleons", "changes", "checks out", "closets", "code-switches", "conforms", "controls", "disassociates or disengages", "downplays", "flirts and giggles", "guards", "hides", "ignores", "impersonates", "isolates or withdraws", "lies", "masks", "mimics", "mirrors", "overcompensates", "passes", "people-pleases", "plays into stereotypes", "professionalizes", "sets boundaries", "shaves armpits", "smiles when sad", "stays", "steals", "sublimates", "suppresses", "uses deodorant", "whitewashes"] AS behavior_terms MATCH (p:Persona)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(i:Identity) WHERE EXISTS {MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c1:Code) WHERE ANY(term IN behavior_terms WHERE toLower(c1.name) CONTAINS term)} AND (EXISTS {MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man")}) AND EXISTS {MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian")}) AND NOT EXISTS {MATCH (f:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman")} MATCH

(p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) WHERE ANY(term IN behavior_terms WHERE toLower(c.name) CONTAINS term) RETURN DISTINCT i, p, c

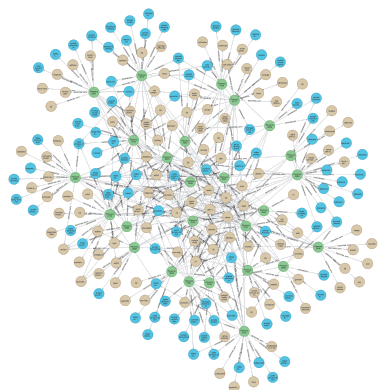


Figure 26. Coping Behaviors Among White Male/Man Personas (26 personas)

Description: This figure maps how personas with white male/man identities reported behavioral coping mechanisms.

Displays all personas who identify as white male/man and express distress or fear

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE EXISTS { MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") } AND NOT EXISTS { MATCH (f:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman") } MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code)-[:CONTAINS]-(cat:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]-(th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" AND toLower(cat.name) CONTAINS "distress/fear" RETURN DISTINCT p, c, cat, th

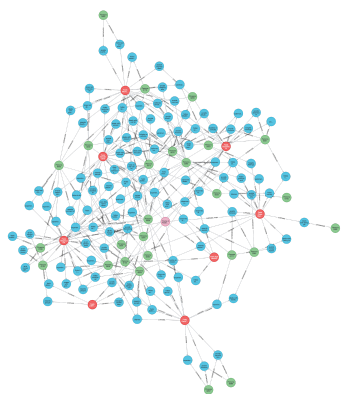


Figure 27. White Male/Man Personas Experiencing Distress or Fear

Description: This visualization focuses on emotional coping and vulnerability among white male/man personas, expanding the analysis of privilege and other attributes like defensiveness or fear

Displays all personas who identify as white male/man and express self-acceptance or joy/peace

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE EXISTS { MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension =

```
"race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") }
AND NOT EXISTS { MATCH (f:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE f.dimension = "gender" AND
(toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(f.name) CONTAINS "woman") } MATCH
(p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code)-[:CONTAINS]-(cat:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]-(th:Theme)
WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social
Scenarios" AND (toLower(cat.name) CONTAINS "accepts self" OR toLower(cat.name) CONTAINS
"joy/peace") RETURN DISTINCT p, c, cat, th
```

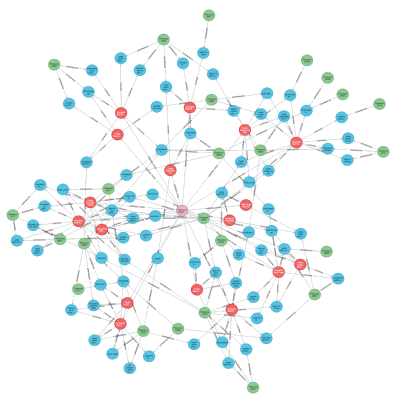


Figure 28. White Male/Man Personas Expressing Positive Emotional States (24 personas)

Description: This graph identifies personas expressing affirmation, peace, or joy—providing a counterpoint to experiences of distress and surfacing how positive emotion relates to power and identity security.

Query Marginalization and Marginalized Identity

Displays all marginalized personas

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE(NOT EXISTS {MATCH (i1:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE i1.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(i1.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(i1.name) CONTAINS "man")}) OR NOT EXISTS { MATCH (i2:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE i2.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(i2.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(i2.name) CONTAINS "caucasian"}}) RETURN DISTINCT p

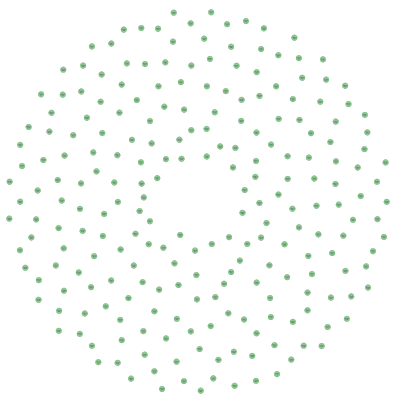


Figure 29. All Personas Identifying With A Marginalized Group

Description: This graph displays all participants with one or more marginalized identities. This foundational query establishes a working definition of marginalization in the dataset, supporting subsequent analysis of identity-based coping.

Displays all personas who identify with a marginalized group and use coping mechanisms

- WITH ["assimilates", "acts", "adapts", "avoids", "blends in", "camouflages", "chameleons", "changes", "checks out", "closes", "code-switches", "conforms", "controls", "disassociates or disengages", "downplays", "flirts and giggles", "guards", "hides", "ignores", "impersonates", "isolates or withdraws", "lies", "masks", "mimics", "mirrors", "overcompensates", "passes", "people-pleases", "plays into stereotypes", "professionalizes", "sets boundaries", "shaves armpits", "smiles when sad", "stays", "steals", "sublimates", "suppresses", "uses deodorant", "whitewashes"] AS behavior_terms MATCH (p:Persona)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(i:Identity) WHERE EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c1:Code) WHERE ANY(term IN behavior_terms WHERE toLower(c1.name) CONTAINS term) } AND NOT (EXISTS { MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") }) MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) WHERE ANY(term IN behavior_terms WHERE toLower(c.name) CONTAINS term) RETURN DISTINCT p, c

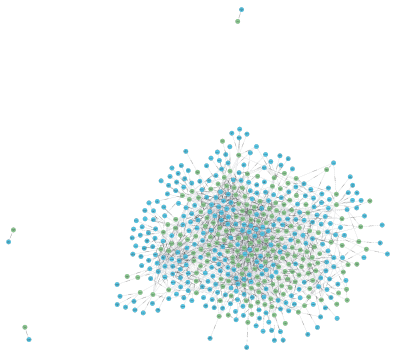


Figure 30. All Marginalized Personas Who Use Coping Mechanisms

Description: This graph shows personas who identify with one or more marginalized groups and who reported behavioral coping mechanisms (e.g., masking, avoidance, code-switching). These results visualize the strategies marginalized individuals use to navigate identity-related adversity in social contexts, linking identity to survival behavior.

Displays all personas who identify with a marginalized group and experience distress or fear

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE NOT (EXISTS { MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") }) MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code)-[:CONTAINS]-(cat:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]-(th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" AND (toLower(cat.name) CONTAINS "distress/fear") RETURN DISTINCT p, c, cat, th

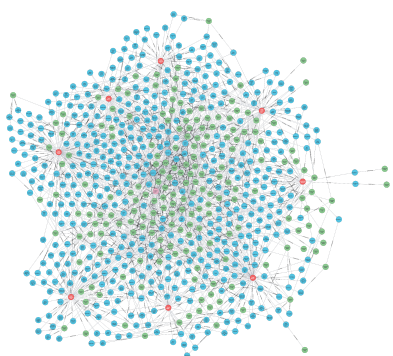


Figure 31. All Marginalized Personas Who Experience Distress or Fear

Description: This graph isolates personas with marginalized identities who expressed feelings of distress or fear. It highlights the emotional costs of navigating exclusion, providing insight into how systemic inequity and identity-based harm manifest psychologically.

Displays all personas who identify with a marginalized group and express self-acceptance or joy/peace

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE NOT (EXISTS { MATCH (g:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "male" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "man") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (r:Identity)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]-(p) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "white" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "caucasian") }) MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code)-[:CONTAINS]-(cat:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]-(th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" AND (toLower(cat.name) CONTAINS "accepts self" OR toLower(cat.name) CONTAINS "joy/peace") RETURN DISTINCT p, c, cat, th

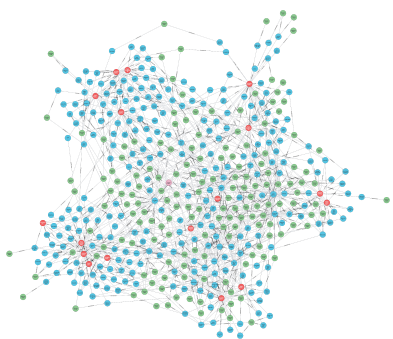


Figure 32. All Marginalized Personas Who Experience Self-Acceptance, Joy, Peace

Description: This visualization highlights marginalized participants who expressed self-acceptance or feelings of joy and peace in relation to identity. It affirms the presence of resilience, pride, and healing despite marginalization—foregrounding identity-based resilience and will.

Query Intersectionality

Race/Ethnicity + Gender experiences

Displays all personas who identify as Black/African American AND woman/female, along with their common shared experiences

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(i1:Identity) WHERE i1.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(i1.name) CONTAINS "black" OR toLower(i1.name) CONTAINS "african") } AND EXISTS {MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(i2:Identity) WHERE i2.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(i2.name) CONTAINS "woman" OR toLower(i2.name) CONTAINS "female")} MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) WITH c, collect(p) AS people, count(DISTINCT p) AS count WHERE count > 1 UNWIND people AS p RETURN DISTINCT p, c

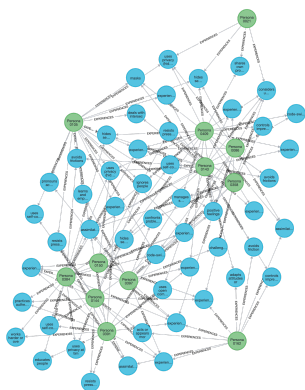


Figure 33. Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Gender: Black Women

Description: This graph displays personas who identify as both Black/African American and woman/female, along with their shared identity-based experiences. It highlights how race and gender intersect to shape patterns. Visualizing co-occurring experiences reveals the compounded nature of identity and points to relational patterns specific to multiply marginalized participants.

Race/Ethnicity + Class experiences

Displays all personas who identify as cuban, hispanic, latin, or mexican AND assisted, low, poor, or working class, along with their common shared experiences

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE EXISTS {MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(r:Identity) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "cuban" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "hispanic" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "mex") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(c:Identity) WHERE c.dimension = "class" AND (toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "assistance" OR toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "low" OR toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "poor" OR toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "working")} MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(code:Code) WITH code, collect(p) AS people, count(DISTINCT p) AS count WHERE count > 1 UNWIND people AS p RETURN DISTINCT p, code

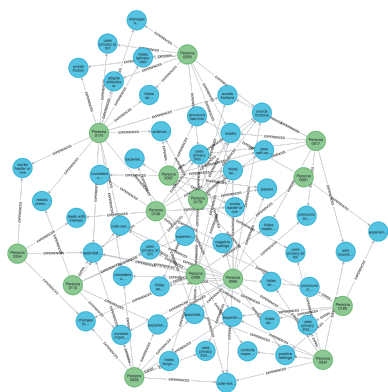


Figure 34. Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Class: Latin/Hispanic Low-Income Personas

Description: This graph shows personas who identify as Cuban, Hispanic, Latin, or Mexican and also as being in low, poor, assisted, or working-class groups. It surfaces patterns of overlapping economic and cultural marginalization, making visible the social pressures and behavioral adaptations experienced by participants navigating class and racial/ethnic barriers simultaneously.

LGBTQIA+ & Disability experiences

Displays all personas who identify as LGBTQIA+ AND disabled, along with their common shared experiences

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE EXISTS {MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(i1:Identity) WHERE i1.dimension = "disability" AND toLower(i1.name) CONTAINS "disabled" } AND EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(i2:Identity) WHERE i2.dimension = "lgbtqia" AND toLower(i2.name) CONTAINS "lgbtqia+" } MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) WITH c, collect(p) AS people, count(DISTINCT p) AS count WHERE count > 1 UNWIND people AS p RETURN DISTINCT p, c

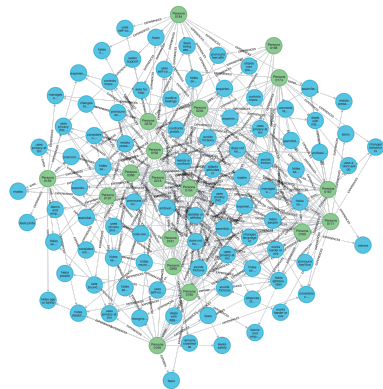


Figure 35. Intersection of LGBTQIA+ and Disability Identities

Description: This graph illustrates shared experiences among personas who identify as both LGBTQIA+ and disabled. The visualization underscores the challenges and coping mechanisms that arise at the intersection of queerness and disability. It reveals how multiple marginalized identities can interact to intensify exclusion but also produce unique strategies of resistance, care, and identity expression.

Marginalized Race/Ethnicity + Gender + Class + Religion experiences

Displays all personas who identify as marginalized across race/ethnicity, gender, class, and religion, along with their common shared experiences:

- MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(r:Identity) WHERE r.dimension = "race-ethnicity" AND (toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "black" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "african" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "hispanic" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "mex" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "asian" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "chinese" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "middle eastern" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "indian" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "jew" OR toLower(r.name) CONTAINS "puerto rican") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(g:Identity) WHERE g.dimension = "gender" AND (toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "woman" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "female" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "nonbinary" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "trans" OR toLower(g.name) CONTAINS "queer") } AND EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(c:Identity) WHERE c.dimension = "class" AND (toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "assistance" OR toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "low" OR toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "poor" OR toLower(c.name) CONTAINS "working") } AND (EXISTS { MATCH (p)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(rel:Identity) WHERE rel.dimension = "religion" AND (toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "jewish" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "muslim" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "islam" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "atheist" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "buddhist" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "none" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "pagan" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "hindu" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "non-religious" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS

```
"satanist" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "taoist" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "hinduism" OR
toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "not religious" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "wicca" OR
toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "humanist" OR toLower(rel.name) CONTAINS "jainism") }) MATCH
(p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(code:Code) WITH code, collect(p) AS people, count(DISTINCT p) AS count
WHERE count > 1 UNWIND people AS p RETURN DISTINCT p, code
```

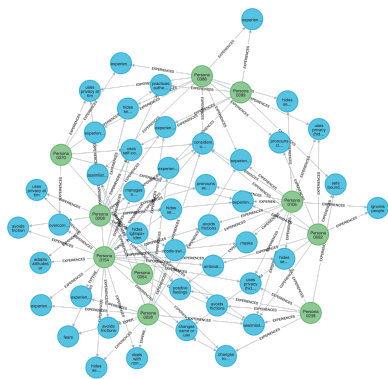


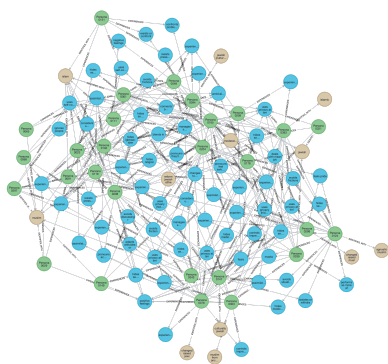
Figure 36. Intersectional Marginalization: Race, Gender, Class, and Religion

Description: This composite graph presents personas who hold three or more marginalized identities—spanning race/ethnicity, gender, class, and religion. It includes individuals who identify as women, nonbinary, or queer; people from minority race/ethnicity groups; those experiencing class precarity; and those identifying with a range of religions that does not include Christianity. The visualization reveals shared identity-based experiences that emerge at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression and provides complex insights into shared experiences.

Religion – Religion experiences

Displays all personas who identify as jewish OR muslim/islamic, along with their common shared experiences

- ```
MATCH (jew:Persona)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(jRel:Identity)
WHERE jRel.dimension = "religion" AND toLower(jRel.name) CONTAINS "jewish"
MATCH (jew)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) MATCH (mus:Persona)-[:IDENTIFIES_WITH]->(mRel:Identity)
WHERE mRel.dimension = "religion" AND (toLower(mRel.name) CONTAINS "islam" OR
toLower(mRel.name) CONTAINS "muslim") MATCH (mus)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c2:Code) WHERE c = c2
RETURN DISTINCT c, jew, jRel, mus, mRel
```



**Figure 37. Religious Marginalization: Shared Experiences Among Jewish and Muslim Personas**

*Description:* This graph highlights experiences shared by personas who identify as Jewish or Muslim/Islamic. It brings into view identity-based experiences related to religion. By focusing on religious identity across two distinct traditions, the graph reveals both parallel and divergent ways participants navigate identity-based faith-related marginalization.

## Synthesis of Query Discoveries

The graph queries provided a novel, immersive experience while uncovering a rich, multidimensional understanding of how individuals navigate identity within social contexts. As the computational phase unfolded, it became clear that the process was not only analytical, but also sensational, reflective, and transformative.

## From Technical Orientation to Embodied Analysis

The initial phase of graph querying served as a technical orientation to the dataset. Early queries explored foundational graph elements—personas, identities, experiences—and their relationships to the qualitative categories and themes. Yet as persona, identity, and experience nodes were dragged, repositioned, and expanded within the graph interface, the experience shifted beyond analysis and became embodied (Pink, 2009; Varela et al., 1991). This sensory orientation was novel.

The push and pull of node connections, the density of clusters, and the isolation of outlier nodes rendered the dynamics of identity – tactile and visceral. The graph interface displayed data while generating feelings. It transformed traditional modes of data interaction into a haptic experience, mirroring the psychological, emotional, relational tensions, and social forces participants described in their narratives.

While the syntax of queries parsed data into graph compositions, time spent interacting with the graphs became time for reflection. The graphs themselves were affective (Massumi, 2015). My mindset shifted from parsing static codes to experiencing the data (Lury, 2021). This was an empathy-infused epistemological turn—from translating participant narratives into static codes, to participating in the tethered realities of individual and collective identity. The analysis process was reconditioned, from translation into participation.

## Insights: Presence and Connection

The graphs illustrated a foundational truth: people are social, relational, and connected. Presence—how individuals show up, express, withhold, or negotiate their identities—emerged as a pervasive tension shaped continuously by context. A wide array of experiences from pride and joy, to assimilation and hiding surfaced as valid forms of agency and survival. Extensive research affirms that social connection, and the presence it requires, is a vital determinant of

both psychological and physical health. Chronic social isolation and alienation are associated with increased risks of anxiety, depression, chronic illness, early mortality, and suicide (Beutel et al., 2017; Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010). In the dataset—and within the relational dynamics of the graph itself—these stakes were palpable.

To maintain an analytic focus amid the graphs' expansive possibilities, two guiding research questions anchored the exploration moving forward:

- How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?
- What behaviors or coping mechanisms do individuals use in social scenarios?

These questions grounded the study's core purpose: operationalizing intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020). Aligned with these questions, the next phase of querying concentrated on coping mechanisms.

## Insights: Coping

Adaptive coping mechanisms are typically understood as healthy, flexible responses that support resilience, while maladaptive coping mechanisms are understood to be harmful or unsustainable over time (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.). However, the graph analysis and the lived realities coded and visualized blurred this binary. It is not a stretch to understand that for individuals navigating structural oppression, hostility, or chronic invalidation, behaviors which may be labeled maladaptive (e.g. avoidance, withdrawal, masking) may be protective, necessary, even life-saving. Rather than imposing rigid categorizations, the analysis turned toward identifying more explicit situational coping behaviors. The following coping mechanisms, and their variations, surfaced across most identity dimensions and became points of interest:

- **Assimilates:** adapts, conforms, impersonates, mimics, mirrors, passes, plays into stereotypes, people-pleases, professionalizes, suppresses, shaves armpits, uses deodorant, whitewashes
- **Avoids:** checks out, disassociates or disengages, ignores, isolates or withdraws, stays
- **Controls:** acts, changes, code-switches, guards, lies, overcompensates, steals, flirts and giggles, sets boundaries, rejects, resists, sublimates
- **Hides:** blends in, camouflages, chameleons, closets, downplays, masks, smiles when sad

## Insights: Emotional and Psychological Labor

Emotional and psychological labor—the continuous negotiation between authenticity and risk—underpins coping. Spoon theory (Miserandino, 2003), a disability justice framework describing the finite energy resources available to some individuals each day, offers a powerful metaphor for understanding this form of labor. Beyond the demands of meeting basic medical needs (spoons) and navigating the heavy financial and legal burdens of accessing care (spoons), individuals must also perform the exhausting work of managing the interface between marginalized self and dominant social expectations. This includes performing ‘normalcy,’ defending needs, enduring microaggressions, masking vulnerabilities, assessing risks, and eliminating nonessential activities—all while vigilantly protecting limited reserves of time, energy, and attention.

The coping behaviors visualized through the graph queries revealed that emotional and psychological labor is not equally distributed. Some individuals must constantly calculate, adapt, and protect themselves to navigate identity-based risks, while others are able to move through social environments without facing the same burdens.

## From Broad Exploration to Intersectional Discovery

After stepping through dozens of queries—exploring the dataset’s structures of identity, experience, privilege, and marginalization—the final phase of analysis arrived at intersectional identity queries. This phase honored the foundational premise of intersectionality: that identities are not additive but multiplicative, producing unique experiences of oppression, resilience, and survival (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020).

Choosing which intersections to explore was difficult. Each complex scenario offered new pathways to think and feel through the lens of intersectional experiences. The final set of queries focused on key intersectional combinations:

### **Figure 33: Race/Ethnicity and Gender – Black Women**

Visualizing compounded experiences at the intersection of race and gender.

- This query surfaced 12 personas, connected through 51 distinct codes and 63 relational ties, revealing a rich and complex picture of compounded experiences at the intersection of race and gender.

- Across this group, assimilation emerged as a dominant coping strategy. Nearly every persona engaged in some form of assimilation, and code-switching appeared almost universally among those who assimilated. This pattern demonstrated the emotional and behavioral labor required to navigate environments where dominant cultural norms shaped expectations and authenticity carried risk.
- Other strategic behaviors also appeared. Some personas reported acting more mature to challenge stereotypes, relying on self-confidence, learning, and personal empowerment to counter bias. Strategies such as controlling impression through clothing and make-up choices, resisting social pressures, and asserting privacy showed a consistent pattern of careful self-management and situational awareness. These actions reflected an ongoing negotiation between external demands and internal self-preservation.
- Microaggressions were a part of daily experience for some participants. Some coped by educating others, transforming personal experiences of harm into moments of social intervention and relational care.
- As an aside, participants expressed positive feelings about pronoun use, suggesting that affirming language played an important role in supporting gender identity. Few participants reported experiences of religious or disability discrimination, indicating that race and gender were the primary axes of visibility and tension within social settings for this group.
- This graph made visible how intersecting racialized and gendered experiences produced intensified marginalization and highly adaptive, strategic forms of coping. The findings highlighted both the cumulative emotional cost and the resilient, creative agency Black women exercised as they navigated social structures shaped by exclusion and bias.

### **Figure 34: Race/Ethnicity and Class – Latin/Hispanic Low-Income Personas**

Surfacing patterns of overlapping economic and racial/ethnic marginalization.

- This query surfaced 14 personas, connected through 47 distinct codes and 61 relational ties, revealing patterns of overlapping economic and racial/ethnic marginalization.
- Across this group, hiding emerged as a common coping strategy. Many personas reported hiding their whole selves and using privacy to protect or withhold personal details. Assimilation into dominant cultural norms was widespread, reflecting the continuous negotiation between visibility, safety, and belonging in environments shaped by systemic bias.

- Some participants described passing regarding their race or ethnicity, choosing to obscure or downplay their backgrounds in order to navigate social settings more safely. Others coped by avoiding conflict, hiding their religious identities, or masking neurodivergence.
- As an aside, experiences and observations of gender discrimination appeared within this group as well, adding further complexity to how awareness through marginalization was lived and navigated.
- This graph revealed that individuals at the intersection of racialized and class-based marginalization often rely on strategies of invisibility and adaptation to survive. The emotional and psychological costs of managing these multiple pressures were literally made visible through the density of hiding, privacy, and assimilation strategies across the group.

### **Figure 35: LGBTQIA+ and Disability Identities**

Illuminating dual navigations of queerness and ableism.

- This query surfaced 18 personas, connected through 90 distinct codes and 108 relational ties, illustrating how individuals navigate the compounded pressures of LGBTQIA+ and disability-based marginalization.
- Most participants described adapting behaviors or attitudes to fit situations, often through privacy, avoidance, or hiding. Coping strategies included withholding LGBTQIA+ identity, masking neurodivergence, and avoiding friction in conversations around both dimensions. The widespread use of privacy underscores how often individuals in this group must weigh personal safety against authentic self-expression.
- Only two participants expressed LGBTQIA+ joy or pride.
- Ableism was commonly experienced or observed. Participants reported managing perceptions, downplaying needs, or protecting themselves in contexts that were not supportive or accommodating. A few expressed fear around disability, gender, or religion.
- Experiences with pronouns revealed mixed emotions: while some described them as empowering or affirming, others expressed ambivalence, and a few described pronouns as complex or conditional on context. A small number of participants reported asking for help regarding disability, or seeking safety more broadly.
- This graph made clear that individuals navigating both LGBTQIA+ and disability identities often live with heightened emotional and psychological labor. The data showed

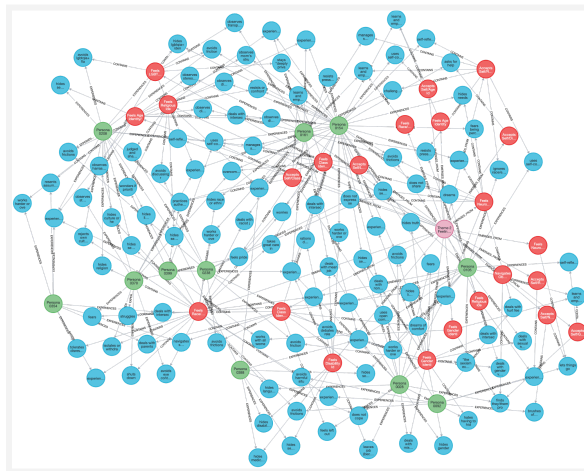
how coping required constant assessment of risk, self-protection, and boundary-setting, often without safety or support. Identity here is negotiated—sometimes celebrated, but mostly constrained.

### Figure 36: Race, Gender, Class, and Religion

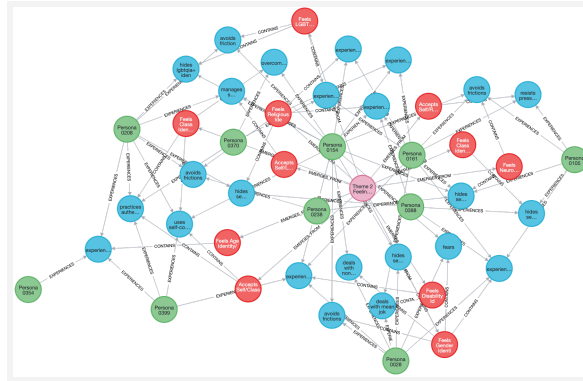
Mapping experiences across multiple marginalized identity dimensions.

- This query surfaced 11 personas, connected through 43 distinct codes and 53 relational ties, revealing the relational complexity of participants navigating the intersection of race, gender, class, and religion.
- Despite the very broad diversity across this group, several shared patterns emerged. Many participants expressed heightened sensitivity to pronoun use—not just for themselves, but in consideration of others. This attentiveness suggests awareness of social dynamics and identity-based respect, with seven participants reflecting on pronoun use through both personal and relational lenses.
- Assimilation was another recurring strategy, appearing among six participants. Code-switching and changes in voice, tone, or manner of speaking were common among this subgroup, revealing how language and self-presentation are actively managed to navigate dominant cultural expectations. Some participants used privacy to protect themselves, while others drew boundaries. A number of participants drew on self-confidence and authenticity to assert presence despite social pressures.
- Experiences of discrimination also surfaced across identity dimensions. Participants described facing gender and class-based discrimination. A few described misgendering, religious distress, and nonbinary erasure. These accounts were paired with adaptive responses such as masking, boundary-setting, or avoidance.
- This graph revealed a mixed portrayal of marginalization and experience. Since the diversity within this group introduced significant variation, I decided to look at additional elements – participant feelings. This additional layer of exploration demonstrates the flexibility enabled by graph queries. The following queries were run:
  - `MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE p.name IN [ "Persona 0028", "Persona 0092", "Persona 0105", "Persona 0154", "Persona 0161", "Persona 0208", "Persona 0238", "Persona 0354", "Persona 0370", "Persona 0388", "Persona 0399"] RETURN p ORDER BY p.name`
  - `MATCH (th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" RETURN th`

- `MATCH (th:Theme)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(ct:Category) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" AND ( toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "accepts" OR toLower(ct.name) CONTAINS "feels") RETURN th, ct`
- `MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE p.name IN ["Persona 0028", "Persona 0092", "Persona 0105", "Persona 0154", "Persona 0161", "Persona 0208", "Persona 0238", "Persona 0354", "Persona 0370", "Persona 0388", "Persona 0399"] MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) MATCH (c)-[:CONTAINS]->(ct:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" RETURN DISTINCT p, c, ct, th ORDER BY p.name, c.name`



- `MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE p.name IN ["Persona 0028", "Persona 0092", "Persona 0105", "Persona 0154", "Persona 0161", "Persona 0208", "Persona 0238", "Persona 0354", "Persona 0370", "Persona 0388", "Persona 0399"] MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) MATCH (c)-[:CONTAINS]->(ct:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(th:Theme) WHERE th.name = "Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" WITH c, ct, th, collect(p) AS people, count(DISTINCT p) AS count WHERE count >= 2 UNWIND people AS p RETURN DISTINCT p, c, ct, th ORDER BY p.name, c.name`



- 
- `MATCH (p:Persona) WHERE p.name IN ["Persona 0028","Persona 0092","Persona 0105","Persona 0154","Persona 0161","Persona 0208","Persona 0238","Persona 0354","Persona 0370","Persona 0388","Persona 0399"] MATCH (p)-[:EXPERIENCES]->(c:Code) MATCH (c)-[:CONTAINS]->(ct:Category)-[:EMERGES_FROM]->(th:Theme) WHERE th.name="Theme 2 Feelings: Identity-Informed Emotional/Psychological States in Social Scenarios" WITH c,ct,th,collect(p) AS people,count(DISTINCT p) AS count WHERE count>=2 RETURN c.name AS code,ct.name AS category,count AS frequency ORDER BY frequency DESC,code`
- Across these 11 highly marginalized personas, emotional and psychological struggles were widespread. Disability-related struggles appeared in the form of feelings of ableism and distress, with four participants reporting experiences such as observing ableism or dealing with mean jokes and slurs. Gender identity struggles were similarly prominent, reflected in experiences of gender discrimination, nonbinary erasure, and fear, collectively affecting four participants. Religious identity distress also surfaced, as several participants described navigating islamophobia, religious discrimination, or general religious-based distress. Neurodivergent identity struggles were common, particularly through experiences of hiding one's neurodiversity or avoiding friction to maintain safety. Finally, class-based distress emerged in accounts where participants reported hiding their class background and overcoming stigma, underscoring the intersectional nature of emotional and psychological labor across marginalized identities. Despite these challenges, adaptive and affirming emotional states also appeared. Several participants practiced authenticity, used self-confidence, resisted external pressures, or overcame shame—experiencing moments of self-acceptance and pride tied to class, race/ethnicity, or LGBTQIA+ identities.

- This graph powerfully visualized how emotional labor, coping, and resilience are entangled within complex intersectional realities.

### **Figure 37: Religious Marginalization – Jewish and Muslim Participants**

Revealing shared and divergent coping strategies in religiously marginalized groups.

- This query surfaced 28 personas, connected through 69 distinct codes and 108 relational ties, revealing the complexity of religious identity struggles among Jewish and Muslim participants.
- Despite religious, cultural, and/or ethnic differences, participants shared profound commonalities in how they navigated marginalization. The most widespread shared experience was distress related to religious identity, appearing across 16 participants. This distress was not only emotional but tied to repeated experiences of bias, discrimination, and erasure. Religious identity struggles were a persistent and active force shaping participants' daily negotiations of safety, belonging, and authenticity.
- Coping strategies showed convergence between Jewish and Muslim personas. Many engaged in assimilation strategies—adapting outward appearances, behaviors, or self-presentations to conform to dominant norms. "Assimilates into dominant culture" and "hides whole self" were especially common, underscoring how religious marginalization often demands self-protection through concealment. Participants also frequently used privacy, avoiding conversations about religion or religious markers altogether to protect themselves from potential harm.
- Emotional labor was present. Feelings of fear, ambivalence, and distress co-occurred with efforts to maintain self-confidence and authenticity when possible. Some participants described practicing resilience and boundary-setting, while also demonstrating an emotional cost of vigilance.
- Importantly, while many coping strategies reflected protective or adaptive mechanisms, there were also signals of resistance and pride. A few participants described managing difficult situations by asserting religious identity in safe contexts, engaging with peers for support, or resisting pressures to conform.

While the graphs presented here are only a beginning, the method itself—computationally augmented, relationally structured, and affectively engaged—enabled a different kind of deep dive into data, the tangled, messy realities of intersectional identity data. This approach serves as a starting point for focused social research that aims to understand complex human

experiences, impressions, feelings through large text-based datasets. Ultimately, the graph queries surfaced more than data structures, they invited participation in the emotional, psychological, and social labor of identity and social experience navigation.

## Thematic and Computational Analysis Together

This final section addresses a critical methodological question:

- What patterns, clusters, or relationships are discoverable through data modeling and graph-based querying—and how do they compare to the findings of conventional thematic analysis?

This question underscores a central aim of the methodology component of the TMI project: to understand what becomes visible through graph querying that might remain obscured in traditional, manually coded analysis.

The computational phase of this study resonates with the call from Bentley et al. (2023) to develop an “articulation mindset” in intersectional data science—an approach that centers connection, relational complexity, and lived meaning over reductive categorization. It also aligns with foundational intersectionality scholarship that defines intersectionality not only as a framework for understanding oppression, but as a way of seeing, knowing, and relating (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020).

## Chapter 4 Conclusion

In the TMI study, both thematic analysis and computational graph-based analysis were essential. Each contributed unique strengths and perspectives, working in tandem to answer the study’s central and supporting research questions. Their complementarity reflects the project’s emergent, iterative research design, which evolved in response to the scale, complexity, and relational nature of the dataset.

Thematic analysis provided depth, nuance, and contextual understanding of participants’ lived experiences. Through inductive coding, category development, and themes, this method illuminated how individuals described identity, navigated marginalization, coped under pressure, and made sense of their social realities. Thematic analysis was especially effective in exploring emotional and psychological states, coping strategies, personal definitions of identity, and

revealing manifestations of privilege. It kept the PI close to the data, while preserving participant voice and honoring the affective and situational richness of the data.

However, traditional qualitative methods revealed important limitations—particularly in scalability, cognitive load, and the capacity to model intersectional relationships. These limitations prompted the move toward computational augmentation.

Graph-based querying introduced a distinct yet complementary analytic layer. Instead of focusing on individual narratives, this approach illuminated collective structures, relational patterns, and intersectional dynamics. It revealed how identity dimensions clustered, how experiences co-occurred, and how systemic pressures shaped behavior across marginalized groups. Computational analysis was particularly effective in addressing research questions related to intersectionality, structural exclusion, and emergent patterns across the dataset.

Unexpectedly, the graph interface also created a tactile, embodied mode of analysis. As nodes were dragged, expanded, or repositioned within the visual interface, the analytic process shifted from linguistic interpretation to experiential participation. The density of clustered identities, the reach of experience nodes, and the visual isolation of outliers all mirrored the social dynamics described by participants. The analysis became felt—not just read or coded. This affective dimension reinforced the fundamentally relational nature of identity, and made visible the emotional, psychological, and structural forces that shape lived experience. It underscored that identity is not just textual or conceptual—it is spatial, embodied, vulnerable to forces, and socially situated.

Together, these two approaches provided a more comprehensive understanding than either could alone—and within the TMI-WEB workflow, they rely on one another. Thematic analysis generated the codes, categories, and insights that structured the graph. Graph querying extended those insights, enabling new discoveries, comparisons, and iterations across dimensions of identity data.

In combination, they embody the multi-method, flexible, and critical stance required to study intersectionality at scale. The study did not treat these methods as competing paradigms but as interdependent tools, each building iteratively upon the other. The qualitative depth of thematic coding informed and grounded the computational model; the systemic view of graph queries amplified and extended the thematic findings.

By moving between thematic interpretation and computational modeling, this project operationalized intersectionality as both a lived and structural phenomenon—advancing new methodological pathways for expanded, embodied, and computationally augmented mixed-methods research.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Futures

### Introduction

This chapter brings *TMI*, and the first iteration of TMI-WEB to a close—tracing the arc of the work and projecting into its unfolding futures. The project began as a provocation: a deliberate effort to observe, question, and intervene in how identity is experienced and understood. Rooted in lived experience, curiosity, and critical reflection, the work evolved into a multi-phase, mixed-methods study. It embraced an emergent design, adapting to shifting data, reframing questions, accepting learning curves, developing tools, and responding dynamically at every stage.

And true to its acronym—*Too Much Information*—the study lived up to its name. It was expansive, emotionally demanding (e.g. disturbing, enlightening, life-changing), technically ambitious, and epistemologically unruly. The methodology needed to be wide enough to hold affect and complexity, flexible enough to accommodate structure and contradiction, and generous enough to invite the unexpected. This final chapter revisits the research questions, reflects on what was discovered, and names the contributions, tensions, and forward directions that now emerge from the work.

### Reconnecting with Research Questions

The project was anchored by a central question: How do individuals and groups experience and navigate the complexities of intersectional identity in social scenarios?

This guiding inquiry was supported by several additional questions. TMI asked how exclusion, erasure, bias, and hate emerge in context; what coping mechanisms individuals develop when faced with identity-based harm; what emotional and psychological states unfold through these experiences; how privilege reveals itself through language and social behavior; how people

define the concept of identity in their own words; what kinds of discoveries graph-based modeling can support; and how these discoveries compare to those surfaced through conventional thematic analysis. Finally, the study examined how emergent insights might inform design interventions and pro-social applications.

These questions developed iteratively, and shaped each phase of the study. From early participant-observation and ethnographic journaling, to open-ended survey collection, inductive thematic coding, and computational querying, the questions evolved in parallel with the research process. Through this layered, iterative progression, the study was able to explore the complexity of lived identity and activate intersectionality as both an analytic and structural method, using TMI-WEB's graph-based system.

## Discoveries

This study affirms that identity is relational, performed, contextual, and social. It is shaped by self-understanding, emotional experience, social interaction, imposed labels, environmental settings, systems of power, and the language through which individuals are seen and heard. Identity exists through both self-articulation and social constraint, and it adapts to new conditions.

The research demonstrates that intersectionality functions as an emergent dynamic phenomena. Identities interact in compounding ways. Rather than existing as separate “layers” that can be neatly categorized, dimensions of identity intersect and co-form one another—producing unique experiences of safety, risk, visibility, and belonging. Race or ethnicity may shape how gender is read. Class may affect how neurodivergence is received and accepted. These example intersections multiply one another and cannot be disentangled.

Coping strategies—while showing recognizable patterns—remain context-dependent. Many participants relied on similar forms of emotional, behavioral, social adaptation, but the motivations behind these strategies and the effects they produced were always informed by individual context. Silence could be protective in one setting and erasure in another. Resistance could take the form of protest, expressed vulnerability, complex humor, or complete disengagement. Each act, every decision, is shaped by structural pressures, situational details, relational dynamics, and personal necessity.

The integration of experiential observation, thematic interpretation, and computational modeling made it possible to follow these threads across the dataset. This approach honored individual narrative while surfacing collective patterns—offering a view into how exclusion unfolds and how necessary resilience forms in response.

TMI also calls attention to the fact that identity remains a site of social contention. Participants described moments when their identities were celebrated and others when they were suppressed, punished, or doubted. Some were permitted to move through the world with ease, while others had to justify their presence, defend their needs, or hide in plain sight. Identity was a source of affirmation for many—through expressions of culture, gender, or community—but it was also a site of trauma. The order matters less than the simultaneity. Identity is both pride and pain, survival and celebration. It depends on where one is, how one is seen, and who holds the power to define the rules and decide what counts. In most cases it is a constant negotiation and emotional labor for some – but not others.

## Integrating Priming Sensibilities, Thematic Findings, and Computational Discoveries

The earliest stages of *TMI* established an observational orientation—through participant-observation, field notes, and reflexive journaling—that centered presence, power, norm breaking, and norm making. This phase, detailed in Chapter 1, primed the PI and the study to attend to how identity is constrained, negotiated, and surfaced in social space.

Thematic analysis, described in Chapter 3, allowed for close reading. Through inductive coding and interpretive grouping, the PI was able to explore affect, metaphor, contradiction, and tone. This phase revealed six central themes: contextual experiences of identity-based exclusion; emotional and psychological responses; behavioral coping mechanisms; relational and social supports; manifestations of privilege; and participant-defined meanings of identity.

Computational graph queries, detailed in Chapter 4, extended the analysis into new territory. Using TMI-WEB, the team could model and query identity intersections across hundreds of participants, identifying shared coping strategies, behavioral clusters, and co-occurring identity experiences. The analysis shifted from interpretation to interaction, as graph structures allowed the researcher to not only read the data, but feel its complexity—dragging, repositioning, and exploring nodes in space—a profound experience.

Sometimes, thematic patterns did not scale. Other times, unexpected clusters emerged from queries. These divergences were intellectually and methodologically generative. They reminded the team that identity cannot be fully captured by any one method. Together, however, thematic interpretation and computational exploration offered a fuller, more relational understanding.

## Contributions to Identity Research

*TMI* reconceptualized identity as fluid, relational, and emergent. It moves beyond fixed, demographic definitions and instead explored identity as a system of interconnected meanings, shaped by context, power, and experience. Intersectionality becomes traceable—narratively and computationally—as a force that organizes social reality.

Methodologically, *TMI* advances the possibilities of emergent mixed-methods research by integrating qualitative interpretation and computational modeling in a continuous analytic loop. *TMI-WEB* offers a concrete contribution: a graph-based, open-source analysis tool that enables visualization and exploration of intersecting identity structures, coping behaviors, and affective themes. AI-assisted features were tested during development but ultimately disabled after introducing hallucinations and interpretive distance. Maintaining direct researcher engagement with the data proved more effective and more ethically grounded.

Practically, this study surfaces insights that can inform inclusive design practice, equity-oriented policy, and institutional efforts toward visibility and belonging. It presents a replicable analytic model for research teams seeking to engage large-scale qualitative data while remaining rooted in meaning-making, care, and complexity. The open-source commitments of this project ensure that others can adapt, critique, and build on what has been developed.

## Limitations

While the *TMI* project was designed with flexibility, depth, and innovation in mind, it was not without its constraints. First and foremost, the study relied on self-selected participants and self-reported data, which means the dataset cannot be treated as fully representative or generalizable. Participants who chose to engage were likely those already reflecting on identity, marginalization, and social dynamics—leaving out voices who may experience identity-based harm without having the language or safety to articulate it.

Second, although TMI aimed to operationalize intersectionality at scale, the project still relied on category-oriented tagging and modeling for the identity dimensions, which risks reintroducing the reductive logic it critiques. While graph queries allowed for emergent relational analysis, the creation of node types—like race, gender, disability, or class—still required decisions about inclusion, naming, and structure. This tension between methodological necessity and epistemological resistance shaped the project at every turn.

The thematic coding process, while intentionally inductive and iterative, was still performed by a single PI. Interpretive bias, shaped by positionality, bias, assumptions, and affective reactions, inevitably influenced which codes were created, emphasized, or grouped. Similarly, the computational augmentation offered through TMI-WEB was shaped by design choices that foregrounded certain patterns. Although the system allowed for flexible queries, the sheer size and dimensionality of the dataset meant that some intersections and pathways went unexplored.

In addition, the decision to disable AI-assisted features during graph querying—due to hallucination risk and interpretive distance—limited the speed and scalability of some processes, but preserved a human-centered, meaning-driven analysis approach. This tradeoff reflects an ongoing tension between scale and care, automation and intentionality.

Finally, the sociopolitical context in which this research was conducted—marked by intensifying attacks on DEI, anti-trans legislation, and threats to academic freedom—both motivated the work and constrained its institutional support. Funding opportunities narrowed as language once welcomed by research institutions became targeted and politicized. The research team faced ethical and logistical challenges as the public discourse around identity became more hostile and polarized.

These limitations do not invalidate the findings; rather, they contextualize them. TMI was not designed to produce closure, but to open space for continued inquiry, critique, and iteration. The constraints encountered along the way now shape the contours of its future evolution—reminding us that all knowledge is situated, all research is partial, and all systems, no matter how inclusive, require ongoing revision.

## A Difficult and Transformative Project

*TMI* was not just technically ambitious—it was emotionally and politically charged. The dataset revealed the full spectrum of social experience, from white grievance and resentment, to disability assertiveness, queer despair and religious fear, along with stories of shame and survival under threat all wrapped around and embedded in a core aspect of existence - self-concept. Experiencing and holding this density and range of lived experience required stamina, humility, and care.

Participants offered vulnerability. They described moments of terror, isolation, humor, and power. Some shared information they had never shared before. The survey question sequence primed participants for the final survey question: “This is the last question. Identity is a complex interplay of empowerment and vulnerability. What would you like to add to a conversation about identity? Your input, experiences, and perspectives are deeply appreciated.” The responses, detailed in Appendix G, are powerful. The trust extended to this project was immense. That trust shaped every decision—from coding practices, to visual modeling, to the phrasing of insights. This project became a site of empathy, ontological transformation, ethical responsibility, not just technical analysis.

## Futures

*TMI* remains an experiment. It was designed to test the possibility of combining critical qualitative insight, inclusive data and design principles, and computational graph querying in the service of identity research. The test succeeded in many ways—and illuminated where more work is needed.

TMI-WEB enables forms of intentional analysis that traditional qualitative tools cannot. It can surface multi-dimensional intersections, identify hidden clusters, and trace patterns of systemic experiences. TMI-WEB is still under active development. We built a bicycle while riding it. This is extreme product development. It is undergoing heuristic and usability evaluation. With further iteration, the tool will support more advanced queries, with accessible documentation, and participatory features that will enable collaborators into the analysis process.

Looking ahead, multiple next-steps pathways are already underway. The first centers on data analysis: expanding the querying power and flexibility of TMI-WEB to support deeper, more customizable, more usable, intersectional research. The second centers on design: translating the pilot study’s findings into real-world interventions, tools, curricula, and creative provocations.

The third centers on research support: identifying nontraditional funding streams, cultivating community partnerships, and working beyond federal constraints to continue this work in ways that are resilient, transformative.

## Closing Reflections

*TMI* is a living container for stories, a timestamp of this particular turbulent moment, 2025, and a seed for future practice. It shows that identity is complicated, irreducible, and human. It shows that research can be rigorous and messy, computational and ethical.

At its core, *TMI* is a call to reimagine what is possible in social research. It is a demonstration of what can happen when methodology is emergent, when systems are built to support complexity rather than constrain it, and when the act of analysis becomes an act of care.

We do not close this document with finality. We close it with commitment—to continue listening, querying, designing, and finding ways to honor the lives, experiences, feelings, and futures this research holds.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

- What generation do you belong to, and what is your current age?
  - Ageism is a form of prejudice and discrimination that targets individuals or groups based on the perception of age and beliefs around age-related expectations. If you have experienced (or witnessed) ageism in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like changing your appearance, language, or behavior, or hiding details about yourself.
- Class is a multifaceted socioeconomic construct connected to income, housing, education, medical care, and access to opportunities. How do you describe your socioeconomic class or economic background?
  - Classism is a form of prejudice and discrimination that targets individuals or groups based on economic status. If you have experienced (or witnessed) classism in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like code-switching, changing your appearance or behavior, or hiding details about your life or circumstances.
- Race and ethnicity are complex social constructs connected to culture, history, spoken language(s), traditions, and ancestry. How do you describe your race and/or ethnicity?
  - Racism and ethnicity-based discrimination are forms of prejudice and discrimination that target individuals or groups based on race or ethnicity. If you have experienced (or witnessed) racism or ethnicity-based discrimination in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like code-switching, changing your appearance or behavior, using a "nickname" to blend in, or hiding details about your life or circumstances.
- Religion is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses a wide range of beliefs, practices, and cultural expressions. It typically involves a system of beliefs and values related to the sacred or the divine, as well as the associated rituals, moral codes, and community structures. If you are religious, how do you describe your religion?
  - Religious discrimination is a form of prejudice and discrimination that target individuals or groups based on religion. If you have experienced (or witnessed) this in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like hiding details about your beliefs or practices.
- Disability is a broad term that includes but is not limited to physical, sensory, cognitive, and neurological disabilities; chronic diseases and autoimmune disorders, mental health conditions, and more. If you are disabled, how do you describe your disability?
  - Ableism is a form of prejudice and discrimination that targets individuals who are disabled. If you have experienced (or witnessed) ableism in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like withdrawing, hiding your equipment or medicine, or not expressing your needs.

- Neurodivergence is a broad term that includes but is not limited to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourette Syndrome, Sensory Processing Disorders, Social Anxiety, mental health conditions, and more. If you are neurodivergent, how do you describe your neurodivergence?
  - Neurodivergent discrimination is a form of prejudice and discrimination that targets individuals who are neurodivergent. If you have experienced (or witnessed) neurodivergent discrimination in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things withdrawing, hiding your equipment or medicine, not expressing your needs, masking, or scripting.
- Gender is a complex social construct connected to physical, psychological, behavioral, and cultural characteristics and expectations. How do you currently describe your gender?
  - Gender discrimination is a form of prejudice and discrimination that targets individuals based on the perception of gender. Gender discrimination takes many forms affecting a wide range of gender identities. Within gender discrimination resides many subcategories like sexism, misogyny, misgendering, gender stereotyping, and bullying. If you have experienced (or witnessed) gender discrimination in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like withdrawing, or hiding details about your life or circumstances.
- The umbrella acronym "LGBTQIA+" includes but is not limited to a diverse spectrum of identities related to sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. The LGBTQIA+ letters represent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, and asexual individuals and groups. The + sign indicates this acronym is flexible and open to emerging identities beyond dominant cultures. If you connect with LGBTQIA+ orientations, identities, and/or expressions, how do you currently describe yourself?
  - LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups experience prejudice and discrimination in many forms. Examples of LGBTQIA+ prejudice and discrimination include things like homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and queer/genderqueer discrimination, amongst others. If you have experienced (or witnessed) LGBTQIA+ prejudice or discrimination in social settings at school or work, what coping mechanisms have been helpful for you? Examples of personal coping mechanisms may involve things like being closeted or hiding details about your life circumstances.
- Which pronouns do you currently use? Select all that apply. Options are stacked alphabetically. If your pronouns are not listed use the 'self-describe' option. (ae/aer/aers, he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, undecided or in transition, self-describe)
  - What is your experience with sharing your pronouns, online and in-person?
  - How does the practice of sharing pronouns in social settings (both online and in-person) make you feel?
- Identity can involve affinity, or a sense of belonging or connection to place, cultures, communities, ideologies, values, interests, lifestyles, and/or activities (like art, food,

music, politics, sports, etc). Considering your own identity, where do you find belonging or connection?

- This is the last question. Identity is a complex interplay of empowerment and vulnerability. What would you like to add to a conversation about identity? Your input, experiences, and perspectives are deeply appreciated.

## Appendix B: Theme 1 Insights, Categories, and Codes

This document provides the codes, categories, and insights informing Theme 1.

### Theme 1: Identity-Based Experiences in Social Contexts

This theme explores the contexts in which individuals encounter bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate based on their identities. It explores how these experiences manifest in social scenarios, including workplaces, educational settings, public spaces, and personal relationships. The theme highlights the systemic, interpersonal, and intersectional challenges individuals face based on their identity.

### Theme 1: Underlying Identity Dimension Insights

#### Age Identity Insights

Participants experienced age-based identity struggles across various life contexts, including at home, in school, at work, in medical settings, and in public spaces. Common experiences included discrimination against older individuals perceived as less capable or productive, stereotypes of younger individuals as inexperienced or immature, and systemic age bias, particularly in workplaces and schools.

Age related assumptions are pervasive. Comments like “*You look good for your age*” or “*You don’t look 65*” reveal ingrained societal expectations about appearance and age. These assumptions are further highlighted by narratives like the following, which underscore the complexity of navigating such biases: “*I work as a salesperson with mostly male customers. When I work with men, I make my voice higher pitched, and I tend to widen my eyes a bit. It is pretty subtle, but I have noticed that men (especially older men) are much more receptive to me when I do these things. They buy more, which is good for the store. I am only 20, and I am sometimes told I look around 14-16. I found that male customers wouldn’t take me as seriously when I acted more business-like, and my best guess as to why is because of how young I look. Now, I play into their perception of me as a young, innocent girl (even though 20 isn’t old by any means), and my sales have gone very well. I giggle a lot. I’ll wear little skirts and, on occasion, pigtails. If they flirt, I’ll flirt back. It’s icky, but I have a youthful appearance that some old men*”

*like, and I need to use it to my advantage when I can.*" This example illustrates how individuals may adapt their behavior to navigate (or exploit) age bias. It recognizes the tension between societal expectations and personal agency, as well as the emotional and professional challenges that arise from being perceived through the lens of age-related assumptions.

In addition to age-based bias, prejudice, or discrimination, participants experience a complex interplay between age and other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. This complexity is evident in statements like, *"My mom is 52, and went back to school to get her Bachelor's in 2020; watching the way that students would treat her like a surrogate mom-figure and unload their emotional turmoil onto her was exhausting. It was more exhausting watching how professors wouldn't always treat her like a student because she was closer in age to them. This was also compounded upon because she's Black."* and, *"I exercise impression management on public transportation: I am young and disabled, so I carry a cane on the CTA to visually justify sitting in a handicapped spot since many conflate youth with good health."* Sometimes, these intersectional dynamics manifest as social in presence or erasure. For instance, one participant shared, *"I've witnessed ageism in some social situations where older girls are treated like they're invisible."*

## Class Identity Insights

Participants experienced class identity-based struggles across various life contexts, including educational settings, workplaces, social interactions, and within families. Common experiences included being underestimated or judged based on financial circumstances, facing stereotypes tied to socioeconomic status, and experiencing social exclusion or shame.

Class disparities are evident. Participants described navigating disparities in wealth and resources, which often resulted in feelings of being "othered" or singled out due to their class status. These disparities frequently led to a complex range of emotions, including shame, resentment, defensiveness, and loneliness. One participant shared, *"I had a peer in my high school who stated I was lucky to have my fees waived when applying to colleges (because I was on free/reduced lunch). I laughed it off and asked her: 'Why do you think I have that?'"* Other participants recounted being targeted or judged based on visible markers of financial struggle. For instance, one participant noted, *"some kids really liked my shoes (they were off brand Converse from JCPenney) and they thought they were real converse. I never corrected*

*them." Another said, "My clothes were always thrifted, hand-me-downs, or discounted so I used to tell people my mom got them at the mall to excuse why I didn't know what store they're from."*

Class disparities are pervasive. Some participants shared deeper experiences of exclusion and the lengths they went to avoid judgment. One remarked, *"I had to miss out on social activities because I had to work or I didn't have the money to participate. There were several years where all of my friends went on an expensive vacation for spring break and could not understand why I couldn't attend and kept insisting I just have my parents pay for it. I actively tried to hide details about my family life while I was in school because of this. I wouldn't invite people to visit me over the summers because I thought they would make fun of my family's house."* Others described adopting defensive or protective behaviors to manage their class identity. For example, one participant stated, *"I was defensive about many things and almost aggressively showy about being lower middle class. I would scoff at the luxuries my classmates and friends took for granted."* Some participants even reported feeling pressured to engage in criminal activity to maintain appearances. One participant said, *"In my youth I used to steal a lot to keep up appearances to have the things I couldn't afford. I stole clothes, cds, makeup and sometimes food."* In stark contrast, a wealthy participant stated, *"I don't tell people that I come from money because I don't want to be treated differently."*

Participants also reported exclusion due to assumptions about financial stability, even in professional settings. One shared, *"My boss kept recommending extremely expensive places, especially for a work event, so a lot of people declined to go. She kept making comments afterwards about how it's not too expensive and other comments that were insensitive."*

Participants further reflected on the struggles of others, including family members dealing with shame over financial instability or classmates trying to fit in through conspicuous consumption. One participant noted, *"I saw classmates being discriminated against, mostly during lunch or gym. It was disheartening to see how economic differences created unnecessary hatred between students."*

In addition to class-based bias, prejudice, or discrimination, participants experience a complex interplay between class and other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. These dynamics were tied to race, gender, body image, and language proficiency. One participant, reflecting on their experience as a first-generation college student, said, *"Growing up, I was also responsible for translating for my immigrant parents, who couldn't afford a translator."* A woman of color shared how they consciously counter assumptions: *"Now I make*

*sure to dress in brands that people around here dress in, when before I used to not. I also definitely will hide the fact that I am from a single parent household and I also don't mention class or race that much, but I will mention things that 'signify' my class, including that I am going to study law or that I shop organic at Whole Foods."*

Another participant highlighted how multiple aspects of their identity shaped their experiences: *"I am a Fat, Queer, Black, Non Binary online grad student. I code switch all the time. I refrain from wearing durags in class via Zoom. I am constantly worried about my appearance, especially when interacting with Caucasian and Asian classmates and/or professors, as I can only 'mute' my appearance by so much, in order to remain authentic. If my professor is white, I always try to sound 'smart' and participate a lot in class, so I can negotiate stereotypes. Otherwise, people have assumed the worst about me, including my economic status. Its conflicting, because this is very toxic, mental health wise, but in most cases shockingly necessary, its how I have survived."*

## Disability Identity Insights

Participants experienced disability identity-based struggles across various life contexts, including educational settings, workplaces, social interactions, and public spaces. Common experiences included internalized medical trauma, stigma related to disabilities, facing ableism in personal and professional environments, and the pressure to conceal disabilities to avoid judgment or discrimination.

Disability is difficult. Participants described navigating societal expectations that often invalidate and humiliate disabled individuals. For example, one participant shared, *"Sometimes doctors tell me that things are in my head, or they don't take me seriously because I'm young and I look healthy."* Another reflected, *"Because my disabilities are unseen, they are some of the hardest to get recognized. The biggest challenge I've faced is expressing my needs,"* and *"Sometimes with work, school, or even in my personal life, I've coped by making up more 'plausible' excuses for missing something."*

Ableism is pervasive. Some participants recounted being targeted or ridiculed for visible disabilities. One participant said, *"When I first showed up with a mobility aid (walking stick), I immediately was made fun of... these days, even when I do need my mobility aid, I do tend not to use it so I don't get stared at. Instead, I try to go out less, sit, and take breaks more."* Another shared, *"At my last job, I disclosed my condition to my boss to ask for accommodations to be able to go to my therapy appointments and he told all my coworkers without asking me first. He*

*also would make comments about my disability in front of my coworkers regularly. I eventually left, because he began berating daily." Another participant stated, "I've been called stupid for my bad memory."*

Participants also highlighted the emotional and psychological toll of living with a disability. One participant reflected, *"My hearing aids sit behind my ears and are only visible from the back of my head. Most people do not know I have a disability because I keep my hair down everyday and therefore the hearing aids are hidden. When I do put my hair up when I'm at the gym or playing volleyball with friends, I typically take my hearing aids out because I don't want to have to explain to people what they are."* Another shared, *"I carry a cane while traveling to avoid awkward confrontations regarding whether I am disabled enough to need preferential seating on public transportation. I also preemptively lower my teacher's expectations of my academic ability so I can rely on a buffer when my symptoms are acting up."*

Some participants expressed feelings of shame or stigma related to their disabilities. For instance, one participant admitted, *"I really try not to express my needs and act as if I am normal when I am struggling because I don't want to change people's perception of me."* Another shared, *"I have tried to hide my medication and the fact that I have been hospitalized."*

In addition to disability-based bias and discrimination, participants described a complex interplay between disability and other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. For example, one participant explained, *"With my condition, it's hard to control body odors, and this is not correlated to poor hygiene... So my coping mechanisms include only seeing Black Women dermatologists for my condition, staying in during flares, getting therapy and never mentioning it to people, ever."*

Participants also reported witnessing intersectional discrimination against others based on disability and other identities. For instance, one participant described, *"The worst I've seen was at a previous job where employees were required to stand for the full duration of their shift. They hired an older man who had arthritis and he brought in a doctor's note to inform them that he had a disability. The store director infamously told him that if he couldn't stand for the duration of his work shifts, they no longer had a job for him."* Another shared, *"My friend is disabled, and she gets called the r-slur online when we play video games because she doesn't meet a 'high standard.'"*

## Gender Identity Insights

Participants experienced gender identity-based struggles across various life contexts, including workplaces, educational institutions, social settings, family dynamics, and public spaces. These struggles stemmed from deeply embedded gender norms, expectations, and biases, creating challenges for individuals navigating their identities. Common experiences included patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes that oppressed women, often leading to frustration and trauma; perceptions of misandry that left men feeling alienated and defensive; and anti-LGBTQIA+ opinions that targeted nonbinary, queer, and transgender individuals.

Women deal with oppression. For many women, gender-based discrimination originated in patriarchy and was perpetuated through misogyny. One participant working in a male-dominated field shared, *"As a woman in a masculine-dominated industry and major, it's been a bit of an uphill battle trying to be seen as equal to my male peers. I have been harassed by men in my class who have tried to unsuccessfully flirt with me when I made it clear I was not interested and they have attempted to sabotage my classwork as a result."* Similarly, another noted, *"I have experienced sexism in my undergrad since I was a female in a male dominated degree (hint: engineering). I guess my coping mechanism would just be trying extra hard not to make mistakes because then I would just be labelled as a typical woman who doesn't know what she's doing."* Another participant reflected on the burden of overcompensating: *"I tend to overextend myself to show competency. I often work late hours and accept every task because I feel a need to 'prove' my skills are valuable."*

Women also described a double bind in which assertiveness was perceived as confrontational while emotional expression was dismissed. One participant explained, *"I noticed that at meetings I sometimes get ignored or cut off when I'm expressing ideas. It's frustrating, but I ignore it. I don't want to be seen as confrontational."* Another added, *"I put on a tougher exterior sometimes because I would not want to be dismissed from serious conversations for being too emotional."* Implicit bias was another challenge. One participant shared, *"It can be hard to address implicit bias directly—it feels like gaslighting when the other person denies their intention."*

Sexism is pervasive. Gendered expectations and sexism also persisted in family and social settings. A participant stated, *"In my family I am not treated equally to my brother. I was not given the freedom of expression in my home but my brother is given because he is male. I was*

*not allowed to wear clothes of my choice. I have not been paid equally to my male colleagues in my workplace." In social settings over-sexualization and objectification were recurring patterns. One participant shared, "I have been in many situations where I or a friend has been over-sexualized or objectified by random men and male friends. I don't think I can cope with it, it is just like what is expected to happen and it is what it is." Another explained, "misogyny is ingrained in the system." Women also described learning defense mechanisms to navigate these challenges. "As a woman I feel like sexism is a common experience in many aspects of life and you learn from a young age to build defense mechanisms around sexist and predatory behavior. It's second nature," one participant remarked.*

Men have feelings. Some men reported experiencing misandry or hostility based on their gender. One participant noted, *"There's a lot of misandry right now, especially when actions are labeled with terms like 'toxic masculinity.'" Another added, "I feel excluded because I'm a hetero white male,"* expressing feelings of alienation and defensiveness. Others acknowledged their privilege. One stated, *"I haven't experienced gender discrimination. I'm a cis male, the most dominant group culturally around the world." Another noted, "As a male in a patriarchal society, I haven't witnessed gender discrimination."*

Erasure is a problem. LGBTQIA+ participants reported struggles with anti-LGBTQIA+ phobias and erasure. One participant shared, *"I am frequently misgendered as I am not feminine, and I sometimes have to force myself to be more fem than I am to not be mistreated by transphobics, but also have to worry about misogynists who hate fem women." Another described challenges with asserting their pronouns: "I genuinely cannot remember a time where I have been gendered correctly on campus. teachers will ask for pronouns and not use them. if i correct people im a bitch" Another participant reflected, "I use all pronouns but prefer they/them because it feels validating. Still, I avoid correcting people or sharing my pronouns because it feels like too much effort." The pain of erasure was particularly poignant in family contexts. One participant stated, "I hide my gender from most people, especially family and strangers because I fear their reaction." Participants also highlighted systemic barriers. "People use gender terms like gay for example as cuss words to scold others. Gender fluid people doesn't have bathrooms or changing rooms in many social places"*

In addition to gender-based bias, prejudice, or discrimination, participants experience a complex interplay between gender and other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. A Black woman explained, *"the sexism I've experienced as a woman has been a lot*

*more violent and physical in nature than the racist experiences I've had"* Another participant shared the difficulty of parsing prejudice: *"They may be in fact sexist, but they may also be racist, or homophobic, or fatphobic or a lovely cocktail of sorts."* An Asian woman working in tech added, *"As an Asian female, I have to shake off stereotypes while working in a male-dominated industry."*

Hate can be internalized. Societal values and priorities often led participants to repress attributes associated with femininity. One woman shared, *"I work in construction, and therefore am often the only female-identifying person in the room. When I first started in the industry I was sensitive to dress in a way that concealed my body and 'feminine' traits. I refrained from wearing makeup, which I wear every day otherwise."* Another explained, *"I am someone who is very cheerful and energetic, but that can be seen as foolish, so I try to seem more serious, calm and reserved in most settings but especially professional settings."* Others rejected traditionally feminine traits to navigate male-dominated fields. Avoiding the color pink came up several times. Another participant added, *"I change my feminine approach to a more masculine approach when I am in a room full of boys."*

## LGBTQIA+ Identity Insights

Participants experienced LGBTQIA+ identity-based struggles across various life contexts, including educational settings, workplaces, social interactions, family dynamics, and public spaces. Common experiences include enduring discrimination, erasure, and stigma related to sexual orientation or gender identity, witnessing homophobia and transphobia, and the pressure to conceal or mask identities to avoid judgment, discomfort, or violence. These challenges often left participants feeling excluded, unsafe, or invalidated, requiring constant emotional labor to navigate complex social dynamics.

Being LGBTQIA+ is difficult and unsafe. Participants shared accounts of direct discrimination or hostile environments, highlighting the tension between identity and external pressures to conform or conceal. One participant reflected, *"I have witnessed discrimination against this community. Many people say that this is a mental disorder which can be treated with medicine which I believe is not correct."* For others, concealing their identity felt necessary for safety. One participant explained, *"Try to be 'straight-acting' - I am conscious about my speech and mannerism when I feel like my sexual orientation may put me in a dangerous or uncomfortable situation. sometimes they assume that I have a girlfriend, and I just go with it without correcting."*

Another described the influence of family and cultural norms: *"My parents, I know what they think, and even the community I was raised in, they think queerness is immoral."* Similarly, one participant admitted, *"I hide that I'm gay. I do. Only my friends and mom know. I don't want anyone to know."* In addition, a participant explained, *"I avoid topics of sexuality. By definition, I am gay since I'm in a male to male relationship, but I do not identify myself as gay when people ask me (which is rarely)."*

Nonbinary is complex. Nonbinary participants shared experiences of being misgendered and struggling with societal expectations. One participant explained, *"I think a lot of people perceive me as a woman because of the way I present myself, and sometimes to feel safe, I lean into that."* Another participant reflected, *"I just don't talk about it. I already have so many other identities that people might label me as a 'blue haired pronoun social justice warrior' or something."*

The intersection of LGBTQIA+ identities with other LGBTQIA+ identities introduced nested/additional layers of complexity. For some, biphobia and erasure within and beyond LGBTQIA+ spaces created additional challenges. A participant described being told that, *"people are bisexual because they are confused."* Another reflected on the impact of these attitudes: *"I do not publicly identify as bisexual because I do not want to deal with any bad reactions from my friends, family, or colleagues."* Another declared, "I would say that biphobia is very real, and people in my life do not seem to take bisexual identities very seriously, which does bother me." A participant who identified as bisexual in a heteronormal relationship explained, *"I refrain from mentioning my boyfriend in spaces where I'm trying to explore my bisexual identity because I feel like when I've mentioned it, I've been treated as 'lesser' for being in a heteronormal relationship."*

It is notable that some participants expressed resentment and animosity toward LGBTQIA+ contexts. One stated, *"I find it appalling that I am being renamed as cisgendered. I find it appalling that these individuals are told that the most important thing about them is who they like to have sex with. It is not."* Another remarked, *"I am not homophobic. I am wokephobic. And I reject being included in all woke ideas."*

## Neurodivergence Identity Insights

Participants experienced neurodiversity-related struggles across various life contexts, including workplaces, educational settings, social situations, and family dynamics. These struggles were

shaped by societal ableism, stigma, microaggressions, and a lack of accommodations, often forcing individuals to mask or conceal their neurodivergent traits to navigate social and professional environments. These experiences ranged from overt discrimination to subtle but persistent pressures to conform to neurotypical standards.

Normal is changing. The normalization of conditions like ADHD may trivialize their impact, as reflected in the comment, *“ADHD is so common people joke about it all the time.”* While greater awareness is beneficial, it can diminish the seriousness of living with ADHD and its associated challenges. One participant admitted, *“I’ve internalized the concept that needing medicine to be ‘normal’ is bad.”* Another stated, *“I don’t medicate because then I would be really discriminated against, even though it is impossible to get Adderall because you’re discriminated against due to the way medicine is handled in the U.S., and the pharmacist gives you ‘the look’ (iykyk).”*

Masking is common. Compounding this, neurodivergent individuals feel pressured to perform neurotypical to avoid judgment or rejection. One participant shared, *“It takes a lot of energy to seem like you are neurotypical, and it can be draining and depressing.”* Another added, *“I mask in class all the time and am constantly fidgeting with fidget toys during lectures as I find it damn near impossible to stay seated for three hours.”*

Participants frequently concealed their needs or withdrew to avoid stigma. Internally, neurodivergent individuals struggled with feelings of shame and a desire to appear “normal.” One participant stated, *“I hide it, masking 24/7.”* Another shared, *“I withdraw when I sense people figuring out that I’m kind of ‘off.’”* A different participant explained, *“I mask all the time and script often, and I don’t really express my needs, especially my mental health needs.”* Another remarked, *“I do not have accommodations but I want to get them. I try to pretend I don’t need accommodations.”* One participant shared, *“I’ve never worn short sleeves at work because my forearm is covered in scars. It’s a piece of my body that says something very specific about my mental health history, and I don’t think I ever will.”*

Workplace dynamics often illustrated systemic bias against neurodivergent individuals. For instance, one participant described witnessing a neurodivergent manager being ostracized for attempting to implement useful structures. Another shared how users misunderstood or dismissed cognitive challenges: *“users seem to believe that you must be ‘retarded’ or you are just lying and making excuses about your memory issues.”* A participant added, *“I often script*

*social situations before they occur, and this makes me inflexible to change in my schedule at times.”*

Participants also observed how neurodivergent bias impacted others. One shared, *“There is a student in our program who appears to be neurodivergent and has been lightly bullied at times, but he also is accepted by the cohort. The issues arise when he brings up politics or certain ethnic topics in situations where it is entirely inappropriate.”* Another remarked, *“I have witnessed prejudice/discrimination against people on the autism spectrum.”*

In addition to neurodivergent-based bias, prejudice, or discrimination, participants experienced a complex interplay between neurodiversity and other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. As one participant noted, *“Women are often diagnosed much later in life than men, and I haven’t seen much in terms of benefits from that outside of medication.”* Family dynamics also illustrated these complexities. One parent expressed, *“I felt ashamed though I love and support my son. I withdrew to some extent or felt shame when I knew I needed to bring him places for him. Some parents were very accepting. Some were not.”* Another shared observations of a family member with both ADHD and OCD attempting to *“act normal”* due to bullying.

## Race/Ethnicity Identity Insights

Participants experienced race and ethnicity-related struggles across various life contexts, including workplaces, educational settings, social situations, and public spaces. These struggles were shaped by systemic racism, microaggressions, and intersectional biases, often forcing individuals to navigate complex dynamics to protect themselves or fit in.

Dominant culture dominates. Participants described the pressures to conform to dominant cultural standards or to hide aspects of their identity. One participant stated, *“People adopt ‘Americanized’ names very frequently.”* Another participant shared, *“I was very much ashamed to eat my native food in an open work setting. I could sense that the others around me did not like the smell or the way the food looked. I had to start eating either early or delay my lunch time to avoid being in the group.”* Food also became a source of anxiety for another participant: *“I use deodorant after cooking food or having dinner and room freshener after a meal.”*

Pressures are pervasive. The pressure to assimilate often started at home. As one participant reflected, *“My parents purposefully did not teach my sister and me Tagalog and gave us*

American names. In situations where I am one of the only people who is not white, I tend to stay quiet as I am afraid to be stared at and seen as ‘different.’” For some, these pressures led to internalized racism. One participant shared, *“When I was younger, I didn’t really understand why people discriminated against me, so I would try to ‘act white’ to fit in.”* Another reflected, *“I lived in an affluent white area, and being one of the few Asians, I made a lot of racist self-deprecating jokes to try to fit in. I actively ignored my ‘Asian-ness’ and felt ashamed until I went to college.”*

Aggression/microaggression is pervasive. Participants also recounted experiences of overt racism and microaggressions. One participant stated, *“I experienced racism in the workplace when people would mistake me for another Asian co-worker.”* Another shared, *“I was bullied for my race in school and called ‘Ling Ling.’”* Racial appearance also shaped encounters in public spaces. One participant described their experience: *“This is not my first time getting middle fingers because of how I look. I felt cold-hearted afterward, so I closed myself more to the outside world for a long period after that to cope. I tried my best not to make any eye contact. I pretend to be aloof and hard to approach.”*

Workplace dynamics further illustrated systemic problems. One participant described the difficulty of addressing racism directly: *“I have had to tell a boss directly that I was not comfortable with her racist language. That was a difficult thing to do as a subordinate.”* Another participant highlighted a different challenge, sharing, *“Others felt like they could say racist stuff to me because I present and am racially white.”*

In addition to race/identity-based bias, prejudice, or discrimination, participants experienced a complex interplay between race, ethnicity, and other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. One participant shared, *“I’m white passing, and it allowed me the ability to not disclose my history and background as a DACA student and Latina.”* Another reflected on linguistic and cultural assumptions: *“I’m white presenting, so I have the privilege of racial ambiguity like other white people. I think that’s why I got away with stealing so much as a kid.”* For those navigating multiple identities, the challenges were even more pronounced. An Asian participant adopted by a white family shared, *“I have to hide that I’m adopted when I’m around other Asian peers so they see me as ‘one of them.’”* Another participant reflected on the interplay between race and gender: *“As a Black woman, I constantly have to manage people’s perceptions. If I’m assertive, I’m seen as ‘angry,’ but if I’m quiet, I’m ignored.”* A Hispanic Muslim participant noted, *“People see my hijab and assume I must be Arab, which completely erases my Latina identity.”* Another shared their experience of dual cultural navigation: *“I’m constantly*

*shifting between two cultures—at home, I’m expected to adhere to my family’s traditions, but at school, I’m judged for being different.”* Similarly, another participant said, *“My mom is first generation, my dad is fourth, so English is my first language, and I don’t have an accent. I was not discriminated against growing up in the larger sense, but I was bullied for not really being Mexican in elementary.”*

Fear is real. Fear-based challenges were also evident in the responses. One participant explained, *“I avoid neighborhoods that are considered unsafe—in my experience, Asians are typically seen as weak and targeted more frequently, so I just need to be more vigilant about where I go.”* Another shared their fears as a Jewish student: *“It is scary and haunts me every single day that I am in this country and on this campus, knowing people hate me purely for my religion and ethnicity.”* This was echoed by another Jewish participant, who said, *“I stopped talking about being Jewish after the war started between Israel and Palestine.”*

Privilege is real. Some participants recognized their privileged context. As one stated, *“If I were to hide from the privilege I have as a white person, I would be doing my peers a disservice. I do my best to learn every day how to unpack my privilege and use it for good, but being discriminated against for my race is not something I need to deal with because of that privilege.”* Another participant shared, *“I use my white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator.”* Insights from another white participant noted, *“As a white person, I’ve had racist remarks made to me because people assume I’m racist too.”*

## Religious Identity Insights

Participants experienced religious identity struggles across various life contexts, including at school, in workplaces, in social settings, and in public spaces. These struggles were shaped by discrimination, prejudice, and systemic bias, often forcing individuals to hide, defend, or reconcile beliefs under pressure.

Hiding was a recurring pattern, especially for participants whose beliefs required visible practices or symbols. *“Sometimes I feel like I can’t pray in public,”* one participant shared. Another echoed this sentiment: *“Yeah, I try not to pray in open public spaces because that requires I wear a hijab, and I feel like that may make others ask me weird targeted questions.”* Concerns about public perception and safety led some to conceal their religious identity altogether. *“I took off my Star of David necklace,”* one participant explained, while another

reflected, *“Fear of others assuming I am a Zionist because I am Jewish, even though I am not, means I do not share my religion or practice my religion or attend religious campus events.”*

The public politicization of religion further complicated participants’ experiences. One participant recalled, *“I remember my 8th-grade classmates thought my dad was a terrorist, and I was so deeply embarrassed of my family in that way.”* Another participant observed, *“Politicians use religion to gain vote bank. They try to polarize people for their own benefits.”* This manipulation of religious identity for political gain contributed to heightened tensions and the erosion of safe spaces for open faith practice. A participant who wore a hijab reflected, *“I wear a hijab but I am afraid of practicing fully at school [...] especially after October 7th, when the vice president refused to acknowledge the current genocide, putting all those of us who are Muslim in a vulnerable spot.”* One stated bluntly, *“I pity those who are religious. In this day and age, it is preposterous that people still believe in 2,000-year-old fairy tales.”* These attitudes underscored the complexity of religious identity in environments where faith is both a personal and public matter.

Participants also shared experiences of discrimination, both within and outside their religious communities. One Jewish participant described the duality of their struggles: *“I have experienced religious discrimination from both sides—discrimination because I am Jewish, but also discrimination because I’m not Jewish enough.”* Others faced ongoing societal pressures and systemic erasure. *“I find that most institutions are not open to non-Abrahamic religions, especially pagan practices,”* one participant noted, highlighting how certain faiths are marginalized even within diverse settings.

In addition to race-based bias, prejudice, or discrimination, participants experienced a complex interplay between or within religions, along with other aspects of identity, creating layered, intersectional challenges. A Christian participant shared, *“As a Christian, I experience other Christians that are homophobic, fat-phobic, transphobic, racist, and sexist.”* Another Christian participant explained, *“I am often a mediator for other Christians who don’t understand another’s perspective on life.”*

## Theme 1: Underlying Categories

## Experiences (or Observes) Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate

Data (codes) informing this category recognizes the contexts in which bias, prejudice, discrimination, and/or hate occurs.

## Experiences (or Observes) Identity + Intersectionality

Data (codes) informing this category recognizes the layered complexities of intersectionality, where multiple facets of a person's identity—e.g. age, class, disability, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodiversity, race/ethnicity, religion—intersect to shape or compound experiences of bias, prejudice, discrimination, or hate.

## Theme 1: Underlying Codes

### Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Age Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** deals with age discrimination at work, deals with age discrimination on public transportation, deals with intersectionality (age and gender/sex), deals with intersectionality (age and race), deals with sexual harassment from older men, experiences age discrimination, experiences age discrimination at work, experiences/observes age discrimination at home, experiences/observes age discrimination at school, experiences/observes age discrimination at work, experiences/observes age discrimination in medical contexts, experiences/observes age discrimination in the queer community, experiences/observes ageism, observes age discrimination, observes age discrimination (against women), observes age discrimination against elderly, observes age discrimination against old people, observes age discrimination against older people, observes age discrimination against younger people, observes age discrimination and acts, observes age discrimination at work, observes age discrimination or erasure (girls made invisible), observes grand's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes mom's struggles with age discrimination at school, observes parent's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes stereotypes about elderly being less productive

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Age Identity + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** deals with age discrimination on public transportation, deals with intersectionality (age and gender/sex), deals with intersectionality (age and race), deals with sexual harassment from older men, downplays life experience, experiences/observes age discrimination in medical contexts, experiences/observes age discrimination in the queer community, hides age or birthday, hides face on Zoom calls, hides gender, hides political views, hides sexuality, hides whole self, observes age discrimination or erasure (girls made invisible), observes grand's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes mom's struggles with age discrimination at school, observes parent's struggles with age discrimination at work, resents and rejects assumptions (that every woman has children), wears little skirts and pigtails to appeal to older men, works on receding hairline

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Class Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** deals with being patted down for drugs and feeling exploited without just cause, deals with being taken advantage of, deals with ignorance and judgment about government assistance, deals with intersectionality (body and gender and race), deals with intersectionality (class and race), deals with intersectionality (class and race/ethnicity), deals with intersectionality (multiculturalism), deals with language proficiency, deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with not being invited, deals with parents having no papers, deals with peer resentment over free lunch and waived fees, experiences class discrepancy, experiences/observes class discrimination at a car wash, experiences/observes class discrimination at school, experiences/observes class discrimination at work, experiences/observes class discrimination in social settings, experiences/observes class discrimination online, observes "hand-making versions of popular shirts," observes assumptions of wealth/comfort, observes bullying, observes class discrimination, observes coping mechanisms, observes family shame, observes intersectionality (class and gender), observes people buying brands to fit in, operates in survival mode, shuts down when snubbed, stays silent, witnesses the struggles of others

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Class Identity/Experience + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** acts more white, deals with being patted down for drugs and feeling exploited without just cause, deals with ignorance and judgment about government assistance, deals with intersectionality (body and gender and race), deals with intersectionality (class and race), deals with intersectionality (class and race/ethnicity), deals with intersectionality (multiculturalism), deals with language proficiency, deals with parents having no papers, experiences class discrepancy, experiences/observes class discrimination at a car wash, hides whole self, identifies as fat queer Black who must code switch all the time, navigates college as first-gen, navigates culture shock, navigates food insecurity, no class discrimination just racism, observes family shame, observes intersectionality (class and gender), translates for immigrant family, witnesses the struggles of others, works with impoverished youth

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Disability Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** deals with "lazy" stigma, deals with "unfit" stigma, deals with (suicidal) ideation, deals with debilitating disorder and flares, deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with medical trauma, experienced disability discrimination and settled out of court, experiences dismissive doctors, experiences erasure, experiences invalidation, experiences invisible/hidden disability intolerance or judgment, experiences pressure of judgments and assumptions, experiences stigma, experiences/observes ableism, observes "less trust for coworkers who have disabilities," observes disability discrimination at work, observes disability resilience, observes disability stress, observes disabled coworkers mask their feelings and work harder, observes disabled people joke and make light of their situation to get along, observes disabled people struggling, observes family member's traumatic experience, observes illegal disability discrimination, observes invalidation of disability grief, observes lack of accommodations because of poor infrastructure, observes people staring or doing double-takes at friend's walking cane, observes rampant ableism, observes scoffing at scooter or wheelchair, observes sibling ask for help, observes sibling withdraw or isolate, observes the r slur, observes unsolicited "think positive" advice

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Disability Identity/Experience + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** experiences dismissive doctors, feels medical trauma, hides whole self, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), observes "less trust for coworkers who have disabilities," sees only Black women doctors now, studies marginalized communities, wears hair down to cover hearing aids, works with disabled children validates their feelings, works to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies

*Note that gender categories are more focused and specific to gendered-type experiences*

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Gender Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate for Women: Experiences Patriarchy and/or Misogyny*

**Underlying Codes:** "if i correct people im a bitch," "the sexism I've experienced as a woman has been a lot more violent and physical in nature than the racist experiences I've had," "told me repeatedly that I can't argue well because I get too emotional," becomes more submissive and lets self be walked all over, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, deals with "bad intentions in their eyes," deals with "model minority" stereotype, deals with being a girl pushed into STEM field and its "masculinity," deals with being called "crazy and stupid" by a professor, deals with being paid less than male colleagues at work, deals with being underestimated, deals with bullying, deals with discomfort of attention, deals with disrespect from other women for choosing high-maintenance aesthetics, deals with erasure, deals with exclusion, deals with family favoring and supporting brother at home, deals with gaslighting, deals with gender discrimination from teacher, deals with gender violence, deals with impositions and disrespect, deals with inappropriate or sexist comments, deals with intersectionality (gender and race/ethnicity), deals with jokes about female weakness and emotional vulnerability, deals with mansplaining, deals with many stereotypes, deals with misgendering, deals with misogynoir, deals with mistreatment, deals with nonbinary erasure, deals with not being taken seriously, deals with not fitting, deals with objectification, deals with pervasive daily gender discrimination, deals with queerphobia, deals with racism or homophobia or fatphobia or a lovely cocktail of sorts, deals with sexism and traditional gender expectations around real estate and children, deals with sexism from family, deals with sexist STEM culture or other male-dominated field, deals with sexual harassment, deals with social isolation, deals with society run by men made

for men, deals with splaining, deals with staring, deals with transphobia, deals with transphobia or transmisogyny, deals with unwanted advances, deals with women being told not good enough, deepens voice, develops a sense of misandry, develops defense mechanisms that become second nature, experiences abuse or harassment, experiences double bind, experiences nonbinary exclusion, experiences objectification, experiences/observes gender discrimination, experiences/observes gender discrimination (misogyny), files a Title IX, gets ignored or cut off when expressing ideas in meetings, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, has delayed response or understanding of "how awful someone has just been," knows that "individuals who are distasteful towards me because of my gender know not to shove their hate in my face," knows there are prejudices and assumptions about women who look like me, objectified and over-sexualized, observes "girl child being told she is pretty and boy child that he is strong," observes creepy male residents, observes disrespect for unique gender identities, observes everyday sexism at work, observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination in family, observes LGBTQIA+ intolerance, observes males getting more flexibility, observes men displaying gender prejudice against women, observes men talking over and interrupting women, observes sexism and misogyny, observes that people (even women) hate when women are in charge, observes transphobia misgendering and bullying online, performs gender as needed, plays into gender script to get by, plays into stereotypes, prays to be left alone, raises voice at home asking for rights but not in workplace, refrains from discussing things like beauty or pop culture "and other topics that I feel could make me seen as less than," regrets being steered away from computer science "because no one in the room looked like me," tries extra hard to not be dismissed from serious conversations for being too emotional, understands people have trouble with gender outside the social script, understands that sexism is normal, wishes for the opportunity to be self and develop more "feminine" traits, woman in tech, works harder or overcompensates, works in construction and often the only female in the room, works in male industry

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Gender Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate for Men: Experiences Misandry*

**Underlying Codes:** believes "if I'm hated for being male it's usually by someone who wishes they could be male like me," believes "professors used to discriminate between men and women resulting in demotivation to the male section of the class," believes "some places feel

unjustifiably hostile towards men," believes "there is a lot of misandry right now," feels excluded "because I am a hetero white male," feels othered as a white religious man, removes self from misandrist situations, resents concept of toxic masculinity

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Gender Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate for LGBTQIA+ Identities: Experiences Anti-LGBTQIA+ phobias*

**Underlying Codes:** accepts misgendering, acts more fem at times to prevent transphobia while simultaneously worrying about misogynists who hate women, avoids elaborating on gender, avoids situations where perceived gender creates risk, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, conflates gender diversity with "type of sex people have", deals with nonbinary erasure, deals with queerphobia, deals with transphobia, deals with transphobia or transmisogyny, does not correct pronouns, does not identify as "non-male", dresses "assigned gender at birth" at times, experiences nonbinary exclusion, fears coming out, fears the pain of being misgendered, finds they/them pronouns validating, focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences, gives up on correcting pronouns, hates binary, hates having to hide, hides gender, hides genderqueer identity from family, hides pronouns, hides truths from family because "it will go badly", identifies as intersectional, identifies as a black fat non binary queer person, learns from making and correcting a misgendering mistake, masks as female at times, negotiates identity and clothing, notices gender fluid people do not have bathrooms or changing rooms, notices the term "gay" used as a slur, observes disrespect for unique gender identities, observes lgbtqia+ discrimination in family, observes lgbtqia+ intolerance, observes misgendering on purpose, observes people defending their gender identities and correcting pronouns, observes transphobia misgendering and bullying online, performs queer femininity, queers appearance, remains closeted at home, seeks same respect given to cis people, seeks support from allies who understand, shares clothes to help others with body dysmorphia, shares gender when in a safe space, slows down in order to use the right pronouns, speculates about being non-binary, transcends gender, transitions, understands people have trouble with gender outside the social script, uses she/they at times just to make it easier on other people

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Gender Identity + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** "the sexism I've experienced as a woman has been a lot more violent and physical in nature than the racist experiences I've had," adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, experiences double bind, experiences nonbinary exclusion, experiences stereotype threat, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, hides whole self, identifies as a Black fat nonbinary queer person, identifies as intersectional, prefers Latine over Latinx, understands patterns, woman in tech, works in construction and often the only female in the room, works in male industry, works with all women

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Represses Femininity Due to Internalized Misogyny, Stigmas, Biases*

**Underlying Codes:** acts less intelligent and less active to avoid conflict, avoids appearing cheerful and energetic because that is seen as foolish, avoids attention, avoids being "like other women," avoids being perceived as "too sensitive" and playing into stereotypes that women can't take a joke, does not act feminine, dresses modestly or hides body, dresses neutrally, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, hides feminine details and interests, prefers to be invisible, refrains from discussing things like beauty or pop culture "and other topics that i feel could make me seen as less than," rejects color pink due to its associations and norms, rejects stereotypically feminine hobbies, shys away from being "overly emotional" in professional settings, tones down feminine traits at work, works in construction and often the only female in the room, works in male industry

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) LGBTQIA+ Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** as a nonbinary person deals with being perceived as a woman, as a nonbinary person deals with trauma, deals with being told "people are bisexual because they are confused," deals with ace exclusion or erasure, deals with aggression or hate or homophobia, deals with being treated as lesser for being in a heteronormal relationship as a bisexual, deals with biphobia, deals with it "by not giving a shiiii and telling them to go rot," deals with regressive unsupportive culture, deals with stares, deals with toxic masculinity, develops thick skin, experiences/observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination, knows that parents and the

community I was raised in "think queerness is immoral," observes cousin having "difficult time telling his extremely Catholic family," observes cruelty towards gay coworker, observes deadnames in systems, observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination, observes harassment of queer people, observes homophobia and politics at work, observes individuals hiding LGBTQIA+ identity as needed, observes LGBTQIA+ co-worker bullied into quitting, observes transphobia

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) LGBTQIA+ Identity + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids discussing religion, dates both men and women, deals with being told "people are bisexual because they are confused," deals with ace exclusion or erasure, deals with being treated as lesser for being in a heteronormal relationship as a bisexual, deals with biphobia, deals with toxic masculinity, does not believe that LGBTQIA+ people have a mental disorder which can be treated with medicine, feels that "people might label me as a blue-haired pronoun social justice warrior," feels excluded from the LGBTQIA+ community as aro/ace, feels lucky can hide sexuality as a bisexual, has many identities, hides having two mothers, hides whole self, knows that parents and the community I was raised in "think queerness is immoral," navigates being bisexual while having a boyfriend, observes cousin having "difficult time telling his extremely Catholic family," understands Bollywood is transphobic

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Neurodiverse Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** "ADHD is so common people joke about it" (says person who is not disabled or neurodivergent), deals with a lack of accommodations, deals with being perceived as "off," deals with being perceived as antisocial, deals with disruptions, deals with hurt feelings, deals with ignorance, deals with internal struggles, deals with pressure to perform neurotypically, deals with stigma, deals with stigma of weakness, experienced challenges like shame and rejection, experiences meltdowns, experiences microaggressions, experiences pharmacist giving "the look" (iykyk), experiences/observes neurodiversity discrimination, makes it "hard enough on myself," observed neurodivergent manager ostracized for trying to create useful structures, observes autistic friend struggle with social scenarios opting instead for one-on-one time, observes brother with ADHD and OCD try to "act normal" because of bullying, observes gaslighting/erasing/bullying people, observes masking, observes

prejudice/discrimination against people on the autism spectrum, observes sister isolate or withdraw or mask, restricts social events

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Neurodiverse Identity + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** believes prayer is the path to overcoming neurodivergent crutch, controls hyperactivity to avoid being viewed as "ghetto," experiences pharmacist giving "the look" (iykyk), feels shame about needing medication to be "normal," helps AuDHD roommate go to the grocery store to buy food, hides depression, hides whole self, observed neurodivergent manager ostracized for trying to create useful structures, observes brother with ADHD and OCD try to "act normal" because of bullying, stays away from normies/born Americans

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Race/Ethnicity Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** deals with "international student" assumption, deals with and resists pressures to "act my race," deals with being called "exotic," deals with being made fun of for being pale, deals with being mistaken with other Asian co-worker, deals with being singled out by security, deals with bullying, deals with complexity of being adopted, deals with harassment, deals with intersectionality (race and disability), deals with intersectionality (adopted and Chinese), deals with intersectionality (race and gender), deals with model minority myth, deals with racist jokes, experiences assumptive racism, experiences erasure, experiences inaccurate appearance-based stereotyping (white seen as Asian), experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Cuban does not speak Spanish), experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Mexican who does not speak Spanish), experiences microaggressions, experiences model minority stereotype, experiences race/ethnicity policing, experiences racial bias at work, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at church, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at home, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at home (roommate), experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at school, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at work, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination in retail, experiences racism during COVID, experiences some racial or ethnic discrimination, loses native tongue, lost native tongue, manages overt and covert racism,

navigates assumptions about hijab as a Hispanic Muslim, navigates two different cultures within, observes "Americanized" names, observes "colleagues & staff members/professors use nicknames for some of my Black friends," observes "racism consistently in education expecting that Black and Brown people cannot compete or achieve without lowering standards," observes "racism that expects whites to feel ashamed of themselves," observes acting out and struggles, observes Black woman standing up for self, observes code switching, observes code-switching, observes discrimination against Black people and people of color, observes friends dealing with insensitive comments, observes masking, observes negative talk about India and Indian food, observes racism, observes racist customers, observes social segregation or in-group congregation, observes "Americanized" names, processes racism, puts white people at ease, recognizes bias and discrimination and barriers, recognizes internalized racism, recognizes intersectionality, witnesses racism.

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Race/Ethnicity Identity + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** deals with "international student" assumption, deals with being called "exotic," deals with being singled out by security, deals with complexity of being adopted, deals with intersectionality (race and disability), deals with intersectionality (adopted and Chinese), deals with intersectionality (race and gender), deals with model minority myth, downplays life experience, experiences being Asian and adopted by white family, experiences identity misattribution and/or passing fatigue or friction or discomfort, experiences inaccurate appearance-based stereotyping (white seen as Asian), experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Cuban does not speak Spanish), experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Mexican who does not speak Spanish), experiences model minority stereotype, experiences multiracial or multi-ethnicity complexity, experiences race/ethnicity policing, fights back against passive forces that lead to injustice in this country, hides adopted status around Asian peers, hides culture or heritage or traditions, hides DACA status, hides home life, hides whole self, loses native tongue, lost native tongue, navigates assumptions about hijab as a Hispanic Muslim, navigates two different cultures within, observes code switching, observes code-switching, plays up different ethnic identities depending on context, puts white people at ease, recognizes intersectionality, regrets not exploring culture early on, taught to not make waves but now has to be assertive in corporate America to be rewarded, uses attributional distancing, works and lives in Latinx and Black

neighborhoods so observes implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination, works on own biases

## Experience with RELIGIOUS identity

*Category: Experiences (or Observes) Religion Identity Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination, Hate*

**Underlying Codes:** as a Catholic experiences assumptions about being conservative when in reality extremely liberal, as a child experienced aggression due to family's religion, as a Christian experiences other Christians that are homophobic fatphobic transphobic racist and sexist, as a Christian tries not to get offended by insults or taunts, as a Jewish person does not attend public religious events, as a Jewish person removes Star of David necklace to avoid tensions, as a Jewish person suffers does not cope, as a Muslim avoids heated discussions, as a Muslim feels at times that "I can't pray in public," as a Pagan experiences disrespect and erasure, as a Roman Catholic experiences "suffocating secularism," as an agnostic/ex-Catholic criticizes Catholicism to avoid association, as an atheist avoids conflicts or confrontations, as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, believes in science not Pentecostal Christianity, believes religious people are "more likely to be racist Trump supporters," deals with mean jokes or slurs, disassociates or disengages, experiences a lack of support for Israel, experiences discrimination "from other Christians if I am not overtly religious or if I am not discriminatory toward other groups," experiences discrimination because Jewish and because not Jewish enough, experiences or expresses distress related to religion, experiences or observes antisemitism, experiences or observes blasphemy and anti-Christian sentiment, experiences or observes Islamophobia, experiences or observes religious tensions, experiences or observes xenophobia, experiences religious identity as something easier to conceal, experiences religious impositions or pressures to conform, experiences/observes discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination, experiences/observes religious discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination in public, finds "the lack of support and encouragement of Catholics in education embarrassing," finds it impolite to discuss religion at school or work, remembers "my 8th grade classmates thought my dad was a terrorist," remembers details of antisemitic slurs, resists or confronts religious discrimination

## Experience with RELIGIOUS identity

*Category: Navigates (or Observes) Religion Identity + Intersectionality*

**Underlying Codes:** as a Christian experiences other Christians that are homophobic fatphobic transphobic racist and sexist, as a Christian minority exits awkward or pushy situations, as a Christian observes religious generational divide, as a spiritual person connects with people from many faiths, avoids wearing hijab when traveling, code-switches, experiences a lack of support for Israel, fears being assumed Zionist because Jewish, feels fear or dread about Islamophobia and xenophobia, feels prejudice from other Christians at times, feels uneasy around religious people, hides whole self, separates self from Jewish religion due to situation in Gaza, supports religion if it is not harming anyone, wonders if prioritizing certain holidays is discrimination

## Appendix C: Theme 2 Insights, Categories, and Codes

This document provides the codes, categories, and insights informing Theme 2.

### Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Responses to Identity-Based Experiences

This theme focuses on the emotional and psychological states generated by individuals' identity-based experiences. It explores how self-acceptance, positive emotions, and negative emotions emerge in response to social scenarios, and may influence well-being, self-perception, and belonging. The theme highlights the diversity of identity-related feelings individuals experience.

### Theme 2: Underlying Identity Dimension Insights

#### Age Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in age identity was rooted in acknowledging and embracing age-related characteristics. Participants described “embraced gray hair and unique look” and “signaled disability with cane” as acts of authenticity and openness. They also adopted a reflective approach, “self-reflected to understand own place in time” and “recognized own prejudice,” which suggested growth and understanding. Resilience and confidence were central, as seen in “thugged it out when underestimated,” “used self-confidence,” and “managed situations.” By “involving themselves in more serious discussions” and “staying true to themselves and seeing others the same way,” participants reinforced their sense of identity while rejecting societal age-based biases.

#### Positive Feelings

Age identity inspired positive feelings through moments of empowerment and self-expression. Participants often “lived life” fully and “surprised people with ideas and questions,” activating the joy of defying age-related stereotypes. These actions supported pride and gratitude, contributing to emotional resilience.

## Negative Feelings

Age identity generated negative feelings connected with discrimination encountered in personal and public contexts. Participants reported “dealt with age discrimination at home,” “at school,” and “at work,” reflecting the pervasiveness of bias. Additional challenges like “dealt with age discrimination in medical contexts” and “on public transportation” highlighted systemic issues that could lead to feelings of frustration, exclusion, exhaustion, or trauma.

## Class Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in class identity involved rejecting pressures and affirming one’s own values. Actions like “did not deal with facades” and “exited the games” reflected a conscious choice to disengage from norms. Participants emphasized living authentically, as seen in “lived within means,” “maintained integrity by not changing self for others,” and “rejected consumer pressure.” A strong sense of pride and resilience was evident in “felt pride,” “found power within,” and “gained class consciousness,” underscoring their commitment to living sustainably and authentically.

## Positive Feelings

Class identity inspired positive feelings embracing resistance, simplicity, and authenticity. Codes like “rejected consumer pressure,” “used an old phone,” and “lived life” highlighted the joy and fulfillment participants found in resisting material pressures. These actions underscored their gratitude for a life aligned with values. One participant “dreamed of comfort,” suggesting hope.

## Negative Feelings

Class identity generated negative feelings connected with stigma and distress. Participants described feeling “disheartened,” “disregarded,” “left out,” “small,” and “embarrassed” due to judgments. Instances like “shut down when snubbed” and “felt teasing and jokes” highlighted the interpersonal struggles tied to class identity. Experiences including “felt resentment as a working-class person” and “operated in survival mode” revealed the deep harms of systemic inequities.

## Disability Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in disability identity was expressed through empowerment and self-advocacy. Participants described actions including “acted unapologetic and outspoken about condition”

and “shamelessly asked for accommodations” as transformative. Building understanding through practices like “kept a log of symptoms,” “learned and understood triggers and limits,” and “used prescription medication” enabled participants to take care and manage confidently. Codes including “intentionally signaled disability with an assistive device” and “practiced acceptance” underscored commitments to presence and authenticity.

### Positive Feelings

Disability identity inspired positive feelings through advocacy, connection, and affirmation. Participants “advocated for accessibility and inclusion,” “connected with others who could empathize,” and “participated in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health.” Moments of pride and joy were highlighted in actions including “ignored stares,” “explained spoon theory,” and “practiced kindness and empathy,” reflecting the power of shared understanding, mutual aid, and support.

### Negative Feelings

Disability identity generated negative feelings stemming from systemic barriers, stigma, and struggles. Participants reported institutional failures, including “dealt with medical trauma,” “dismissive doctors,” and “left a job because of berating and humiliation about disability.” In educational and professional settings, challenges included “lowered expectations of academic ability” and “feared being fired because of disability.” Social stigma compounded these issues, with participants describing experiences like “dealt with ‘lazy’ stigma,” “invalidation,” and “erasure.” Public interactions often led to avoidance behaviors, including “ignored stares,” “avoided loud places,” and “avoided official diagnoses to prevent trouble.” Challenges often resulted in exclusion. Participants shared they “missed out on sports because of performance standards” and “stayed in during flares.” This exclusion also impacted social interactions, with many describing a reluctance to share their disability circumstances due to a “fear of judgment or misunderstanding from peers.” The emotional toll of these experiences often led to feelings of isolation, shame, and despair. Participants described actions including “buried self in hobbies to cope,” “sought solitude to cope,” and “self-medicated” as ways to manage the psychological impact of ableism. Others reported they “did not ask for help even when needed” or “did not cope,” illustrating the challenges of seeking support in environments that were often dismissive or hostile. Internalized ableism also presented, as seen in “expected ableism” and “neglected own rights and freedoms,” demonstrating how systemic oppression influences self-worth.

## Gender Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in gender identity was generated through affirmation and the rejection of norms. Codes including “accepts self and identity without external validation,” “queers appearance,” and “transcends gender” illustrated their commitment to authenticity and empowerment. Statements like “focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences” and “maintains integrity by not changing self for others” highlighted their resilience and confidence when facing pressures. Many participants embraced self-expression, as seen in “dresses based on feelings, not gender norms” and “lives cosmic rather than material,” reflecting a sense of liberation from restrictive expectations. Other examples, like “tells self ‘I’m more than my body’” and “reminds self of the power I hold as a woman,” demonstrated strength.

### Positive Feelings

Gender identity inspired positive feelings through presence, empowerment, and affirmation. Participants described feeling “pride” and “gratitude” in their gender identities, with examples like “finds they/them pronouns validating” and “identifies as a black fat nonbinary queer person.” These expressions of joy often arose in spaces where participants could authentically be themselves, as reflected in “comes out in safe spaces with trusted people” and “grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self.” Others highlighted gratitude, “feels accomplished by achieving a college degree in a male-dominated field” and “welcomes curiosity and questions.” Participants also derived positive feelings from defying stereotypes and challenging norms. Codes like “ignores stereotypes and proves them wrong” and “experiences being my best self and doing right unto others is what makes me a man” reflected how empowerment and self-respect were cultivated through these acts. Sharing gender-affirming experiences, including “queers appearance,” “transitions,” and “focuses on gender-affirming moments,” further illustrated the joy participants found in embracing and celebrating their identities.

### Negative Feelings

Gender identity generated negative feelings rooted in systemic and interpersonal challenges related to gender identity. Many participants recounted experiences of “gaslighting,” “misgendering,” “transphobia or transmisogyny,” and “pervasive daily gender discrimination.” Codes like “deals with toxic masculinity and bullying,” “deals with sexual harassment,” “avoids interactions with opposite sex,” and “avoids male-dominated situations” highlighted how safety

concerns shape daily life. Others described “avoids sounding direct or blunt to avoid being seen as aggressive,” illustrating the nuanced ways gendered expectations undermine individuals. Emotional struggles included “feels anger,” “feels defensive,” and “feels exhausted and drained,” reflecting the psychological toll of constantly navigating bias. Specific examples, including “deals with being paid less than male colleagues” and “deals with bullying,” showcased the intersection of gender discrimination and daily life. Participants also reported instances of being dismissed or disrespected, like “deals with mansplaining,” “deals with inappropriate comments,” and “deals with jokes about female weakness and emotional vulnerability.” Exclusion was another recurring pattern. Participants shared experiences of “avoiding debates related to misogyny,” “hiding genderqueer identity from family,” and “remaining closeted at home.” These actions often stemmed from fear of judgment or rejection, as reflected in codes like “fears coming out,” “fears reactions,” and “fears the pain of being misgendered.” Other participants highlighted the emotional burden of navigating societal expectations, describing how they “tones down feminine traits at work” or “plays into gender script to get by.” The cumulative effect of these challenges often led to feelings of frustration and isolation. Codes including “hates having to hide,” “self-medicates,” and “retreats and holds opinions back” revealed the impact of struggles.

## LGBTQIA+ Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in LGBTQIA+ identity was demonstrated through pride and openness. Codes like “comes out in safe spaces with trusted people” and “lives open” reflect the empowerment derived from authenticity. Statements like “no longer needs to pass as straight,” “not bothered by negative perception,” and “finds safety around other queer people” demonstrate the strength gained through personal growth and shared community.

## Positive Feelings

LGBTQIA+ identity inspired positive feelings through transformation, presence, advocacy, and connection. Participants described experiences including “escaping severe depression and anxiety by coming out,” “speaking out,” and “advocating for LGBTQIA+ people,” which reflected the joy of embracing authenticity and supporting community. Acts of celebration, like “participating in parades” and “embracing LGBTQIA+ friends who were once closeted,” underscored the collective power of lifting each other. Expressions of pride and gratitude were central, as seen in codes like “feels pride” and “surrounds self with positive people and queer people.” Participants also found meaning in supporting others, as reflected in “acts as ally.”

Inspiration played a key role, with individuals describing how they “admired queer confidence and bravery,” highlighting the empowering effect of witnessing and celebrating resilience within their community.

### Negative Feelings

LGBTQIA+ identity generated negative feelings tied to overt discrimination, safety concerns, and societal oppression. Participants shared experiences including “avoids public displays of affection” and “hides LGBTQIA+ identity as needed,” reflecting the compromises made to ensure personal safety. Codes like “feels unsafe,” “experiences slurs,” and “observes harassment of queer people” highlighted the constant vigilance required to navigate fear and violence. Actions including “leans into misperceptions as needed for safety” and “withholds compliments towards other males in order to prevent suspicion about sexuality” illustrated the emotional toll of homophobia and the pervasive impact of living in a society that prioritizes heteronormativity. Safety concerns were further underscored by codes like “fears bullying or violence,” “fears danger or discomfort,” and “observes LGBTQIA+ co-worker bullied into quitting,” showcasing how oppression extends beyond the personal to professional and social environments. Participants also described avoiding visibility, with examples including “avoids LGBTQIA+ flags, signals, or topics” and “avoids public displays of affection like holding hands or kissing in public,” reflecting the pressure to suppress expressions of identity to escape discrimination. Together, these insights reveal the emotional and psychological weight of living with LGBTQIA+ identities.

### Neurodivergent Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in neurodivergent identity was characterized by empowerment, self-awareness, and proactive care. Participants described taking ownership of their needs, including “asked for help,” “asserted and communicated needs,” and “shamelessly asked for accommodations.” Personal growth was reflected in actions like “unlearned the masking,” “recognized triggers,” and “experienced cathartic transformation by ‘finally understanding why I am the way I am.’” Participants also emphasized self-care practices, including “established routines,” “focused on breath,” and “managed day-to-day life,” to maintain well-being. Resilience and authenticity were further demonstrated in statements like “no longer hid,” “did not push self,” and “practiced mindfulness.”

## Positive Feelings

Neurodivergent identity inspired positive feelings through stability, connection, and self-regulation. Participants described finding joy and relief in structure and sensory management, including “broke tasks into smaller steps,” “dimmed lights,” and “used music” to create calming environments. Codes like “felt carefree when alone,” “used stimming,” and “used fidget toys” highlighted comfort. Support systems also contributed to positive feelings, with participants sharing they “used therapy,” “connected with a support network,” and “participated in talk therapy.” Accessing resources, including “psychological counseling,” “organizational tools,” and “to-do lists,” enabled them to manage effectively and maintain a sense of control. These practices, along with proactive self-care, including “wore noise dampeners” and “took medication,” reflected self-empowerment.

## Negative Feelings

Neurodivergent identity generated negative feelings attached to societal stigma, self-doubt, and systemic challenges. Participants shared experiences of “avoided seeking accommodations (because guilt)” and “believed perceived as offensive,” reflecting the internalized pressures of conforming to neurotypical standards. Emotional tolls, including “experienced exhaustion and depression from masking,” “felt shame about needing medication to be ‘normal,’” and “experienced meltdowns,” revealed the impact of suppressing or hiding needs. Interpersonal and institutional barriers compounded struggles. Participants described “fears being perceived as incapable,” “experienced microaggressions,” and “dealt with pharmacist giving ‘the look’ (iykyk),” highlighting the judgment and invalidation faced. To cope, some withdrew, as seen in “kept to self,” “hid symptoms,” and “did not talk about diagnosis.” Avoidance behaviors were also common, with participants reporting “hid medication,” “avoided expressing needs,” and “self-medicated.” These challenges led to feelings of isolation, frustration, and despair. Codes like “felt no one can help,” “neglected own feelings,” and “used laughter and jokes ‘to downplay how I truly feel’” revealed the psychological weight of navigating life as neurodivergent.

## Race/Ethnicity Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in race and ethnicity identity was demonstrated through pride, authenticity, and connection to heritage. Participants described efforts to “amplify identity or culture or heritage” and “embrace ethnicity,” emphasizing the importance of celebrating backgrounds. Reflective

practices, including “believed assumptions are ‘a reflection of them, not me’” and “approached prejudice with empathy and did not get offended,” highlighted resilience and power. Acts of authenticity were central, as seen in “no longer acts white,” “no longer assimilates,” and “maintains integrity by not changing self for others.” Participants also described reclaiming and honoring their roots by “learning their mother tongue,” “connecting with their own culture,” and “navigating two different cultures within.” Confidence and pride were reinforced through practices including “practices self-care,” “self-advocates,” and “uses mindfulness or psychotherapy,” demonstrating their commitment to well-being while resisting pressures.

### Positive Feelings

Race and ethnicity identity inspired positive feelings through pride and confidence, “feels pride,” “feels different,” and “embraces ethnicity.” In addition, “builds resilience” and “keeps an open mind,” illustrates transformation while, “ignores racism,” and “ignores racial discrimination” demonstrate strength and stamina. Cultural preservation and exploration also inspired positive emotions. Codes like “learns mother tongue” and “learns Spanish language” highlighted participants’ joy in rediscovering or maintaining linguistic and cultural ties.

### Negative Feelings

Negative feelings related to race and ethnicity identity stemmed from systemic discrimination, interpersonal bias, and the emotional toll of navigating these challenges. Participants reported facing “linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination,” “microaggressions,” and “racial bias at work,” reflecting the pervasive nature of prejudice in personal and professional spaces. Interpersonal moments, including “experiences racist jokes” and “deals with slurs” underscored the emotional burden of confronting everyday racism. Some participants internalized these struggles, as seen in “internalizes racism,” “I have no choice but to tolerate it” and “processes racism,” while others expressed difficulty coping, reflected in “does not cope” and “shuts down.” Complexities of identity, including “experiences being Asian and adopted by a white family” and “experiences multiracial or multi-ethnicity complexity,” revealed additional layers of struggle in reconciling cultural expectations and personal identity. Emotional responses, including “feels afraid or haunted,” “feels victimized and disadvantaged,” and “gets angry and ruminates,” highlighted the psychological impact of living in a world that often marginalizes racial and ethnic diversity. Participants also grappled with systemic issues, sharing that “calling out other white people is hard” and “feels it is impossible to eliminate race/ethnicity discrimination,” reflecting frustration with structural inequities. These experiences often left

individuals feeling “goes into shell” or “wonders if it was racism or something else,” demonstrating the pervasive pressure on racial or ethnic minorities.

## Religion Identity Insights

Self-acceptance in religious identity was expressed through resilience, personal conviction, and spiritual practices. Participants described staying grounded in their beliefs, as seen in codes like “as a Muslim stays resilient in beliefs and practices” and “as an agnostic stays true to self.” For many, faith or lack thereof was deeply personal, reflected in statements like “believes beliefs are personal” and “believes in freedom of religion.” Spiritual practices played a significant role in self-acceptance. Codes including “prays,” “meditates,” and “practices prayer and penance” highlighted the importance of rituals in grounding participants and affirming their faith. Others expressed their commitment to their convictions through actions like “does God’s work,” “feels a calling,” and “strongly believes in Jesus.” These actions underscored the sense of pride and peace participants found in aligning their actions with their spiritual or personal values.

## Positive Feelings

Religious identity inspired positive feelings through connection, compassion, and affirmation. Participants often derived joy and peace from their beliefs, as illustrated by “experiences peace,” “feels religious pride or joy,” and “as a Christian keeps the peace and sets an example.” Acts of kindness and community engagement, including “practices kindness and is a good neighbor that helps kids,” supported gratitude and fulfillment. Connection across faiths also played a key role, with codes like “as a spiritual person connects with people from many faiths” and “experiences others being curious about Wiccan religion” highlighting the value of mutual respect and understanding. Participants also described advocacy and compassion as central to their positive experiences, as seen in “as a Christian holds compassion for those who hold prejudice” and “benefits from left-wing Buddhist values.” These actions reflected the strength participants drew from their ability to embrace and share their beliefs while remaining open to diverse perspectives.

## Negative Feelings

Religious identity generated negative feelings tied to systemic discrimination, interpersonal prejudice, and the emotional toll of navigating cultural and societal expectations. Participants reported experiences of institutional failures and societal tensions, including “experiences or

observes Islamophobia,” “experiences or observes antisemitism,” and “experiences religious impositions or pressures to conform.” These experiences often left individuals feeling unsafe, as reflected in codes like “fears antisemitism,” “fears for safety,” and “feels fear or dread about Islamophobia and xenophobia.” Interpersonal challenges also emerged prominently. Participants described being judged or excluded, as seen in “judged and shamed,” “as a Jewish person removes Star of David necklace to avoid tensions,” and “as a non-practicing Catholic pretends to care or understand.” Instances of prejudice within religious communities were reported, including “as a Christian experiences other Christians that are homophobic, fat phobic, transphobic, racist, and sexist.” Emotional struggles, including “feels a little embarrassed by my participation in religion,” illustrated the internal conflicts some participants experienced as they reconciled personal faith with societal perceptions. Avoidance behaviors were another recurring pattern. Many participants described “avoids discussing religion or religious topics,” “avoids prayer in public,” or “avoids wearing hijab when traveling,” reflecting the lengths to which they went to minimize conflict or judgment. Privacy and concealment were common strategies, as illustrated by “uses fake name when working in public to avoid religious assumptions” and “hides Jewish details to protect self.” The psychological toll of discrimination and conflict was evident in codes like “as a Jewish person suffers does not cope,” “separates from Pentecostal family,” and “rejects judgment about Christian beliefs.” Participants also highlighted the difficulty of confronting prejudice, sharing that “calling out other Christians is hard” and “feels unlearning is difficult.”

## Theme 2: Underlying Categories

### Experiences Self-Acceptance

Data (codes) informing this category suggest feelings of confidence or empowerment.

### Experiences Positive Feelings

Data (codes) informing this category suggest feelings of joy, peace, gratitude, belonging.

### Experiences Negative Feelings

Data (codes) informing this category suggest feelings of distress, fear, anger, shame, alienation.

## Theme 2: Underlying Codes

### Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** asks for help, benefits from technology advantages of youth, embraces gray hair and unique look, grows up or matures, involves self in more serious discussions, knows self-worth, learns and empowers self, lives life, manages difficult situations, practices authenticity, practices authenticity or transparency, recognizes own prejudice, resists pressures, respects people, self-advocates, self-reflects, shares age to signal maturity, signals disability with cane, speaks up, uses self-confidence, uses indicators or signifiers, uses open communication, uses self-care, uses self-confidence

### Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** embraces gray hair and unique look, expresses love, learns and empowers self, lives life, practices authenticity, practices authenticity or transparency, resists pressures, uses self-confidence, uses open communication

### Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids dating self, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, deals with age discrimination at work, deals with age discrimination on public transportation, deals with intersectionality (age and gender/sex), deals with intersectionality (age and race), deals with sexual harassment from older men, disassociates or disengages, experiences age discrimination, experiences age discrimination at work, experiences/observes age discrimination at home, experiences/observes age discrimination at school, experiences/observes age discrimination at work, experiences/observes age discrimination in medical contexts, experiences/observes age discrimination in the queer community, experiences/observes ageism, fears, feels excluded sometimes, feels exhausted, felt undervalued, hides age or birthday, hides face on Zoom calls, hides gender, hides political views, hides sexuality, hides whole self, isolates or withdraws, observes age discrimination, observes age discrimination (against women), observes age discrimination against elderly, observes age discrimination against old people, observes age discrimination against older people, observes age

discrimination against younger people, observes age discrimination and acts, observes age discrimination at work, observes age discrimination or erasure (girls made invisible), observes grand's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes mom's struggles with age discrimination at school, observes parent's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes stereotypes about elderly being less productive, resents and rejects assumptions (that every woman has children), resents assumptions, vents with friends, works harder or overcompensates, works on receding hairline

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** asks for help, disarms class expectations, does not deal with facades, exits scene, exits the games, feels empathy, feels pride, finds power within, focuses on what can be controlled, gains class consciousness, ignores class discrimination, learns and empowers self, lets things go, lives life, lives within means, manages difficult situations, opts out of activities that are unaffordable, pays no mind, practices authenticity, practices gratitude, practices hospitality, practices inclusivity, practices kindness or generosity, practices resilience, rejects consumer pressure, resists pressures, self-reflects, strives to live a sustainable lifestyle, takes care of self and others, takes nothing personally, uses an old phone, uses class indicators or signifiers, uses open communication, uses self-confidence

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** dreams, feels guided by values, feels pride, finds power within, focuses on what can be controlled, learns and empowers self, lets things go, lives life, lives within means, overcomes shame or stigma, pays no mind, practices authenticity, practices gratitude, practices resilience, rejects consumer pressure, takes nothing personally, uses an old phone, uses self-confidence

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** acts aggressively showy about being lower class, acts out, as lower middle class defensively scoffs at luxuries, avoids class indicators or signifiers, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, avoids money topics, avoids snobs, blames, deals with being patted down for

drugs and feeling exploited without just cause, deals with being taken advantage of, deals with ignorance and judgment about government assistance, deals with intersectionality (body and gender and race), deals with intersectionality (class and race), deals with intersectionality (class and race/ethnicity), deals with intersectionality (multiculturalism), deals with language proficiency, deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with not being invited, deals with parents having no papers, deals with peer resentment over free lunch and waived fees, deals with shock by laughing it out, disassociates or disengages, dominates, dreams of comfort, fears, feels both shame and luck, feels burden, feels defensive, feels different, feels disheartened, feels disregarded, feels embarrassment, feels guilty, feels injustice, feels internal struggle, feels left out, feels lonely, feels pressures, feels resentment as working-class person, feels self-conscious, feels small, feels uncomfortable, forgets feelings, hides caste, hides home life, hides language, hides money, hides political and economic beliefs, hides spoken language in certain contexts, hides truth, hides whole self, isolates or withdraws, navigates college as first-gen, navigates culture shock, navigates food insecurity, no coping mechanisms, operates in survival mode, resents assumptions, resents disadvantages, resents people, saves food, shuts down when snubbed, steals, sublimates, suicidal at times, witnesses the struggles of others, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** accepts whole self, acts unapologetic and outspoken about condition, asks for help, confronts or manages stereotypes, connects with others who share similar experiences, does not hide issues because needs are important, experiences a journey towards resilience and self-empowerment, feels empathy, identifies anxiety as something in body and not something that can always be controlled, ignores cruelty, ignores stares, intentionally signals disability with an assistive device, keeps log of symptoms, learns and understands triggers and limits, manages condition, manages difficult situations, manages perceptions, manages stereotypes, observes disability resilience, practices acceptance, practices kindness and empathy, resists pressures, respects and cares for disabled people, respects people, self-advocates, shares disability if questioned, shows strength, stims, supports inclusivity, takes care of disabled friend, takes online asynchronous courses to accommodate own disability, uses accommodations, uses open communication, uses prescription medication, uses self-confidence, works with disabled children validates their feelings

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** accepts whole self, acts unapologetic and outspoken about condition, advocates, cares, connects with others who share similar experiences, connects with peers, does not hide issues because needs are important, does not take things personally, experiences a journey towards resilience and self-empowerment, explains disability as needed, explains spoon theory, feels empathy, identifies anxiety as something lived with (separate from the self) rather than a self-defining feature, intentionally signals disability with an assistive device, learns and empowers self, learns and understands triggers and limits, manages condition, manages difficult situations, observes disability resilience, participates in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health, practices acceptance, practices kindness and empathy, respects and cares for disabled people, self-advocates, shows strength, supports inclusivity, takes care of disabled friend, uses accommodations, uses open communication, uses self-confidence, works to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies, works with disabled children validates their feelings

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids attention or pity, avoids frictions, avoids loud places, avoids official diagnosis to prevent trouble in future, avoids situations, deals with "lazy" stigma, deals with "unfit" stigma, deals with (suicidal) ideation, deals with debilitating disorder and flares, deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with medical trauma, disregards own pain and discomfort to get by, does not ask for help, does not ask for help even when needed, does not cope, downplays pain, expects ableism, experiences dismissive doctors, experiences erasure, experiences invalidation, experiences invisible/hidden disability intolerance or judgment, experiences pressure of judgments and assumptions, experiences stigma, experiences/observes ableism, fears, fears being fired because of disability, feels embarrassed by alarms at times, feels medical trauma, feels overwhelmed by noise, feels powerless to make change that will help disabled people, feels uncomfortable sharing disability circumstances, forgets feelings, guards, has embarrassing experiences, hides disability, hides disability at work, hides disability with clothing, hides disability/struggles, hides food, hides hospitalizations, hides hyperfixations, hides insulin injections from family, hides medical equipment, hides medication, hides multivitamin supplements, hides state (hypomanic or depressive), hides whole self, ignores cruelty, isolates

or withdraws, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), lowers "expectations of my academic ability so I can rely on a buffer when my symptoms are acting up," makes more "plausible" excuses for delays caused by disability, misses out, misses out on sports because of performance standards, neglects own rights and freedoms, observes disability stress, observes disabled coworkers mask their feelings and work harder, observes disabled people struggling, observes family member's traumatic experience, observes illegal disability discrimination, observes invalidation of disability grief, observes lack of accommodations because of poor infrastructure, observes people staring or doing double-takes at friend's walking cane, observes rampant ableism, observes scoffing at scooter or wheelchair, observes the r slur, observes unsolicited "think positive" advice, participates in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health, rations sick days, resists pressures, seeks solitude to cope, smiles when sad, stays in during flares, sublimates, suppresses own thoughts, wears hair down to cover hearing aids, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** "it is what it is," "remind myself the power I hold as a woman," accepts self and identity without external validation, asks for help, believes everyone deserves love, believes gender identity "only matters to me" and "what other people think is irrelevant," centers own feelings, centers self rejects impositions, comes out, does not care what people say, does not let confusion or discrimination impact own identity, does own thing, dresses based on feelings not gender norms, elevates femininity and care, feels confident, feels pride, finds identity outside of gender, finds they/them pronouns validating, focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences, focuses on own path, gains confidence, identifies as a Black fat nonbinary queer person, identifies as a woman proudly, identifies as feminist, identifies as genderless, ignores fascists, ignores gender issues, ignores sexism, ignores sexism (if rando), ignores sexist comments, learns and empowers self, learns to cut own hair, lets things go, lives cosmic rather than material, lives life, manages difficult situations, practices acceptance, practices authenticity, practices mindfulness, queers appearance, resists or rejects gender norms policing or enforcement, resists pressures, respects people, self-affirms "there is nothing wrong with who I am and that I am strong," self-reflects, speaks up, speaks up against misogyny, stands up for self, tells self "I have masculine energy and drive and get things done," tells self "I'm more than my body," uses open communication, uses self-confidence, wears boots

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** "remind myself the power I hold as a woman," accepts self and identity without external validation, advocates for self and others, believes everyone deserves love, believes gender equality is a human rights issue, comes out, cooks for self, creates comfortable workplace for women, does not care what people say, does not let confusion or discrimination impact own identity, does own thing, escapes, experiences "being my best self and doing right unto others is what makes me a man," experiences gratitude, feels accomplished by achieving college degree in male-dominated field, feels confident, feels pride, finds identity outside of gender, finds they/them pronouns validating, focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences, focuses on own path, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, hopes for the best, hopes that technology will solve gender bias and discrimination and uplift people, identifies as a Black fat nonbinary queer person, identifies as a woman proudly, identifies as feminist, identifies as genderless, identifies as intersectional, ignores fascists, ignores sexism (if rando), ignores sexist comments, includes and loves people, learns and empowers self, learns to not care what people think, lets things go, lifts women, lives cosmic rather than material, lives life, manages difficult situations, practices acceptance, practices authenticity, practices mindfulness, queers appearance, quits, self-affirms "there is nothing wrong with who I am and that I am strong," tells self "I'm more than my body," transcends gender, transitions, understands gender discrimination happens all the time, understands it's their problem, wears pronoun pins, welcomes curiosity and questions, works hard to be the person they are, works with all women

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** "if I correct people I'm a bitch," "the sexism I've experienced as a woman has been a lot more violent and physical in nature than the racist experiences I've had," "told me repeatedly that I can't argue well because I get too emotional," acts less intelligent and less active to avoid conflict, acts more fem at times to prevent transphobia while simultaneously worrying about misogynists who hate women, avoids all-male groups and committees, avoids appearing cheerful and energetic because that is seen as foolish, avoids attention, avoids being "like other women," avoids being perceived as "too sensitive" and playing into stereotypes that women can't take a joke, avoids certain identity-based groups, avoids conflicts with family,

avoids creating hassle and inconvenience for others, avoids debates related to misogyny, avoids elaborating on gender, avoids friction, avoids frictions, avoids further damage, avoids going places alone at night, avoids interacting with male colleagues so they don't assume it's flirting, avoids interactions with opposite sex, avoids male-dominated situations, avoids meeting with cis men, avoids parents, avoids situations where perceived gender creates risk, avoids sounding direct or blunt or assertive, avoids toxic masculinity, avoids unwelcoming unsafe or threatening places and situations, becomes more submissive and lets self be walked all over, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, believes "claim to promote a diverse community is just lip service," believes "if I'm hated for being male it's usually by someone who wishes they could be male like me," conforms to gender expectations at times despite being uncomfortable doing so, conforms to gender expectations to avoid conflict, deals with "bad intentions in their eyes," deals with "model minority" stereotype, deals with being a girl pushed into STEM field and its "masculinity," deals with being called "crazy and stupid" by a professor, deals with being paid less than male colleagues at work, deals with being underestimated, deals with bullying, deals with discomfort of attention, deals with disrespect from other women for choosing high-maintenance aesthetics, deals with erasure, deals with exclusion, deals with family favoring and supporting brother at home, deals with gaslighting, deals with gender discrimination from teacher, deals with gender violence, deals with impositions and disrespect, deals with inappropriate or sexist comments, deals with intersectionality (gender and race/ethnicity), deals with jokes about female weakness and emotional vulnerability, deals with mansplaining, deals with many stereotypes, deals with misgendering, deals with misogynoir, deals with mistreatment, deals with nonbinary erasure, deals with not being taken seriously, deals with not fitting, deals with objectification, deals with pervasive daily gender discrimination, deals with queerphobia, deals with racism or homophobia or fatphobia or a lovely cocktail of sorts, deals with sexism and traditional gender expectations around real estate and children, deals with sexism from family, deals with sexist STEM culture or other male-dominated field, deals with sexual harassment, deals with social isolation, deals with society run by men made for men, deals with splaining, deals with staring, deals with transphobia, deals with transphobia or transmisogyny, deals with unwanted advances, deals with women being told not good enough, develops defense mechanisms that become second nature, disassociates or disengages, does not act feminine, does not befriend straight dudes, does not cope, does not correct pronouns, does not identify as "non-male," experiences abuse or harassment, experiences double bind, experiences nonbinary exclusion, experiences objectification, experiences stereotype threat, experiences toxic masculinity and bullying,

experiences/observes gender discrimination, experiences/observes gender discrimination (misogyny), falls into fawn response, fears, feels anger, feels defensive, feels disrespected, feels exhausted and drained, feels frustrated because fits negative stereotypes for women (no sense of direction, bad driver, etc.), feels pressured by mom to do more house cleaning, feels pressured by parents to have children, feels sad or frustrated, feels uncomfortable disclosing gender experiences, feels uncomfortable disclosing gender issues, files a Title IX, finds it difficult to parse roots of prejudice or discrimination, gives up on correcting pronouns, has delayed response or understanding of "how awful someone has just been," has stories, hates binary, hates having to hide, hides body, hides feminine details and interests, hides gender, hides genderqueer identity from family, hides hobbies/interests, hides pronouns, hides things like menstrual cycles or other problems so as not to be discounted, hides truth, hides truths from family because "it will go badly," hides whole self, internalizes sexism, isolates or withdraws, knows that "individuals who are distasteful towards me because of my gender know not to shove their hate in my face," knows there are prejudices and assumptions about women who look like me, laughs to cope at times, objectified and over-sexualized, observes "girl child being told she is pretty and boy child that he is strong," observes creepy male residents, observes disrespect for unique gender identities, observes everyday sexism at work, observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination in family, observes LGBTQIA+ intolerance, observes males getting more flexibility, observes men displaying gender prejudice against women, observes men talking over and interrupting women, observes misgendering on purpose, observes people defending their gender identities and correcting pronouns, observes sexism and misogyny, observes that people (even women) hate when women are in charge, observes transphobia misgendering and bullying online, plays into gender script to get by, prays to be left alone, pushed into STEM, pushes back, puts on tough exterior, quits, remains closeted at home, resents assumptions, resents concept of toxic masculinity, resents LGBTQIA+, sublimates, withholds, withholds thoughts and opinions because they are not valued, woman in tech, works harder or overcompensates, works in construction and often the only female in the room works in male industry

## Experience with LGBTQIA Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** comes out in safe spaces with trusted people, discovers term 'queer' finds peace, escapes severe depression and anxiety by coming out, feels pride, feels sexuality is not a big deal but does not warrant sharing, has many identities, ignores LGBTQIA+ discrimination,

ignores mean comments, learns and empowers self, leaves a heterosexual presenting marriage, lives open, manages difficult situations, navigates being bisexual while having a boyfriend, no longer needs to pass as straight, not bothered by negative perception, participates in parades, respects people, self-reflects, speaks out, tries to normalize diverse genders and sexualities, uses open communication

## Experience with LGBTQIA Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** acts as ally, advocates for LGBTQIA+ people, believes "everyone is or should be a little bit bi," comes out in safe spaces with trusted people, connects with peers, discovers term 'queer' finds peace, embraces LGBTQIA+ friends who were once closeted, encourages exploration, encourages thoughtful questions, escapes severe depression and anxiety by coming out, feels pride, holds space, learns and empowers self, lives open, makes no assumptions and relies on individuals to share name and pronouns, out with partners or friends, participates in parades, speaks out, surrounds self with positive people and queer people, tries to normalize diverse genders and sexualities, uses open communication

## Experience with LGBTQIA Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** as a nonbinary person deals with being perceived as woman, as a nonbinary person deals with trauma, avoids "Boystown or West Hollywood because it's overwhelming," avoids friction, avoids LGBTQIA+ flags signals or topics, avoids public displays of affection like holding hands or kissing in public, avoids talking about relationships, avoids talking sex or romance, blames, checks in on target of abuse, deals with being told "people are bisexual because they are confused," deals with ace exclusion or erasure, deals with aggression or hate or homophobia, deals with being treated as lesser for being in a heteronormal relationship as a bisexual, deals with biphobia, deals with it "by not giving a shiiii and telling them to go rot," deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with regressive unsupportive culture, deals with stares, deals with toxic masculinity, escapes severe depression and anxiety by coming out, experiences/observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination, fears, fears bullying or violence, fears danger or discomfort, feels that "people might label me as a blue-haired pronoun social justice warrior," feels "not nearly as open about my sexuality as I would like," feels bothered when not taken seriously, feels defensive, feels excluded from the LGBTQIA+

community as aro/ace, feels LGBTQIA+ people are misunderstood, feels lucky can hide sexuality as a bisexual, hides LGBTQIA+ identity as needed, hides rainbow phone, leans into misperceptions as needed for safety, observes cousin having "difficult time telling his extremely Catholic family," observes cruelty towards gay coworker, observes deadnames in systems, observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination, observes harassment of queer people, observes homophobia and politics at work, observes individuals hiding LGBTQIA+ identity as needed, observes LGBTQIA+ co-worker bullied into quitting, observes transphobia, resents, resents people, stays "deeply private about it despite being out," withholds compliments towards other males in order to prevent suspicion about sexuality

## Experience with NEURODIVERGENT Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** asks for help, asserts and communicates needs, breathes, brushes things off, builds confidence, collects self, does not hide, does not push self, does what needs to be done to regulate and feel comforted, establishes routines, experiences cathartic transformation by "finally understanding why I am the way I am," expresses needs, feels sad and moves on, learns and empowers self, lets things go, manages difficult situations, manages symptoms, no longer hides, no longer suffers, plays up eccentricity, practices mindfulness, practices empathy and grace, practices resilience, recognizes triggers, self-reflects, self-soothes, shares about neurodiversity when asked, speaks out, stays mindful of wellbeing, sways back and forth, takes care of own needs, takes care of wellbeing, takes medication, unlearns the masking, uses accommodations, uses fidget toys, uses open communication, uses self-confidence, wears headphones, wears noise dampeners

## Experience with NEURODIVERGENT Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids normies, avoids overstimulation, avoids overthinking, breaks tasks into smaller steps, breathes, dims lights, does what needs to be done to regulate and feel comforted, escapes, feels carefree when alone, gets psychological counseling, goes to a safe space, hopes for the best, learns and empowers self, learns to take care of self better, lets things go, manages symptoms, practices mindfulness, practices resilience, reduces sensory, seen as typical "artist" (eccentric high highs), self-soothes, slows pace, stays mindful of

wellbeing, sways back and forth, takes care of wellbeing, takes medication, uses fidget toys, uses music, uses organizational tools, uses therapy, uses to-do lists, wears headphones, wears noise dampeners

## Experience with NEURODIVERGENT Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids drawing attention to self, avoids eye contact, avoids frictions, avoids judgment, avoids looking like a "poser or as if I am participating in a trend," avoids medication because of stigma, avoids normies, avoids overstimulation, avoids overthinking, avoids seeking accommodations (because guilt), avoids situations, avoids things that overwhelm and cause burnout, believes perceived as offensive, deals with a lack of accommodations, deals with being perceived as "off," deals with being perceived as antisocial, deals with disruptions, deals with hurt feelings, deals with ignorance, deals with internal struggles, deals with pressure to perform neurotypically, deals with stigma, deals with stigma of weakness, disassociates or disengages, does not cope, does not express needs, does not express self, does not share, does not talk about diagnosis, doesn't express needs, drinks alcohol to ease social anxiety, experienced challenges like shame and rejection, experiences exhaustion and depression from masking, experiences meltdowns, experiences microaggressions, experiences pharmacist giving "the look" (iykyk), experiences/observes neurodiversity discrimination, fears, fears being perceived as incapable, feels tired, feels afraid to ask for flexibility or accommodation, feels no one can help "there is nothing anyone can tell me about myself that I do not already know," feels sad and moves on, feels shame about needing medication to be "normal," goes nonverbal, hides circumstances, hides depression, hides diagnosis from those who are closed-minded, hides medication, hides mental health, hides needs, hides neurodiversity, hides scars (from cutting), hides stimming, hides symptoms, hides whole self, isolates or withdraws, isolates to avoid overstimulation, keeps condition to self, keeps secrets, keeps to self, lies, neglects own feelings, neglects own needs, resents disadvantages, resents people, restricts social events, struggles with stigma, sublimates, suppresses feelings in front of others, uses laughter and jokes "to downplay how I truly feel," withdraws sometimes, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** amplifies identity or culture or heritage, approaches prejudice with empathy and does not get offended, believes assumptions are "a reflection of them not me," benefits from Black-sounding nickname, celebrates heritage, challenges or manages stereotypes, connects with own culture, emphasizes strength and growth, encourages respectful curiosity, feels different, feels pride, ignores comments, ignores prejudice and ignorance, ignores race/ethnicity discrimination, ignores racial discrimination, ignores racism, learns and empowers self, learns mother tongue, learns Spanish language, lets things go, manages difficult situations, manages overt and covert racism, navigates two different cultures within, no longer acts white, no longer assimilates, no longer changes name or uses nickname, practices authenticity, resists pressures, self-advocates, self-reflects, uses open communication, uses self-care, uses self-confidence

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates, believes assumptions are "a reflection of them not me," builds resilience, celebrates heritage, connects with own culture, connects with peers, feels different, feels pride, keeps an open mind, learns and empowers self, learns and shares, learns mother tongue, learns Spanish language, looks past obstacles, participates in social justice activities, practices authenticity, uses self-care

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** attempts to rationalize racist behavior, avoids ethnic colors, avoids eye contact, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, avoids looking "fresh-off-the-boat," avoids unwanted additional aggression, blames, creates distractions to protect victims, deals with "international student" assumption, deals with and resists pressures to "act my race," deals with being called "exotic," deals with being mistaken with other Asian co-worker, deals with being singled out by security, deals with bullying, deals with complexity of being adopted, deals with harassment, deals with intersectionality (race and disability), deals with intersectionality (adopted and Chinese), deals with intersectionality (race and gender), deals with model minority myth, deals with racist jokes, deals with racist jokes or slurs, disassociates or disengages, does not cope, downplays life experience, experiences assumptive racism, experiences being Asian and adopted by white family, experiences erasure, experiences identity misattribution and/or

passing fatigue or friction or discomfort, experiences inaccurate appearance-based stereotyping (white seen as Asian), experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Cuban does not speak Spanish), experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Mexican who does not speak Spanish), experiences microaggressions, experiences model minority stereotype, experiences multiracial or multi-ethnicity complexity, experiences race/ethnicity policing, experiences racial bias at work, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at church, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at home, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at home (roommate), experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at school, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at work, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination in retail, experiences racism during COVID, experiences some racial or ethnic discrimination, fears, feels afraid or haunted, feels annoyed and angry when group called out, feels defensive, feels hated, feels it is impossible to eliminate race/ethnicity discrimination, feels racism impacts opportunities, feels spite, feels that "calling out other white people is hard!," feels unlearning is difficult, feels victimized and disadvantaged, feigns indifference, gets angry and ruminates, goes into shell, hides adopted status around Asian peers, hides caste, hides culture or heritage or traditions, hides DACA status, hides ethnicity, hides food, hides home life, hides language, hides opinions, hides race or ethnicity, hides race or ethnicity for the time being, hides religion, hides whole self, "I have no choice but to tolerate it," internalizes racism, isolates or withdraws, observes acting out and struggles, observes code switching, observes code-switching, observes discrimination against Black people and people of color, observes friends dealing with insensitive comments, observes masking, observes negative talk about India and Indian food, observes racism, observes racist customers, observes social segregation or in-group congregation, observes "Americanized" names, processes racism, regrets, rejects own culture to fit in, resents people, shuts down, struggles, takes great care in communication to prevent racism, tolerates disrespect, tolerates race/ethnicity discrimination because no choice, uses vigilance to protect self from violence, works harder or overcompensates, worries

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Experiences Self-Acceptance*

**Underlying Codes:** accepting, acts as an ally, as a Muslim stays resilient in beliefs and practices, as a Muslim uses inner voice to lift self, as an agnostic stays true to self, as a spiritual person ignores or avoids religious pressures or discrimination, believes beliefs are personal, believes in freedom of religion, challenges discrimination or manages stereotypes about others, challenges or manages stereotypes, does God's work, experiences peace, feels a calling, feels

confident, feels empathy for others, feels pride, feels religious pride or joy, ignores comments, ignores hate and remains indifferent, ignores Islamophobia, learns and empowers self, loves to discuss religion, manages difficult situations, meditates, practices allyship at work and respects and supports religious holidays, practices kindness and is a good neighbor that helps kids, practices prayer and penance, practices resilience, practices self-control does not feel anger or rejection as Buddhist, prays, resists pressures, respects and celebrates differences, respects people, respects the emotions of others, self-reflects, speaks up, stays positive, strongly believes in Jesus, uses open communication, waits until marriage to have sex

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Experiences Positive Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** acts as an ally, as a Christian feels for those who haven't experienced the joy and peace of religious experiences, as a Christian holds compassion for those who hold prejudice, as a Christian keeps the peace and sets an example, as a Christian speaks of mainstream concepts like divine intervention and miracles, as a Muslim stays resilient in beliefs and practices, as a Muslim uses inner voice to lift self, as a spiritual person connects with people from many faiths, believes in freedom of religion, benefits from left-wing Buddhist values, experiences others being curious about Wiccan religion, experiences peace, feels confident, feels empathy for others, feels no discrimination or friction, feels pride, feels religious pride or joy, focuses on alignments and wellness, learns and empowers self, listens, listens and learns, loves to discuss religion, meditates, practices allyship at work and respects and supports religious holidays, practices kindness and is a good neighbor that helps kids, practices prayer and penance, practices resilience, respects and celebrates differences, respects the emotions of others, self-reflects, stays positive

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Experiences Negative Feelings*

**Underlying Codes:** as a Catholic experiences assumptions about being conservative when in reality extremely liberal, as a child experienced aggression due to family's religion, as a Christian experiences other Christians that are homophobic fatphobic transphobic racist and sexist, as a Christian minority exits awkward or pushy situations, as a Christian tries not to get offended by insults or taunts, as a Jewish person does not attend public religious events, as a Jewish person feels afraid, as a Jewish person hides religion, as a Jewish person removes Star

of David necklace to avoid tensions, as a Jewish person suffers does not cope, as a Muslim avoids heated discussions, as a Muslim feels at times that "I can't pray in public," as a Pagan experiences disrespect and erasure, as a Roman Catholic experiences "suffocating secularism," as a spiritual person avoids anything religiously demanding, as a spiritual person works hard to be open about my Muslim upbringing and family, as an agnostic stays true to self, as an agnostic/ex-Catholic criticizes Catholicism to avoid association, as an atheist argues morals and ethics do not need religion, as an atheist avoids conflicts or confrontations, as an atheist believes "I can think and act ethically without the threat of going to hell," as an atheist conceals truth, as an atheist performs according to group norms (covers self etc) as needed, as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, as an atheist pretends to believe to avoid conflict, as a non-practicing Catholic pretends to care or understand, as a spiritual person ignores or avoids religious pressures or discrimination, avoids difficult situations, avoids discussing religion or religious topics, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations and people who discriminate, avoids prayer in public, avoids religious contexts, avoids triggering people, avoids wearing hijab when traveling, believes in science not Pentecostal Christianity, believes religious people are "more likely to be racist Trump supporters," blames, challenges or manages stereotypes, copes with antisemitism by laughing it off, disassociates or disengages, downplays life experience, experiences a lack of support for Israel, experiences discrimination "from other Christians if I am not overtly religious or if I am not discriminatory toward other groups," experiences discrimination because Jewish and because not Jewish enough, experiences or expresses distress related to religion, experiences or observes antisemitism, experiences or observes blasphemy and anti-Christian sentiment, experiences or observes Islamophobia, experiences or observes religious tensions, experiences or observes xenophobia, experiences religious impositions or pressures to conform, experiences religious impositions or pressures to conform (pledge and prayers), experiences/observes discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination, experiences/observes religious discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination in public, fakes it, fears, fears antisemitism, fears being assumed Zionist because Jewish, fears for safety, feels "a little embarrassed by my participation in religion," feels angry, feels defensive, feels fear or dread about Islamophobia and xenophobia, feels frustrated, feels prejudice from other Christians at times, feels uneasy around religious people, finds "the lack of support and encouragement of Catholics in education embarrassing," finds it impolite to discuss religion at school or work, hides body, hides Christian religion in liberal settings, hides food, hides holy diet (no beef), hides religion to prevent political polarization tactics, hides whole self, judged and shamed, judges

others, pretends to be religious to avoid conflict, pushes back, rejects conversion attempt by Christian, rejects judgment about Christian beliefs, rejects or resists pressure to conform, remembers details of antisemitic slurs, resents assumptions, resents atheism, resents people, resents science, resists or confronts antisemitism, resists or confronts religious discrimination, separates from Pentecostal family, separates self from Jewish religion due to situation in Gaza, sublimates, uneasy around religious people, unpacks church experiences, uses fake name when working in public to avoid religious assumptions, uses selective disclosure, waits until marriage to have sex, wins arguments, wonders if prioritizing certain holidays is discrimination

## Appendix D: Theme 3 Insights, Categories, and Codes

This document provides the codes, categories, and insights informing Theme 3.

### Theme 3: Coping Strategies: Individual Adaptation, Assimilation, and Resistance

This theme collects and explores strategies participants use to navigate identity-related challenges and preserve their own well-being in social scenarios.

### Theme 3: Underlying Identity Dimension Insights

#### Age Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation relating to age identity, participants used a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To cope with biases tied to age, participants intentionally adapted their behaviors to align with dominant cultural norms and expectations. These adaptations frequently centered around impression management, language adjustments, and presenting as professional. Along these lines, participants described efforts to project youthfulness and vitality through grooming, clothing, and makeup. Specific actions, including "working on a receding hairline" or "shaving armpits," demonstrated how they managed perceptions of their appearance to conform to ideals. Some participants reported altering their speech patterns, including "changing language or using slang" to fit in with peers or "changing language or avoiding slang" to engage with older age groups. Others adopted deliberate behavioral changes, including "changing voice or tone or manner of speaking" or using strategies like "flirts and giggles" to use stereotypes to gain control of social dynamics. Assimilation techniques like "masking," "mirroring," "passing," or "professionalizing" were frequently used to align with dominant norms and expectations.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others actively resisted societal expectations tied to age. They embraced their

identities through authenticity and defiance, challenging stereotypes and asserting their individuality. Some participants highlighted their resistance by "embracing gray hair and a unique look" or "signaling disability with a cane" as deliberate expressions of self. These acts of resistance were often paired with a broader commitment to confidence and authenticity, as illustrated by participants who emphasized "using self-confidence" to navigate biases while staying true to themselves.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate age-related experiences. Some engaged in "self-reflecting to understand one's own place in time" and "checking biases" as strategies to support personal growth and navigate social interactions. These reflective practices enabled participants to "speak out against discrimination or inequality" and "take formal action against discrimination," asserting their agency and challenging biases. Lifelong learning emerged as a key strategy, with participants "asking for help when needed" and continuously building resilience and adaptability.

Participants described using humor. Participants described using humor to navigate social dynamics, like "making fun and playing around with age stereotypes" or "changing language or using slang" to make connections and subvert expectations. Others noted the power of humor to disrupt age-related biases, observing how "surprising people with ideas and questions" could challenge assumptions in playful and unexpected ways.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. Behaviors including "hiding age or birthday", "lying about age to get more respect" were frequently reported. Internalized bias further complicated these coping mechanisms, with some participants "remaining silent" or "downplaying life experience" to avoid judgment, perpetuating societal biases and potentially diminishing self-worth. Avoidance behaviors also included deliberate efforts to withdraw from challenging situations. Participants described creating safe spaces by "hiding details to protect self" or "using privacy at times." Others reported avoiding social interactions altogether, citing behaviors including "disassociates or disengages," "isolating or withdrawing," "hiding face on Zoom calls," "avoiding dating self." Boundary management was another common strategy, with participants "avoiding harmful situations" or "staying as healthy as possible" to protect themselves.

## Class Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation relating to class identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, engaging humor, hiding or avoiding, and in some cases, taking risks like committing crime.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate class-based bias, participants intentionally adapted their behaviors to align with dominant cultural expectations. Along these lines, adaptations often involved projecting affluence through external indicators, including "buying designer items" or "shopping for discounted designer brands or knock-offs." Others engaged in impression management by "cloaking wealth through clothing" or "controlling impressions through grooming or personal hygiene." Adjustments to language and behavior were also common. Participants described "mirroring," "code-switching," "using a customer service voice," or "changing voice or tone or manner of speaking" to blend into different social settings. Some mimicked social habits associated with higher income brackets to navigate class divides. Efforts to project an idealized image included "presenting self as 'classy,'" "composing speech," "storytelling," or "crafting alternative realities on social media" to manage others' perceptions. Participants also noted that they would "lie about their experiences," or "downplay comfort" to avoid appearing privileged. Overcompensation was a frequently cited strategy, with individuals describing how they would "work harder or overcompensate" or "professionalize" in an effort to prove themselves and gain acceptance.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others actively resisted societal expectations tied to class. They asserted their class identities with "exits scene," "exits the games" and by rejecting consumer pressures and materialistic values. Examples included "buying treats," "saving food," or "rejects consumer pressure," "using an old phone" as deliberate choices to challenge societal expectations of affluence. These participants emphasized living authentically, with some describing how they would "live within means" and "practice self-confidence" to maintain their integrity while resisting societal pressures.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate experiences. They described engaging in reflection to challenge stereotypes and address biases, often "self-reflecting" or "observing assumptions of wealth/comfort" to enhance their understanding and empathy. Others

recounted "witnessing the struggles of others" as a means of developing perspective and supporting solidarity. Reflection also led to advocacy and integrity, with participants emphasizing the importance of "maintaining integrity by not changing self for others" and "taking formal action against discrimination" to challenge systemic inequities. Skills and values played a crucial role in these efforts, as participants focused on "centering skills and knowledge rather than class" and "practicing authenticity or transparency." Participants expressed growth in the form of "overcomes shame or stigma." Participants also described acts of kindness and inclusivity, including "practicing hospitality," "extending a leaf to have-nots," "works with impoverished youth," and "taking care of others," which reinforced togetherness and empathy. Resilience and growth were recurring patterns, as participants worked to "gain class consciousness," "practice resilience," "finds power within," and "recognize privilege" in navigating their class identities.

Participants described using humor. For example, they described "pretending to have an NPR mindset" or "treating life like a marathon" as ways to challenge class dynamics playfully. Others recounted "laughing it off" helped them play with societal pressures.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. Participants reported "hiding home life," "hiding money," or "avoiding topics around salary or job" to evade uncomfortable interactions. Maintaining privacy was a common tactic, with individuals "using privacy to hide details or protect self" or "blending in" to avoid unwanted attention. Others opted for selective participation, "turning down invitations" or "living a private life" to control their exposure. Internalized shame was evident in behaviors including "disassociating or disengaging," "feeling small," and "isolating or withdrawing," which highlighted the emotional toll of societal bias and discrimination. Another participant, would "craft alternative realities on social media."

In some select cases, participants resorted to risk-taking like criminal activities as coping mechanisms. These actions reflected the extreme measures taken to address basic needs or societal pressures. Participants described "operating in survival mode" or "committing crime to meet needs" as a means of addressing financial life. Others engaged in behaviors like "stealing to keep up appearances" to navigate class-based pressures. Additional potentially risky strategies included acting out, with individuals describing how they would "act aggressively showy about being lower class."

## Disability Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation relating to disability identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate social scenarios dominated by ableist norms, participants often adopted performative strategies to align with societal expectations. Many described hiding their disabilities to avoid attention, pity, or judgment. Along these lines, examples included "hiding disability at work," "hiding medical equipment," and "wearing hair down to cover hearing aids." Others recounted concealing aspects of their condition, including "silencing medical equipment alarms," "hiding insulin injections from family," or "hiding state (hypomanic or depressive)." Some participants worked to present as able-bodied, using strategies like "camouflages," "presenting as able-bodied to be seen as capable and healthy and strong" or "masking" their struggles. They described efforts to "try to act normal" or "smile when sad" to maintain appearances. Overcompensation was also a recurring pattern, with participants often "working harder or overcompensating" to counter stereotypes of incapacity or "rationing sick days" to meet workplace expectations. Language and behavior adjustments were frequently cited, including "code-switching" and "thinking a lot before expressing self because of mental issues," to manage perceptions and avoid judgment.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others actively resisted societal expectations by asserting their disability identities unapologetically and confronting ableism and bullying. Acts of intentional signaling, including "intentionally signals disability with an assistive device," were seen as visible forms of self-advocacy. Others described actions like "acting unapologetic and outspoken about condition" and "self-advocating" to challenge stigma. Additionally, participants openly engaged in stimming behaviors, rejecting norms that demanded the suppression of neurodivergent sensory needs and expressions.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate experiences. Participants described strategies including "keeping a log of symptoms," "observing ableism," and "observing people staring or doing double-takes at friends' walking cane" to better understand their experiences and prepare for future challenges. Some worked to recognize systemic barriers and bias, as reflected in statements like "identifies anxiety as something lived with rather than a

self-defining feature" and accounts of "dismissive doctors" or "feeling invalidated." Promoting change and education were common themes. Participants "expected ableism" and actively worked to "educate others," "explain spoon theory," and "call out ableism" to dismantle bias and foster understanding. Managing triggers was another critical strategy, with participants describing how they "avoided loud places," "learned and understood triggers and limits," and "used accommodations" to maintain mental and physical health. Resilience and growth were evident in experiences of "practicing acceptance," "experiencing a journey towards resilience and self-empowerment," and "working to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies." For some, witnessing the struggles of others generated a sense of empathy and purpose as in, "works with disabled children validates their feelings."

One participant described finding humor, observing how "disabled people joke and make light of their situation to get along." This was the only mention of humor in the disability dataset.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. Avoidance behaviors often served as self-protective mechanisms but came at the cost of quality of life. Participants frequently described "hiding disability with clothing," "avoiding official diagnosis to prevent trouble in the future," and "disregarding own pain and discomfort to get by." Some reported not asking for help even when needed and "neglecting their own rights and freedoms" or "suppressing their own thoughts" to minimize conflict or stigma. Minimizing presence was a recurring pattern. Participants shared examples of "hiding hyperfixations," "hiding state (hypomanic or depressive)," and "hiding hospitalizations" to avoid being labeled or pitied. Internalized ableism often compounded these behaviors, with individuals "passing as able-bodied," "lowering expectations of academic ability to rely on a buffer when symptoms act up," or "avoiding attention or pity." Selective disclosure was another strategy, with participants describing how they "shared disability if questioned" but otherwise avoided drawing attention to their condition. Seeking solitude was a common approach to managing emotional, psychological, and physical safety. Participants noted strategies like "avoiding loud places" and "seeking solitude to cope." Others recounted how extreme measures, including "leaving a job due to berating and humiliation," were necessary to escape ableist environments. Self-isolation also emerged as a frequent response. Participants described "isolating or withdrawing" and "staying in during flares" to protect themselves from judgment. Some participants "buried themselves in hobbies to cope," avoiding engagement with the broader world.

### Gender Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation relating to gender identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate challenging social scenarios shaped by societal expectations of gender, gender norms, and gender policing, participants often performed behaviors aligned with dominant norms. Some described adopting gender norms to avoid conflict, even when doing so caused personal discomfort. Along these lines, for example, individuals would "conform to gender expectations to avoid conflict" or "dress 'assigned gender at birth' at times." Specific actions included "toning down feminine traits at work," "acts less intelligent and less active to avoid conflict," or "acting more masculine in a room full of boys" to be seen or avoid scrutiny. Others avoided stereotypical femininity by "rejecting the color pink due to its associations and norms." Adjustments to mannerisms and appearance were common. Participants described "changing voice tone or manner of speaking," "using words like bro and man to be more masculine," or "covering self up" to align with social expectations. People-pleasing behaviors were also prevalent, with participants noting how they would "perform different personalities" or "play into gender script to get by" to fit in. Some recounted how they would "lean into femininity or stereotypes at times" while worrying about reinforcing negative perceptions. Overcompensation was a frequent strategy, with participants describing how they would "work harder or overcompensate" or "try extra hard to not make mistakes" to counteract biases against their gender identity. For instance, participants noted that they would "hide things like menstrual cycles or other problems so as not to be discounted," demonstrating the lengths taken to minimize scrutiny and vulnerability. Other participants drew attention to gendered safety considerations, "stays mindful of where I am and staying safe," and "avoids unwelcoming unsafe or threatening places."

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others actively resisted societal expectations tied to gender. Dressing authentically was a key to being true to self, with participants describing how they would "dress based on feelings, not gender norms" or "queer appearance" to reflect their true selves. Some participants highlighted their strong rejection of traditional gender categories by stating they "hate the binary." Self-affirmation played a critical role in these acts of resistance. Some emphasized their

self-worth, affirming statements like "there is nothing wrong with who I am and that I am strong." Participants also rejected gender policing, choosing to "reject gender norms policing or enforcement," "ignore fascists," or transition outright. Pride in identity was another prominent theme, with individuals proudly identifying as a "black fat nonbinary queer person," "genderless," or "proudly identifying as a woman," in defiance of societal pressures to be submissive.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate experiences. Reflection and personal growth were essential strategies for managing gender bias and navigating identity-based challenges. Participants frequently noted the importance of challenging stereotypes and biases. For example, one participant reflected on early lessons in gender bias, stating they "observe 'girl child being told she is pretty and boy child that he is strong.'" Others described how they would "learn and grow" from experiences of misgendering or discrimination. Gaining perspective was another critical component of this process. Participants described how they would "learn to cut own hair," "leave gender on the table," or "let go or move on" to prioritize transformation over societal expectations. Advocacy for equity emerged as a central theme, with participants "standing up against gender discrimination," "supporting gender and LGBTQ equality," and "challenging sexist remarks" as acts of commitment to systemic change. Confidence and growth were recurring patterns, as participants described "asserting self more to be taken seriously," "gaining confidence," "focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences," and "learning to not care what people think" as ways to develop resilience and self-assurance. One agender participant mentioned welcoming curiosity and questions.

Participants described using humor. Humor was a valuable tool for navigating and resisting gender-based challenges. Participants described how they would "joke to get by" or "mock sexist comments" to manage uncomfortable situations and diffuse tension. Humor also played a role in self-awareness, with some participants noting how they would "self-deprecate" to deal and manage their emotions.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. One participant stated that they avoid creating hassle and inconvenience for others. Another, "plays into gender script to get by." Strategic privacy was a frequently cited tactic, with individuals describing how they would "use privacy to protect self" or "hide pronouns" in unsafe environments. Limiting exposure was another approach, as participants recounted actions including "avoiding toxic masculinity,"

"avoiding situations where perceived gender creates risk," and "withdrawing when 'I don't have the energy.'" Desiring inpresence was a recurring pattern among participants. Some expressed a wish to "prefer to be invisible" or "pray to be left alone" as coping mechanisms to navigate hostile or invalidating situations. Avoidance and concealment strategies included "hiding genderqueer identity from family," "avoiding male-dominated situations," and "remaining closeted at home" to protect themselves from judgment or harm.

Related to hiding and avoidance, participants described minimizing femininity or feminine traits. To avoid bias or discrimination, individuals suppressed feminine traits. Participants noted how they would "avoid being 'like other women'" or "dress modestly to hide body" to escape judgment or harassment. Others avoided being perceived as foolish by "avoiding appearing cheerful and energetic" or rejected "stereotypically feminine hobbies." Emotional suppression was another common strategy, with participants describing how they would "remain silent," "withhold thoughts and opinions because they are not valued," or "suppress their own thoughts" to avoid conflict or invalidation. In contrast to the minimization of feminine traits, participants described amplifying masculinity or masculine traits. Masculine traits were often emphasized to gain respect or align with societal values. Participants described how they would "act like one of the boys," "lower voice and speak with authority," or "show no weakness" to assert dominance.

## LGBTQIA+ Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation related to LGBTQIA+ identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate challenges tied to societal expectations, many participants performed behaviors aligned with dominant cultural norms to protect themselves from scrutiny, discrimination, or harm. Hiding identity was a common strategy, with individuals describing how they would "act straight as needed" or "pass as straight at times" to avoid judgment. Others maintained ambiguity about their relationships by "referring to lesbian girlfriend as a roommate" or "using the term partner to describe relationship(s)." Participants also described minimizing presence to avoid drawing attention. Examples included "avoiding public displays of affection like holding hands or kissing in public," "avoiding LGBTQIA+ flags signals or topics," and "hiding rainbow phone." These actions reflect the efforts made to mitigate the risks of being LGBTQIA+. Selective disclosure

was another recurring pattern. Participants noted how they would "come out in safe spaces with trusted people" or "stay deeply private about it despite being out," carefully balancing the need for safety with truth and authenticity. Navigating misperceptions was another strategy, with some participants describing how they "lean into misperceptions as needed for safety," including "acting straight and leaning into the misperception of having a girlfriend." Others avoided conflict by "self-censoring" or "ignoring or changing the topic when witnessing homophobia." The notion of "on a need-to-know basis" also emerged as a guiding principle, as participants explained how they "consider sexuality an 'on a need-to-know basis'" to manage risks of disclosure. Fear and suppression often accompanied these strategies, with participants expressing how they "fear bullying or violence" or "feel unsafe," underscoring the emotional toll of being LGBTQIA+.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others need to be true and open with their LGBTQIA+ identity. Living authentically was a prominent act of defiance, with participants describing how they "live open," "out with partners," or "out about their same-sex marriage and family." One nonbinary participant expressed their resistance boldly, stating they "shout 'fuck you' from the rooftop" in defiance of societal constraints. Another participant "participates in parades." Some described their responses to bias with anger or resignation, recounting how they would "deal with it 'by not giving a shiii and telling them to go rot.'" This strategy, while reflecting personal resistance, also underscored the heavy emotional toll of existing with an LGBTQIA+ identity. In contrast, some participants worked to create inclusive spaces, contributing to cultural shifts by "using progressive nongendered language" or encouraging exploration of diverse identities. Speaking out in support of LGBTQIA+ people was another common form of resistance, with participants noting how they would "surround self with positive people and queer people" to foster solidarity, radical care, and affirm identities.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate experiences. Reflection and personal growth were essential tools for managing identity-based challenges. Some participants described the process of understanding their identities as transformative. They would "figure self out," "discover term 'queer' and find ease," and "live open" to affirm their sense of self. Participants also reflected on systemic challenges, recounting how they "observe LGBTQIA+ discrimination," "observe deadnames in systems," or "observe LGBTQIA+ co-worker bullied into quitting," which informed their strategies for advocacy and personal resilience. Commitment to change was evident in actions like "creating accepting environments," "setting boundaries,"

“being an ally,” and “trying to educate despite personal conflict,” reflecting the desire to support growth and understanding within themselves and broader communities.

Participants described using humor. Some participants used humor as a form of playful empowerment, with one nonbinary individual stating they “shout ‘fuck you’ from the rooftop” in a bold rejection of societal norms. Others described “laughing to get along” or mocking stereotypes, including labels like “blue-haired pronoun social justice warrior,” to deal with social expectations.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. Avoidance behaviors were frequently used to minimize risks or protect personal safety. Selective presence allowed participants to navigate different social contexts, with strategies including using a “don’t ask, don’t tell approach,” “staying deeply private about it despite being out,” or remaining “closeted with family but out with others.” Protecting relationships was also a concern, with participants describing how they would “protect partner from uncertain people” or “refer to lesbian girlfriend as a roommate” to avoid conflict or scrutiny, and “hides having two mothers.” Minimizing exposure to harmful interactions was another common strategy. Participants noted actions like “acting straight as needed,” “avoiding LGBTQIA+ flags signals or topics,” “avoiding public displays of affection,” or “stepping away from LGBTQIA+ discrimination because triggering.” Avoidance and concealment extended to physical spaces, with individuals describing how they would “avoid Boystown or West Hollywood because it’s overwhelming,” “hide LGBTQIA+ identity as needed,” or “avoid talking about relationships” to manage discomfort or danger.

## Neurodiversity Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation related to neurodiversity identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate spaces dominated by neurotypical norms, participants adopted behaviors designed to align with societal expectations, often at the cost of suppressing their authentic selves. Masking and mimicking were commonly reported strategies. Along these lines, participants noted how they would “mask all the time,” “mimic neurotypicals,” or “match energy and speech patterns of others” to blend in. Some described more structured approaches, including “scripting exactly what to say” for

interactions or "pretending to not need accommodations" to avoid stigma, with one participant stating they "use an alternate persona to get by." Suppressing needs was another frequent strategy, with participants avoiding requests for support to avoid being perceived as different or burdensome, for example "avoids medication because of stigma, avoids seeking accommodations (because guilt)." Examples included "not asking for help," "hiding diagnosis from those who are closed minded," or outright "refusing help." Overcompensation was a recurring pattern, with individuals describing how they "work harder or overcompensate," "work longer hours off the clock," or "overplan" to counteract biases and demonstrate competence. Controlled interactions and environmental management were also key components of coping. Participants described how they "control exposure to social situations," "prepare for social interactions," "uses organizational tools," and "take copious notes to avoid forgetting," all aimed at reducing anxiety and maintaining perceptions of normativity. Others implemented strategies to manage their environment and symptoms, including "establishing routines," "reducing sensory exposure," and "taking medication" to mitigate overstimulation or burnout.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to conform, others actively resisted neurotypical expectations, choosing instead to be their authentic selves. Stimming and sensory tools were often used unapologetically as self-regulatory behaviors. Actions like "sways back and forth," "uses stimming," and "wears noise dampeners" exemplify participants' rejection of norms that demand the suppression of neurodivergent needs. Participants also described how they "use music" and "wear headphones" to create controlled environments that cater to their sensory needs while resisting neurotypical pressures. Mindfulness and resilience further supported resistance, with individuals describing how they "focus on breath," "practice resilience," and "remind self that everyone thinks they are the main character" to reframe challenges and maintain well-being.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate experiences. Reflection and personal growth emerged as critical tools for managing identity-based challenges. Some participants described journeys toward self-acceptance, recounting how they "experience cathartic transformation by finally understanding why I am the way I am," "unlearn masking," and "no longer hide." Participants highlighted how they "educate others about neurodiversity" and "share about neurodiversity when asked" to challenge stereotypes and foster understanding. Adaptive strategies further supported personal growth and resilience. Examples included "jerryrigging workarounds," "learning to take care of self better," and "sharing

neurodivergent experience to ease pressures." Others use therapy, mindfulness, "recognize triggers" and "socialize to reduce stress levels and alleviate symptoms." These proactive behaviors reflect participants' dedication to self-advocacy and problem-solving in the face of ableism.

Participants described using humor. Participants described how they would "use laughter and jokes to downplay how I truly feel," leveraging humor to navigate pain and emotional distress. Others described how they would "brush things off" or laugh at misunderstandings to maintain social harmony while navigating complex situations.

Participants described various forms of hiding, avoidance – and emotional suppression as coping strategies in response to the challenges of navigating a world structured around neurotypical expectations and norms. Some recounted strategies to minimize exposure to overwhelming or judgmental situations. These included "controlling exposure to social situations," "avoiding overstimulation," and "restricting social events" to manage sensory and emotional overload while maintaining a sense of control. Concealing identity was another prevalent coping mechanism, with participants sharing how they "hide neurodiversity," "hide diagnosis from those who are closed-minded," and "keep condition to self" to shield themselves from misunderstanding, judgment, or stigma.

Strategic withdrawal was frequently cited as a means of self-preservation, allowing participants to preserve energy and regain equilibrium. They described how they would "withdraw sometimes," "go to a safe space," or "isolate to decompress." Avoidance and isolation were also evident in specific behaviors like "avoiding seeking accommodations (because of guilt)," "binge-watching TV to escape from everything," and "hiding symptoms" to avoid stigma. These actions provided temporary relief from external pressures and allowed participants to manage their emotional and sensory well-being.

Emotional suppression was used to avoid vulnerability. Participants shared experiences of "suppressing feelings in front of others," "neglecting their own needs," "hiding stimming," "guarding communication," and "hiding scars (from cutting)." For some, frustration with neurotypical pressures led to performative responses, including "weaponizing spite as a tool." Others described the emotional toll of constant distress, highlighting behaviors like "going nonverbal," "engaging in maladaptive daydreaming," and "drinking alcohol to ease social anxiety." These narratives collectively reflect the mental and emotional strain participants

endure while navigating environments that often lack understanding or accommodation for their needs.

## Race/Ethnicity Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation related to race and ethnicity identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate bias and discrimination tied to race and ethnicity, participants intentionally aligned their behaviors with dominant cultural norms. Along these lines, concealing identity was a common strategy, with participants recounting how they would "hide race or ethnicity for the time being," "use privacy to protect self," or "control impressions using clothing or makeup" to avoid drawing attention. One participant described "using racial ambiguity" as a nuanced way to manage perceptions and avoid discrimination. Code-switching was frequently used to blend in and minimize perceived differences. Participants described actions including "changing voice or tone or manner of speaking" or "using assimilation" as strategies to fit into dominant cultural spaces. Some participants "leaned into assumptions," illustrating how individuals used stereotypes or perceptions when navigating bias. Whitewashing was another prevalent coping mechanism, with participants describing how they would "act white," "adopt a white name," or "use eurocentric standards" to gain acceptance or avoid judgment. Specific examples included "using deodorant after cooking and eating" or "using room freshener after meal" to suppress cultural markers. Some participants noted how they "opted out or skipped class if hair wasn't looking eurocentric," underscoring the pressures to conform to dominant beauty standards.

Overcompensation was a recurring pattern, as participants described how they would "work harder or overcompensate" or "control first impressions" to counter stereotypes and prove their competence. One participant reflected on "taking care to not appear 'ghetto,'" highlighting the emotional and behavioral toll of managing societal expectations. Another explained how they would "put white people at ease," highlighting the pressures of managing white fragility or discomfort in interracial dynamics.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others actively resisted societal expectations tied to race or ethnicity. Participants expressed pride in their identities, sharing how they would "feel pride," "self-advocate," and

"amplify identity or culture or heritage" to challenge systemic biases. Resistance often took the form of rejecting societal norms. Participants described how they "no longer assimilated," "rejected ignorance to protect mental health," and "used self-confidence" to navigate oppressive systems. Advocacy and support were central to this resistance, with participants recounting actions like "challenging racist bosses," or "supporting wronged party or victim."

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate challenges. Reflection enabled participants to build self-awareness and resilience in the face of discrimination. Some described how they "grew and changed," "maintained integrity by not changing self for others," and "aligned with principled people" as part of their journeys. Challenging stereotypes was a key component of this process. Participants recounted how they "managed overt and covert racism," "dealt with pressures to 'act my race,'" and "observed 'Americanized' names" to better understand and address expectations. Letting go of emotional exhaustion was another strategy, with participants describing how they would "move on or let go," "laugh it off," or "brush it off" to navigate the psychological toll of discrimination. Participants also engaged in education and growth by "educating others," "recognizing internalized racism," and "studying history and sociology" to deepen their understanding and refuse prejudice. Safety and vigilance were common themes, with participants emphasizing the need to "use vigilance to protect self from violence" and "try to be cautious and aware of surroundings."

Participants described using humor. Participants used self-deprecating humor, sharing how they would "make jokes to make light of race/ethnicity discrimination experiences" or "use self-deprecating humor" to diffuse tension and assert control. Others described how they would "laugh it off" to maintain emotional balance and navigate challenging interactions.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. Concealing differences was a common strategy, with participants reporting how they "hid race or ethnicity," "avoided ethnic colors," or "changed eating habits" to blend in and evade prejudice. Avoiding harmful situations was another frequent tactic, as participants described "avoiding harmful situations," "isolating or withdrawing," and "staying quiet to avoid attention" to minimize conflict or risk. One participant noted they would "avoid eye contact," while others described "using attributional distancing," separating themselves from negative stereotypes. Avoidance and concealment were pervasive strategies, with participants recounting how they "hid culture or heritage or traditions," "used racial ambiguity," or "remained silent" to navigate discriminatory environments. Some described how they "mirrored discriminator," an example of managing bias through mimicry as a potential

survival mechanism. Other approaches to hiding and avoidance involve using whiteness or racial ambiguity. Passing was a recurring pattern, with participants describing how they "passed as white," "looked white," or "acted white" to access privileges or avoid discrimination. One participant shared how they "hid adopted status around Asian peers." Overemphasizing whiteness was another strategy, as participants described how they "whitewashed self" or "adopted a white name" to gain perceived social or professional advantages.

## Religion Identity Insights

In acts of self-preservation relating to religious identity, participants described a wide range of behavioral coping mechanisms, including assimilation and conformity, resisting or rejecting norms, engaging in reflection and change, finding humor, and hiding or avoiding.

Participants described assimilation and conformity as coping mechanisms. To navigate social spaces where their religious identity might provoke conflict or misunderstanding, participants adopted behaviors that aligned with dominant cultural norms. These adaptations often included feigning belief, adapting practices, or concealing their religious identity. Along these lines, some participants described how they would "pretend to be religious to avoid conflict," "perform according to group norms," or "pretend to care or understand" in order to minimize tensions. Others reported being "taught to claim particular religious affiliation" to align with social expectations or "use a fake name when working in public to avoid religious assumptions." For example, atheists sometimes "practice ambiguity as needed" to sidestep potential conflict. Calculated adjustments, including "making a point to present as a 'progressive' Christian," helped individuals align with situational expectations.

Participants described acts of resistance. While many participants need to assimilate or conform, others actively resisted societal expectations tied to religion. Open expressions of faith or identity were cited as powerful forms of resistance. Participants described "working hard to be open about my Muslim upbringing," "feeling religious pride or joy," or "rejecting judgment about Christian beliefs" as ways to push back against pressures. Acts of defiance included behaviors including "arguing that morals and ethics do not need religion" (as expressed by atheists) or "rejecting conversion attempts by Christians." Others critiqued established norms by "separating from Pentecostal family" or "distancing self from Jewish religion due to the situation in Gaza," reflecting conscious decisions to reject certain cultural or religious expectations.

Participants relied on reflection, learning, and growth to navigate religious identity challenges. Reflection played a central role in helping individuals adapt and grow. Participants described internalized conflict. Internal struggles influenced by external pressures were evident in participants' reflections. Some described how they "felt embarrassed by participation in religion" or "resented atheism," highlighting the complexity of navigating internalized feelings shaped by societal norms and expectations. Participants described "recognizing privileges afforded to Christians in the U.S." and "remembering details of antisemitic slurs" as ways to deepen their understanding of systemic dynamics. Others highlighted personal growth through introspection, including "unpacking church experiences," "resisting or confronting antisemitism," or "focusing on alignments and wellness." Balancing multiple identities was a recurring pattern. Participants shared experiences of "distress related to religion," "navigating changing relationships with church," or "connecting with people from many faiths" as part of their self-discovery journey. Building resilience was another important aspect, with individuals noting how they "stayed resilient in beliefs and practices," "set boundaries," and "used inner voice to lift self" to maintain their emotional and spiritual well-being.

Participants described using humor. One participant described how they would "cope with antisemitism by laughing it off," using humor to reduce emotional strain.

Participants described many forms of hiding and avoidance. Avoidance and concealment were common strategies for managing perceived threats or discomfort related to religious identity. Some participants engaged in withholding identity by "using privacy to protect self," "hiding Jewish details," or "accommodating religious family members at times" to maintain peace and safety. Others avoided potentially hostile situations by "exiting awkward or pushy situations" or "avoiding triggering people" to reduce confrontation or harm. Concealment was a deliberate approach for many, with participants noting how they would "hide religion to prevent political polarization tactics" or "remove religious symbols to avoid tensions." Avoidance behaviors extended to public practices, including "avoiding prayer in public," "avoiding discussing religion or religious topics," or "avoiding wearing hijab when traveling" to evade judgment or discrimination. Concealment was another common strategy. Participants described efforts to "hide holy diet (no beef)" or "remove Star of David necklace to avoid tensions" to minimize judgment or unwanted attention.

### Theme 3: Underlying Categories

## Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)

Data (codes) informing this category demonstrate assimilation or conformity regarding social norms.

## Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects/Confronts Social Norms)

Data (codes) informing this category demonstrate resistance or rejection of social norms.

## Copes Using Adaptive Strategies

Data (codes) informing this category demonstrate prosocial or healthy approaches towards self-preservation.

Within this general category, subcategories “Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change” and “Copes Using Humor” emerged.

## Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies

Data in this category demonstrates problematic approaches towards self-preservation.

Within this general category, subcategory “Copes By Hiding or Avoiding” emerged across the data, and subcategories emerged in various areas: “Copes By Taking Risks or Committing Crime” (Class only), “Copes by Repressing Femininity or Feminine Traits Due to Associations or Internalized Misogyny (Gender only)”, “Copes by Amplifying Masculinity or Masculine Traits Due to Associations or Social Value (Gender only)”, “Copes Using Whiteness or Passing (Race/Ethnicity only)”

## Theme 3: Underlying Codes

### Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** acts agreeable, acts or appears more mature, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, adopts current trends music memes, assimilates into dominant culture, changes behavior to fit in, changes language or avoids slang, changes language or uses slang, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, controls emotions, controls impressions

through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions through health and wellness, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, exercises impression management, flirts and giggles, learns technologies, lies, masks, mirrors, passes, plays into perceptions to increase sales, professionalizes, projects confidence, shaves armpits, stays as healthy as possible, straightens hair, uses indicators or signifiers, wears little skirts and pigtails to appeal to older men, works harder or overcompensates, works on receding hairline, works out

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects/Confronts Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** confronts problems, embraces gray hair and unique look, expresses love, helps people, ignores people, knows self-worth, learns and empowers self, learns technologies, lives life, practices authenticity, practices authenticity or transparency, projects confidence, proves people wrong, recognizes own prejudice, reports discrimination, resents and rejects assumptions (that every woman has children), resents assumptions, resists pressures, respects people, self-advocates, sets boundaries, shuts them up, signals disability with cane, speaks up, supports arguments with fact, surprises people with ideas and questions, takes formal action against discrimination, thugs it out when underestimated, uses self-confidence, uses indicators or signifiers, uses open communication

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, adopts current trends music memes, asks for help, avoids harmful situations, builds intergenerational relationships, centers skills and knowledge rather than age, checks own bias, code-switches, confronts problems, connects with family, connects with peers, controls emotions, demonstrates empathy and sympathy during interactions, educates people, embraces gray hair and unique look, expresses love, grows up or matures, helps people, involves self in more serious discussions, knows self-worth, learns and empowers self, learns technologies, lives life, makes fun or jokes around, manages difficult situations, observes age discrimination and acts, practices authenticity, practices authenticity or transparency, professionalizes, projects confidence, proves people wrong, recognizes own prejudice, reports discrimination, resents and rejects assumptions (that every woman has children), resents assumptions, resists pressures, respects people, seeks support, self-advocates, self-reflects, sets boundaries, shares age to signal maturity, signals

disability with cane, speaks up, stays as healthy as possible, supports arguments with fact, surprises people with ideas and questions, takes formal action against discrimination, thugs it out when underestimated, uses privacy at times (hides details or protects self), uses self-confidence, uses indicators or signifiers, uses open communication, uses self-care, vents with friends, works out

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category:* Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change

**Underlying Codes:** adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, asks for help, centers skills and knowledge rather than age, checks own bias, disassociates or disengages, educates people, experiences age discrimination, experiences/observes age discrimination at home, experiences/observes age discrimination at school, experiences/observes age discrimination at work, experiences/observes age discrimination in medical contexts, experiences/observes age discrimination in the queer community, experiences/observes ageism, felt undervalued, grows up or matures, ignores people, involves self in more serious discussions, knows self-worth, learns and empowers self, learns technologies, lives life, manages difficult situations, observes age affinity group dynamics, observes age discrimination, observes age discrimination (against women), observes age discrimination against elderly, observes age discrimination against old people, observes age discrimination against older people, observes age discrimination against younger people, observes age discrimination and acts, observes age discrimination at work, observes age discrimination or erasure (girls made invisible), observes grand's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes mom's struggles with age discrimination at school, observes parent's struggles with age discrimination at work, observes stereotypes about elderly being less productive, practices authenticity, practices authenticity or transparency, projects confidence, recognizes own prejudice, resents and rejects assumptions (that every woman has children), resists pressures, self-advocates, self-reflects, sets boundaries, speaks up, supports arguments with fact, surprises people with ideas and questions, thugs it out when underestimated, used to fight it, uses self-confidence, uses open communication, uses privacy at times (hides details or protects self), uses self-care

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category:* Copes Using Humor

**Underlying Codes:** changes language or uses slang, makes fun or jokes around, surprises people with ideas and questions

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category:* Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies

**Underlying Codes:** acts agreeable, acts or appears more mature, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, assimilates into dominant culture, avoids dating self, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, centers skills and knowledge rather than age, changes behavior to fit in, changes language or avoids slang, changes language or uses slang, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, controls emotions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions through health and wellness, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, disassociates or disengages, distracts people, downplays life experience, fears, feels exhausted, flirts and giggles, hides age or birthday, hides face on Zoom calls, hides gender, hides political views, hides sexuality, hides whole self, ignores people, isolates or withdraws, lies, masks, mirrors, obscures self, passes, plays into perceptions to increase sales, professionalizes, proves people wrong, resists pressures, shaves armpits, shuts them up, stays quiet, stays silent, thugs it out when underestimated, used to fight it, uses privacy at times (hides details or protects self), vents with friends, wears little skirts and pigtails to appeal to older men, works harder or overcompensates, works on receding hairline

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category:* Copes By Hiding or Avoiding

**Underlying Codes:** acts agreeable, acts or appears more mature, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, adopts current trends music memes, assimilates into dominant culture, avoids dating self, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, centers skills and knowledge rather than age, changes behavior to fit in, changes language or avoids slang, changes language or uses slang, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, controls emotions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions through health and wellness, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, disassociates or disengages, distracts people, downplays life experience, hides age or birthday, hides face on Zoom calls, hides gender, hides political views, hides sexuality, hides whole self, involves self in more serious discussions, isolates or withdraws, lies, masks, mirrors, obscures self, passes, plays into perceptions to increase sales, professionalizes, sets boundaries, shaves armpits, stays as

healthy as possible, stays quiet, stays silent, straightens hair, thugs it out when underestimated, uses privacy at times (hides details or protects self), wears little skirts and pigtails to appeal to older men, works harder or overcompensates, works on receding hairline

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** acts more white, acts out, adopts hobbies or activities to fit in, assimilates into dominant culture, blends in, buys designer items, buys knock-offs, buys knockoffs, changes body language, changes spoken language, changes the subject, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, cloaks wealth through clothing, code-switches, composes speech, conforms, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions through storytelling, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, crafts alternative realities on social media, downplays comfort, exaggerates about travel to fit in, fits in, keeps up with peers, lies, masks, mimics, mimics social habits of higher income brackets, mirrors, people-pleases, performs as more affluent, presents best self, presents self as "classy," professionalizes, steals to keep up appearances, strategically levels up to gain status, uses "customer service voice," uses class indicators or signifiers, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects/Confronts Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids class indicators or signifiers, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges status quo, confronts problems, disarms class expectations, discusses differences, does not "desire to make those more privileged than me comfortable," does not deal with facades, doesn't care, exits scene, exits the games, feels pride, finds power within, focuses on what can be controlled, gains class consciousness, laughs it off, learns and empowers self, lets things go, lives life, lives within means, overcomes shame or stigma, pays no mind, practices authenticity, reads, rejects consumer pressure, resents assumptions, resents disadvantages, resists or confronts class discrimination, resists pressures, saves food, saves money, seeks clarity, self-reflects, sets boundaries, strives to live a sustainable lifestyle, uses an old phone, uses open communication, uses self-confidence

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with principled people, asks for help, avoids overthinking, builds support networks, centers skills and knowledge rather than class, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges status quo, changes mindset, code-switches, confronts problems, connects with family, connects with peers, controls impressions through storytelling, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, disarms class expectations, discusses differences, educates people, feels empathy, feels guided by values, finds power within, focuses on what can be controlled, gains class consciousness, gives back, laughs it off, learns and empowers self, lets things go, listens, lives life, lives within means, manages difficult situations, opts out of activities that are unaffordable, overcomes shame or stigma, practices authenticity, practices gratitude, practices hospitality, practices inclusivity, practices kindness or generosity, practices resilience, professionalizes, projects calm vibe, recognizes own privilege, recognizes parents' efforts to lift them, rejects consumer pressure, resists or confronts class discrimination, resists pressures, seeks clarity, seeks in-group experiences and relationships, seeks out love and kindness, self-reflects, sets boundaries, strategically levels up to gain status, strives to live a sustainable lifestyle, sublimates, takes care of others, takes care of self and others, takes nothing personally, talks to people, tells stories of achievement, translates for immigrant family, treats life like a marathon, tries to put empathy and sensitivity into practice, uses an old phone, uses mindfulness or mental health therapy, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides details to protect self), uses self-confidence, witnesses the struggles of others, works and builds confidence, works with impoverished youth

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with principled people, asks for help, builds support networks, centers skills and knowledge rather than class, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges status quo, changes, changes mindset, confronts problems, controls emotions, disarms class expectations, disassociates or disengages, discusses differences, does not "desire to make those more privileged than me comfortable," does not deal with facades, doesn't care, educates people, exits scene, exits the games, feels guided by values, finds power within, focuses on what can be controlled, gains class consciousness, gives back, ignores class discrimination, laughs it off, learns and empowers self, lets things go, lives life, lives within means, manages

difficult situations, matures, observes "hand-making versions of popular shirts," observes assumptions of wealth/comfort, observes bullying, observes class discrimination, observes coping mechanisms, observes family shame, observes intersectionality (class and gender), observes people buying brands to fit in, obtains education, overcomes shame or stigma, pays no mind, practices authenticity, practices gratitude, practices resilience, reads, recognizes own privilege, recognizes parents' efforts to lift them, rejects consumer pressure, resents assumptions, resists or confronts class discrimination, resists pressures, saves money, seeks clarity, seeks out love and kindness, self-reflects, sets boundaries, takes care of self and others, takes nothing personally, talks to people, tells stories of achievement, treats life like a marathon, uses mindfulness or mental health therapy, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides details to protect self), uses self-confidence, witnesses the struggles of others, works and builds confidence, works with impoverished youth

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Humor*

**Underlying Codes:** acts aggressively showy about being lower class, acts out, believes this is "embryonic gobbledegook," laughs it off, makes fun of class discrepancies, makes fun or jokes around, pretends to have an NPR mindset

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** acts aggressively showy about being lower class, acts more white, acts out, adopts hobbies or activities to fit in, assimilates into dominant culture, avoids class indicators or signifiers, avoids frictions, avoids money topics, avoids overthinking, blames, blends in, buys designer items, buys knock-offs, buys knockoffs, changes spoken language, changes the subject, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, cloaks wealth through clothing, code-switches, commits crime, commits crime to meet needs, conforms, controls emotions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions through storytelling, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, crafts alternative realities on social media, deals with being patted down for drugs and feeling exploited without just cause, deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with not being invited, deals with parents having no papers, deals with peer resentment over free lunch and waived fees, deals with shock by laughing it out, disassociates or disengages, distracts, dominates, downplays comfort, downplays life

experience, dresses down, exaggerates about travel to fit in, fears, feels both shame and luck, feels burden, feels defensive, feels self-conscious, feels small, forgets feelings, hides caste, hides home life, hides language, hides money, hides political and economic beliefs, hides spoken language in certain contexts, hides truth, hides whole self, ignores class discrimination, isolates or withdraws, keeps low profile, laughs it off, lets things go, lies, makes fun of class discrepancies, makes fun or jokes around, masks, mimics social habits of higher income brackets, mirrors, operates in survival mode, people-pleases, performs as less affluent, performs as more affluent, presents self as "classy," pretends to have an NPR mindset, professionalizes, resents assumptions, resents disadvantages, resents people, resents the "DEI narrative," resists pressures, saves food, saves money, self-censors, shuts down when snubbed, stays silent, steals, steals to keep up appearances, strategically levels up to gain status, sublimates, suicidal at times, talks less because thinks differently, turns down invitations, uses "customer service voice," uses class indicators or signifiers, uses privacy (hides details to protect self), works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** acts more white, adopts hobbies or activities to fit in, assimilates into dominant culture, avoids class indicators or signifiers, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, avoids money topics, blends in, buys designer items, buys knock-offs, buys knockoffs, centers skills and knowledge rather than class, changes, changes body language, changes spoken language, changes the subject, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, cloaks wealth through clothing, code-switches, commits crime, commits crime to meet needs, composes speech, conforms, controls emotions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions through storytelling, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, crafts alternative realities on social media, disassociates or disengages, distracts, downplays comfort, downplays life experience, dresses down, exaggerates about travel to fit in, exits scene, exits the games, hides caste, hides home life, hides language, hides money, hides political and economic beliefs, hides spoken language in certain contexts, hides truth, hides whole self, isolates or withdraws, keeps low profile, lies, lives a private life, lives in middle class bubble, manages difficult situations, masks, mimics, mimics social habits of higher income brackets, mirrors, obscures self, observes "hand-making versions of popular shirts," operates in survival mode, opts out of activities that are unaffordable, performs as less affluent, performs as more affluent, presents best self, presents self as "classy," professionalizes, protects others'

feelings by concealing information, protects privilege or wealth, saves food, saves money, seeks in-group experiences and relationships, self-censors, sets boundaries, shuts down when snubbed, stays silent, steals, steals to keep up appearances, sublimates, turns down invitations, uses "customer service voice," uses class indicators or signifiers, uses privacy (hides details to protect self), works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes By Taking Risks or Committing Crime (Class only)*

**Underlying Codes:** acts aggressively showy about being lower class, acts out, as lower middle class defensively scoffs at luxuries, challenges status quo, commits crime, commits crime to meet needs, lies, operates in survival mode, steals, steals to keep up appearances

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** camouflages, code-switches, makes more "plausible" excuses for delays caused by disability, masks, passes, presents as able-bodied, presents as able-bodied to be seen as capable and healthy and strong, smiles when sad, suppresses own thoughts, tries to act normal, tries to be worthy and 'normal,' tries to control perceptions, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects/Confronts Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** accepts whole self, acts unapologetic and outspoken about condition, advocates for accessibility and inclusion, calls out ableism, confronts ableism and bullying, confronts or manages stereotypes, confronts problems, experienced disability discrimination and settled out of court, helps people, ignores cruelty, ignores stares, intentionally signals disability with an assistive device, learns and empowers self, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), protects self, reports discrimination, resists pressures, seeks better ways to handle ableism, self-advocates, sets boundaries, stims, supports inclusivity, takes care of disabled friend, tries to speak up against ableism, uses accommodations, uses self-confidence, works to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies, works with disabled children validates their feelings

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category:* Copes Using Adaptive Strategies

**Underlying Codes:** accepts whole self, acts unapologetic and outspoken about condition, advocates, advocates for accessibility and inclusion, asks for help, avoids loud places, calls out ableism, cares, code-switches, confronts ableism and bullying, confronts or manages stereotypes, confronts problems, connects with family, connects with others who share similar experiences, connects with peers, distracts, does accessibility research, does not hide issues because needs are important, does not take things personally, educates people, experiences a journey towards resilience and self-empowerment, explains disability as needed, explains spoon theory, forgets feelings, guards, helps people, ignores people, ignores stares, intentionally signals disability with an assistive device, keeps log of symptoms, learns and empowers self, learns and understands triggers and limits, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), manages condition, manages difficult situations, manages stereotypes, observes disability resilience, participates in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health, practices acceptance, practices kindness and empathy, protects self, redirects conversations, relies on self to solve problems, reports discrimination, resists pressures, respects and cares for disabled people, respects people, seeks better ways to handle ableism, seeks solitude to cope, seeks support, sees only black women doctors now, self-advocates, sets boundaries, shames people when they are ableist, shares, shares circumstances in case there is an emergency, shares disability if questioned, shows strength, sleeps, smiles when sad, stays in during flares, stims, studies marginalized communities, sublimates, suggests listening to 'not-normal' people to improve learning, supports inclusivity, takes care of disabled friend, takes online asynchronous courses to accommodate own disability, tries to prevent stigma, tries to speak up against ableism, uses accommodations, uses alone time to decompress, uses open communication, uses prescription medication, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses self-confidence, uses therapy, works with disabled children validates their feelings

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category:* Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change

**Underlying Codes:** accepts whole self, acts unapologetic and outspoken about condition, asks for help, confronts or manages stereotypes, does accessibility research, does not hide issues because needs are important, does not take things personally, educates people, expects ableism, experienced disability discrimination and settled out of court, experiences a journey

towards resilience and self-empowerment, experiences dismissive doctors, experiences erasure, experiences invalidation, experiences invisible/hidden disability intolerance or judgement, experiences pressure of judgements and assumptions, experiences stigma, experiences/observes ableism, explains disability as needed, explains spoon theory, identifies anxiety as something in body and not something that can always be controlled, identifies anxiety as something lived with (separate from the self) rather than a self-defining feature, ignores cruelty, ignores people, ignores stares, keeps log of symptoms, learns and empowers self, learns and understands triggers and limits, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), manages condition, manages difficult situations, manages perceptions, manages stereotypes, observes "less trust for coworkers who have disabilities", observes disability discrimination at work, observes disability resilience, observes disability stress, observes disabled coworkers mask their feelings and work harder, observes disabled people joke and make light of their situation to get along, observes disabled people struggling, observes family member's traumatic experience, observes illegal disability discrimination, observes invalidation of disability grief, observes lack of accommodations because of poor infrastructure, observes people staring or doing double-takes at friends walking cane, observes rampant ableism, observes scoffing at scooter or wheelchair, observes sibling ask for help, observes sibling withdraw or isolate, observes the r slur, observes unsolicited "think positive" advice, opts out, participates in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health, practices acceptance, protects self, redirects conversations, resists pressures, seeks better ways to handle ableism, self-advocates, sets boundaries, shares, shares circumstances in case there is an emergency, studies marginalized communities, suggests listening to 'not-normal' people to improve learning, takes online asynchronous courses to accommodate own disability, thinks a lot before expressing self because of mental issues, uses accommodations, uses open communication, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses self-confidence, uses therapy, works to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies, works with disabled children validates their feelings

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category:* Copes Using Humor

**Underlying Codes:** makes fun or jokes around, observes disabled people joke and make light of their situation to get along, smiles when sad

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids attention or pity, avoids frictions, avoids loud places, avoids official diagnosis to prevent trouble in future, avoids situations, becomes a devout homebody, camouflages, code-switches, deals with (suicidal) ideation, deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with medical trauma, disregards own pain and discomfort to get by, distracts, does not ask for help, does not ask for help even when needed, does not cope, does not identify as disabled despite disabilities, downplays pain, expects ableism, experiences dismissive doctors, experiences erasure, experiences invalidation, experiences invisible/hidden disability intolerance or judgement, experiences stigma, fears, feels medical trauma, feels overwhelmed by noise, feels uncomfortable sharing disability circumstances, forgets feelings, guards, has embarrassing experiences, hides disability, hides disability at work, hides disability with clothing, hides disability/struggles, hides food, hides hospitalizations, hides hyperfixations, hides insulin injections from family, hides medical equipment, hides medication, hides multivitamin supplements, hides state (hypomanic or depressive), hides whole self, ignores cruelty, ignores people, ignores stares, isolates or withdraws, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), lowers "expectations of my academic ability so i can rely on a buffer when my symptoms are acting up," makes more "plausible" excuses for delays causes by disability, manages difficult situations, masks, misses out, misses out on sports because of performance standards, neglects own rights and freedoms, observes the r slur, opts out, passes, presents as able-bodied, presents as able-bodied to be seen as capable and healthy and strong, protects self, rations sick days, redirects conversations, relies on self to solve problems, resists pressures, self-medicates, silences medical equipment alarms, smiles when sad, stays in during flares, sublimates, suppresses own thoughts, tries to act normal, tries to be worthy and 'normal,' tries to control perceptions, tries to prevent stigma, uses marijuana, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), wears hair down to cover hearing aids, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids attention or pity, avoids frictions, avoids loud places, avoids official diagnosis to prevent trouble in future, avoids situations, becomes a devout homebody, camouflages, code-switches, deflects comments, disregards own pain and discomfort to get by, distracts, does not ask for help, does not ask for help even when needed, does not identify as

disabled despite disabilities, downplays pain, guards, hides disability, hides disability at work, hides disability with clothing, hides disability/struggles, hides food, hides hospitalizations, hides hyperfixations, hides insulin injections from family, hides medical equipment, hides medication, hides multivitamin supplements, hides state (hypomanic or depressive), hides whole self, identifies anxiety as something in body and not something that can always be controlled, identifies anxiety as something lived with (separate from the self) rather than a self-defining feature, ignores cruelty, ignores stares, intentionally signals disability with an assistive device, isolates or withdraws, learns and understands triggers and limits, leaves job (because berating and humiliation about disability), lowers "expectations of my academic ability so i can rely on a buffer when my symptoms are acting up," makes more "plausible" excuses for delays caused by disability, manages condition, manages perceptions, manages stereotypes, masks, misses out, neglects own rights and freedoms, opts out, passes, presents as able-bodied, presents as able-bodied to be seen as capable and healthy and strong, protects self, rations sick days, redirects conversations, relies on self to solve problems, seeks solitude to cope, self-advocates, sets boundaries, silences medical equipment alarms, sleeps, smiles when sad, stays in during flares, sublimates, suggests listening to 'not-normal' people to improve learning, suppresses own thoughts, takes online asynchronous courses to accommodate own disability, tries to act normal, tries to be worthy and 'normal,' tries to control perceptions, tries to prevent stigma, uses alone time to decompress, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), wears hair down to cover hearing aids, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** accepts assumptions at times, accepts gender norms and expectations, accepts misgendering, acts less intelligence and less active to avoid conflict, acts like one of the boys, acts more fem at times to prevent transphobia while simultaneously worrying about misogynists who hate women, acts more masculine, acts more masculine in a room full of boys, acts perfect to prove self, acts serious and reserved, adopts more masculine activities, appears put together capable and strong, asserts to be taken seriously, assimilates into dominant culture, assimilates into gender norms, becomes more submissive and lets self be walked all over, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, chameleons, changes mannerisms, changes personality for others, changes voice tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, compromises self to fit workplace expectations, conforms to gender expectations at times despite being uncomfortable doing so, conforms to gender expectations to avoid conflict, controls emotions,

dresses "assigned gender at birth" at times, falls into fawn response, goes along to get along, leans into femininity or stereotypes at times, leans into masculine energy when presenting ideas/self, masks, masks as female at times, navigates public perceptions and expectations around body and strength, people-pleases, performs "more masculine or feminine depending on the social situation," performs different personalities (stereotypes), performs gender as needed, plays into gender script to get by, plays into stereotypes, primed to understand male behavior having grown up with brothers and being raised like a boy, professionalizes, tries extra hard to not be labeled typical woman, tries extra hard to not make mistakes, tries not to react too much, tries to be more masculine, tries to fit in, uses she/her pronouns at work, uses she/they at times just to make it easier on other people, uses words like bro and man to be more masculine, wears boots, wears glasses to be taken more seriously, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** "remind myself the power i hold as a woman," advocates for others, applies mixed coping mechanisms depending on situation, argues as needed, asserts to be taken seriously, assists the victim, avoids all-male groups and committees, believes "if someone is being obviously bullied or discriminated against then someone needs to call it out," believes gender equality is a human rights issue, believes gender identity "only matters to me" and "what other people think is irrelevant," believes gender stereotypes suck, believes misogyny runs deep, blocks gaze, calls out sexism, calls out sexist comments, centers own feelings, centers self rejects impositions, challenges sexist remarks, confronts misogynists, confronts problems, confronts sexism (if family), corrects the perpetrator, creates comfortable workplace for women, develops defense mechanisms that become second nature, does not "allow men to treat women like they are not worth love respect and kindness," does not befriend straight dudes, does not care what people say, dresses based on feelings not gender norms, educates people, educates self on realities of gender-based discrimination, elevates femininity and care, evades hateful rhetoric targeted towards men online, faces situations, feels anger, feels pride, fights back, files a title ix, finds identity outside of gender, focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences, identifies as a black fat non binary queer person, identifies as a woman proudly, identifies as feminist, identifies as genderless, identifies as intersectional, ignores fascists, includes and loves people, knows that "individuals who are distasteful towards me because of my gender know not to shove their hate in my face," learns and empowers self,

learns to cut own hair, learns to fight back from father, learns to not care what people think, mocks sexist comments, overpowers bullies, performs queer femininity, practices authenticity, prevents stereotypes, proves them wrong, pushes back, queers appearance, quits, raises voice at home asking for rights but not in workplace, rejects color pink due to its associations and norms, rejects gender discrimination, rejects stereotypes, rejects stereotypically feminine hobbies, removes self from misogynist situations, repeats points to be heard, reports discrimination, resents assumptions, resists or rejects gender norms policing or enforcement, resists pressures, responds with confrontation or humor at times, responds with sarcasm at times, sets boundaries, showcases strengths, shows no weakness, shuts them up, speaks clearly and sternly, speaks loudly to be heard, speaks up against misogyny, stands up against gender discrimination, stands up for self, stays alert, stays on top of game in conversations, supports equality, supports gender and LGBTQ equality, supports gender equality, supports other women, supports those who endure gender-based discrimination, takes action and proves gender does not define a person, takes on a dominant persona, talks about gender discrimination, talks to others about harassment to cope with it, tells self "i'm more than my body," thinks "that being a female is not a disadvantage but often society tells me otherwise," transcends gender, transitions, tries to get supervisor involved, undermines sexist people, unlearns impositions, uses inner voice, uses open communication, uses self-confidence, voices opinion about sexist behaviors at times, wears pronoun pins, welcomes curiosity and questions, withholds, withholds details about gender, works with all women

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** "remind myself the power i hold as a woman," accepts self and identity without external validation, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, adjusts to new names, advocates for others, advocates for self and others, applies mixed coping mechanisms depending on situation, argues as needed, asks for help, asserts to be taken seriously, assists the victim, believes everyone deserves love, believes gender equality is a human rights issue, believes gender identity "only matters to me" and "what other people think is irrelevant," believes gender stereotypes suck, blocks gaze, calls out sexism, calls out sexist comments, centers own feelings, centers self rejects impositions, challenges sexist remarks, checks out, code-switches, comes out, confronts misogynists, confronts problems, connects clothing with feelings and expectations, connects with alternative social interactions (cares for kids and animals), connects with peers, consumes media "that represents people like me to feel less

excluded from society," controls emotions, cooks for self, copes by including manager when coworkers are sexist, corrects the perpetrator, creates comfortable workplace for women, cultivates a knowledgeable expert persona, differentiates professional relationships and personal relationships, disassociates or disengages, documents work and proves abilities, does not "allow men to treat women like they are not worth love respect and kindness," does not care what people say, does not identify as "non-male," does not let confusion or discrimination impact own identity, does own thing, does things for personal convenience, dresses based on feelings not gender norms, educates self on realities of gender-based discrimination, elevates femininity and care, escapes, evades hateful rhetoric targeted towards men online, experiences "being my best self and doing right unto others is what makes me a man," experiences gratitude, faces situations, feels pride, fights back, files a title IX, finds identity outside of gender, finds they/them pronouns validating, focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences, focuses on own path, gains confidence, gains confidence and respect through physical strength, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, hopes for the best, identifies as a black fat nonbinary queer person, identifies as a woman proudly, identifies as feminist, identifies as genderless, identifies as intersectional, ignores fascists, ignores gender issues, ignores people, ignores pronouns, ignores sexism, ignores sexism (if rando), ignores sexist comments, includes and loves people, keeps a fun friendship bubble of diverse and authentic people, keeps loving relationships (partner and friends), learns and empowers self, learns from co-worker who is a transgender man, learns from making and correcting a misgendering mistake, learns from young age to defend self from sexist and predatory behavior, learns the right pronouns, learns to cut own hair, learns to not care what people think, leaves gender on the table, lets things go, lets work speak for abilities, lifts women, lives cosmic rather than material, lives life, makes fun or jokes around, manages difficult situations, navigates public perceptions and expectations around body and strength, overpowers bullies, performs queer femininity, practices acceptance, practices authenticity, practices mindfulness, presents femininity as normal, professionalizes, proves self, proves self through career, proves them wrong, pushes back, queers appearance, quits, recognizes own male privilege, rejects gender discrimination, rejects stereotypes, reports discrimination, resists or rejects gender norms policing or enforcement, resists pressures, respects people, seeks safety, seeks support, self-affirms "there is nothing wrong with who I am and that I am strong," self-reflects, serves as witness to sexist situations informally and formally, sets boundaries, shares clothes to help others with body dysmorphia, showcases strengths, slows down in order to use the right pronouns, speaks clearly and sternly, speaks loudly to be heard, speaks up, speaks up against

misogyny, speculates about being nonbinary, stands up against gender discrimination, stands up for self, stays alert, stays on top of game in conversations, sublimates, supports equality, supports gender and LGBTQ equality, supports gender equality, supports other women, supports those who endure gender-based discrimination, takes action and proves gender does not define a person, talks about gender discrimination, talks to others about harassment to cope with it, tells self "I'm more than my body," transcends gender, transitions, tries to educate, understands it's their problem, understands patterns, understands that sexism is normal, unlearns impositions, uses inner voice, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses psychotherapy, uses self-confidence, uses smarts, uses social engineering, uses tea and snacks and yoga, voices opinion about sexist behaviors at times, wears boots, wears pronoun pins, welcomes curiosity and questions, working on things, works hard to be the person they are, works on confidence, works with all women

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Learning, Growth, Change*

**Underlying Codes:** "remind myself the power i hold as a woman," adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, adjusts to new names, applies mixed coping mechanisms depending on situation, asks for help, asserts to be taken seriously, believes gender identity "only matters to me" and "what other people think is irrelevant," believes gender stereotypes suck, believes in minding own business, believes misogyny runs deep, centers own feelings, centers self rejects impositions, comes out, cooks for self, develops defense mechanisms that become second nature, disassociates or disengages, does own thing, does things for personal convenience, educates people, educates self on realities of gender-based discrimination, elevates femininity and care, evades hateful rhetoric targeted towards men online, feels confident, feels disrespected, files a title IX, finds identity outside of gender, finds pronouns and transitioning difficult to follow, finds they/them pronouns validating, focuses on gender-affirming moments rather than negative experiences, focuses on own path, forgets feelings, gains confidence, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, has stories, hopes for the best, hopes that technology will solve gender bias and discrimination and uplift people, identifies as a black fat nonbinary queer person, identifies as a woman proudly, identifies as feminist, identifies as genderless, identifies as intersectional, ignores fascists, ignores people, ignores sexism, ignores sexism (if rando), ignores sexist comments, includes and loves people, learns and empowers self, learns from co-worker who is a transgender man, learns from making

and correcting a misgendering mistake, learns from young age to defend self from sexist and predatory behavior, learns that talking and kindness does not always work, learns the right pronouns, learns to cut own hair, learns to fight back from father, learns to not care what people think, leaves gender on the table, lets things go, lets work speak for abilities, lives cosmic rather than material, lives life, manages difficult situations, navigates public perceptions and expectations around body and strength, negotiates identity and clothing, notices gender fluid people do not have bathrooms or changing rooms, notices the term "gay" used as a slur, observes "girl child being told she is pretty and boy child that he is strong," observes creepy male residents, observes disrespect for unique gender identities, observes everyday sexism at work, observes LGBTQIA+ discrimination in family, observes LGBTQIA+ intolerance, observes males getting more flexibility, observes men displaying gender prejudice against women, observes men talking over and interrupting women, observes misgendering on purpose, observes people defending their gender identities and correcting pronouns, observes sexism and misogyny, observes that people (even women) hate when women are in charge, observes transphobia, misgendering, and bullying online, overpowers bullies, practices acceptance, practices authenticity, practices mindfulness, prefers Latine over Latinx, primed to understand male behavior having grown up with brothers and being raised like a boy, quits, regrets being steered away from computer science "because no one in the room looked like me," rejects gender discrimination, rejects stereotypes, resents assumptions, resents concept of toxic masculinity, resists or rejects gender norms policing or enforcement, resists pressures, self-reflects, serves as witness to sexist situations informally and formally, sets boundaries, speaks clearly and sternly, speaks loudly to be heard, speaks up, speaks up against misogyny, speculates about being nonbinary, stays alert, stays on top of game in conversations, thinks "that being a female is not a disadvantage but often society tells me otherwise," transcends gender, transitions, tries to educate, undermines sexist people, understands gender discrimination happens all the time, understands it's hard or even dangerous to correct people or stand your ground, understands it's their problem, understands patterns, understands people have trouble with gender outside the social script, understands that sexism is normal, unlearns impositions, uses inner voice, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses psychotherapy, uses self-confidence, uses smarts, uses tea and snacks and yoga, voices opinion about sexist behaviors at times, welcomes curiosity and questions, working on things, works on confidence

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Humor*

**Underlying Codes:** feels frustrated because fits negative stereotypes for women (no sense of direction, bad driver, etc.), finds "jabs at women" jokes funny, laughs along when experiencing sexism, laughs to cope at times, makes fun or jokes around, mocks sexist comments, performs different personalities (stereotypes), responds with confrontation or humor at times, responds with sarcasm at times, self-deprecates

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** "if i correct people im a bitch", "it is what it is", "the sexism i've experienced as a woman has been a lot more violent and physical in nature than the racist experiences i've had", "told me repeatedly that i can't argue well because i get too emotional", accepts assumptions at times, accepts gender norms and expectations, accepts misgendering, acts less intelligence and less active to avoid conflict, acts like one of the boys, acts more fem at times to prevent transphobia while simultaneously worrying about misogynists who hate women, acts more masculine, acts more masculine in a room full of boys, acts perfect to prove self, acts serious and reserved, adopts more masculine activities, asserts to be taken seriously, assimilates into dominant culture, assimilates into gender norms, avoids all-male groups and committees, avoids appearing cheerful and energetic because that is seen as foolish, avoids attention, avoids being "like other women", avoids being perceived as "too sensitive" and playing into stereotypes that women can't take a joke, avoids certain identity-based groups, avoids conflicts with family, avoids creating hassle and inconvenience for others, avoids debates related to misogyny, avoids elaborating on gender, avoids frictions, avoids further damage, avoids going places alone at night, avoids interacting with male colleagues so they don't assume its flirting, avoids interactions with opposite sex, avoids male-dominated situations, avoids meeting with cis men, avoids parents, avoids situations where perceived gender creates risk, avoids sounding direct or blunt or assertive, avoids toxic masculinity, avoids unwelcoming unsafe or threatening places and situations, becomes hyper independent, becomes more submissive and lets self be walked all over, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, believes "claim to promote a diverse community is just lip service", believes "males & females are different", believes "professors used to discriminate between men and women resulting in demotivation to the male section of the class", believes misogyny runs deep, blames, blocks

gaze, chameleons, changes mannerisms, changes personality for others, changes voice tone or manner of speaking, checks out, code-switches, compromises self to fit workplace expectations, conflates gender and sexuality, conforms to gender expectations at times despite being uncomfortable doing so, conforms to gender expectations to avoid conflict, controls emotions, covers self up, deals with "bad intentions in their eyes", deals with "masochism and teasing but nothing serious", deals with being payed less than male colleagues at work, deals with bullying, deals with discomfort of attention, deals with erasure, deals with exclusion, deals with gaslighting, deals with gender discrimination from teacher, deals with gender violence, deals with impositions and disrespect, deals with inappropriate or sexist comments, deals with jokes about female weakness and emotional vulnerability, deals with mansplaining, deals with many stereotypes, deals with misgendering, deals with misogynoir, deals with mistreatment, deals with nonbinary erasure, deals with not being taken seriously, deals with not fitting, deals with objectification, deals with pervasive daily gender discrimination, deals with queerphobia, deals with racism or homophobia or fatphobia or a lovely cocktail of sorts, deals with sexism and traditional gender expectations around real estate and children, deals with sexism from family, deals with sexist stem culture or other male-dominated field, deals with sexual harassment, deals with social isolation, deals with society run by men made for men, deals with splaining, deals with staring, deals with transphobia, deals with transphobia or transmisogyny, deals with unwanted advances, deals with women being told not good enough, deepens voice, develops a sense of misandry, develops defense mechanisms that become second nature, disassociates or disengages, distracts, does not act feminine, does not befriend straight dudes, does not care what people say, does not cope, does not correct pronouns, does not identify as "non-male", dresses "assigned gender at birth" at times, escapes, experiences double bind, experiences nonbinary exclusion, experiences objectification, experiences stereotype threat, experiences toxic masculinity and bullying, falls into fawn response, fears, feels anger, feels defensive, feels disrespected, feels exhausted and drained, feels sad or frustrated, fights back, files a title ix, forgets feelings, gives up, gives up on correcting pronouns, has to "tolerate several people professionally", has to be more assertive than male coworkers, hates binary, hates having to hide, hides body, hides feminine details and interests, hides gender, hides genderqueer identity from family, hides hobbies/interests, hides pronouns, hides things like menstrual cycles or other problems so not to be discounted, hides truth, hides truths from family because "it will go badly", hides whole self, hopes for the best, ignores fascists, ignores gender issues, ignores people, ignores pronouns, ignores sexism, ignores sexism (if rando), ignores sexist comments, internalizes sexism, isolates or withdraws, laughs along when experiencing sexism, laughs to

cope at times, leans into femininity or stereotypes at times, leans into masculine energy when presenting ideas/self, leaves hair down to cover face, lets things go, lowers voice and speaks with authority, makes fun or jokes around, masks, masks as female at times, mocks sexist comments, negotiates identity and clothing, notices the term "gay" used as a slur, overpowers bullies, people-pleases, performs different personalities (stereotypes), performs gender as needed, plays into gender script to get by, plays into stereotypes, prays to be left alone, prefers to be invisible, professionalizes, proves self, proves self through career, proves them wrong, puts on tough exterior, quits, raises voice at home asking for rights but not in workplace, refrains from asking questions, refrains from discussing things like beauty or pop culture "and other topics that i feel could make me seen as less than", rejects color pink due to its associations and norms, remains closeted at home, removes self from misandrist situations, repeats points to be heard, reports discrimination, resents assumptions, resents diversity, resents lgbtqia+, resists or rejects gender norms policing or enforcement, resists pressures, responds with confrontation or humor at times, responds with sarcasm at times, seeks safety, self-censors, self-deprecates, self-medicates, shows no weakness, shuts them up, shies away from being "overly emotional" in professional settings, stays alert, stays quiet, stays silent, stays silent at work, sublimates, takes on a dominant persona, tones down feminine traits at work, tries extra hard to not be labeled typical woman, tries extra hard to not make mistakes, tries not to react too much, tries to avoid disparaging remarks from males, tries to be more masculine, tries to fit in, tries to get supervisor involved, understands gender discrimination happens all the time, understands that sexism is normal, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses social engineering, uses words like bro and man to be more masculine, wears glasses to be taken more seriously, withdraws when "i don't have the energy", withholds, withholds details about gender, withholds opinions about lgbtqia+, withholds thoughts and opinions because they are not valued, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** accepts assumptions at times, accepts gender norms and expectations, accepts misgendering, acts less intelligence and less active to avoid conflict, acts like one of the boys, acts more fem at times to prevent transphobia while simultaneously worrying about misogynists who hate women, acts more masculine, acts more masculine in a room full of boys, acts perfect to prove self, acts serious and reserved, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, adopts more masculine activities, assimilates into dominant culture, assimilates into gender

norms, avoids all-male groups and committees, avoids appearing cheerful and energetic because that is seen as foolish, avoids attention, avoids being "like other women", avoids being perceived as "too sensitive" and playing into stereotypes that women can't take a joke, avoids certain identity-based groups, avoids conflicts with family, avoids creating hassle and inconvenience for others, avoids debates related to misogyny, avoids elaborating on gender, avoids friction, avoids frictions, avoids further damage, avoids going places alone at night, avoids interacting with male colleagues so they don't assume its flirting, avoids interactions with opposite sex, avoids male-dominated situations, avoids meeting with cis men, avoids parents, avoids situations where perceived gender creates risk, avoids sounding direct or blunt or assertive, avoids toxic masculinity, avoids unwelcoming unsafe or threatening places and situations, becomes hyper independent, becomes more submissive and lets self be walked all over, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, blocks gaze, chameleons, changes mannerisms, changes personality for others, changes voice tone or manner of speaking, checks out, code-switches, colors hair, compromises self to fit workplace expectations, conforms to gender expectations at times despite being uncomfortable doing so, conforms to gender expectations to avoid conflict, covers self up, deepens voice, demonstrates knowledge to prove self, disassociates or disengages, distracts, does not act feminine, dresses "assigned gender at birth" at times, escapes, falls into fawn response, gives up on correcting pronouns, goes along to get along, hates having to hide, hides body, hides feminine details and interests, hides gender, hides genderqueer identity from family, hides hobbies/interests, hides pronouns, hides things like menstrual cycles or other problems so not to be discounted, hides truth, hides truths from family because "it will go badly", hides whole self, isolates or withdraws, leans into femininity or stereotypes at times, leans into masculine energy when presenting ideas/self, leaves hair down to cover face, lowers voice and speaks with authority, masks, masks as female at times, people-pleases, performs "more masculine or feminine depending on the social situation", performs different personalities (stereotypes), performs gender as needed, plays into gender script to get by, plays into stereotypes, prays to be left alone, prefers to be invisible, presents femininity as normal, professionalizes, refrains from asking questions, refrains from discussing things like beauty or pop culture "and other topics that i feel could make me seen as less than", rejects color pink due to its associations and norms, rejects stereotypically feminine hobbies, remains closeted at home, removes self from misandrist situations, retreats and holds opinions back when faced with authority figures who exhibit toxic masculinity and male fragility, self-censors, self-deprecates, stays quiet, stays silent, stays silent at work, sublimates, takes on a dominant persona, tones down feminine traits at work, tries not to react too much, uses

privacy (hides details or protects self), uses she/her pronouns at work, uses she/they at times just to make it easier on other people, uses smarts, uses social engineering, uses words like bro and man to be more masculine, withdraws when "i don't have the energy", withholds, withholds details about gender, withholds opinions about lgbtqia+, withholds thoughts and opinions because they are not valued, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes by Repressing Femininity or Feminine Traits Due to Associations or Internalized Misogyny*

**Underlying Codes:** acts less intelligent and less active to avoid conflict, avoids appearing cheerful and energetic because that is seen as foolish, avoids attention, avoids being "like other women," avoids being perceived as "too sensitive" and playing into stereotypes that women can't take a joke, does not act feminine, dresses modestly or hides body, dresses neutrally, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, hides feminine details and interests, prefers to be invisible, refrains from discussing things like beauty or pop culture "and other topics that I feel could make me seen as less than," rejects color pink due to its associations and norms, rejects stereotypically feminine hobbies, shys away from being "overly emotional" in professional settings, tones down feminine traits at work, uses words like bro and man to be more masculine, works in construction and often the only female in the room, works in male industry

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes by Amplifying Masculinity or Masculine Traits Due to Associations or Social Value*

**Underlying Codes:** acts like one of the boys, acts more masculine, acts more masculine in a room full of boys, acts serious and reserved, adopts more masculine activities, appears put together capable and strong, asserts self more to be taken seriously, behaves as overly masculine/feminine, changes personality for others, changes voice tone or manner of speaking, compromises to fit workplace expectations, deepens voice, does not identify as "non-male," has to be more assertive than male coworkers, learns that talking and kindness does not always work, learns to fight back from father, lowers voice and speaks with authority, navigates public perceptions and expectations around body and strength, overpowers bullies, performs "more masculine or feminine depending on the social situation," primed to understand male behavior

having grown up with brothers and being raised like a boy, puts on tough exterior, showcases strengths, shows no weakness, speaks clearly and sternly, speaks loudly to be heard, takes on a dominant persona, tries to be more masculine, uses words like bro and man to be more masculine, woman in tech, works harder or overcompensates, works in construction and often the only female in the room, works in male industry

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** acts straight and leans into misperception of having girlfriend, acts straight as needed, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, leans into misperceptions as needed for safety, masks, passes, plays into stereotypes, refers to lesbian girlfriend as a roommate, uses term 'partner' to describe relationship(s)

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** confronts problems, contributes to inclusive norms by using progressive nongendered language, dates both men and women, deals with aggression or hate or homophobia, deals with it "by not giving a shiiii and telling them to go rot," deals with regressive unsupportive culture, educates others who hold harmful opinions about the lgbtqia+ community, embraces lgbtqia+ friends who were once closeted, encourages exploration, escapes severe depression and anxiety by coming out, feels pride, fights back with words or by throwing things, learns and empowers self, lives open, no longer needs to pass as straight, out about their same-sex marriage and family, out with partners or friends, participates in parades, prevents bad reactions, protects partner from uncertain people, reports discrimination, resists pressures, sets boundaries, shouts as a nonbinary person resisting constraints shouts "fuck you" from the rooftop, speaks out, speaks out in support of lgbtqia+ people, surrounds self with positive people and queer people, uses open communication

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** acts as ally, acts friendly, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, appreciates multicultural activities including parades, checks in on target of abuse, comes out in safe spaces with trusted people, confronts problems, connects with peers, considers sexuality

an "on a need to know basis," contributes to inclusive norms by using progressive nongendered language, dates both men and women, develops thick skin, educates people, embraces lgbtqia+ friends who were once closeted, encourages exploration, encourages thoughtful questions, escapes severe depression and anxiety by coming out, feels pride, has many identities, holds space, ignores lgbtqia+ discrimination, ignores mean comments, ignores or changes topic when witnessing homophobia, ignores people, learns and empowers self, leaves a heterosexual presenting marriage, listens, listens and supports lgbtqia+ family, lives open, makes no assumptions and relies on individuals to share name and pronouns, manages difficult situations, not bothered by negative perceptives, out with partners or friends, participates in parades, resists pressures, respects multiculturalism, respects people, seeks safety, seeks support, self-reflects, sets boundaries, shouts as a nonbinary person resisting constraints shouts "fuck you" from the rooftop, speaks out, speaks out in support of lgbtqia+ people, surrounds self with positive people and queer people, tries to educate and hold space for other points of view despite personal conflict, tries to normalize diverse genders and sexualities, uses open communication

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change*

**Underlying Codes:** adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, appreciates multicultural activities including parades, as a nonbinary person deals with being perceived as woman, as a nonbinary person deals with trauma, comes out in safe spaces with trusted people, develops thick skin, educates others who hold harmful opinions about the lgbtqia+ community, educates people, encourages exploration, encourages thoughtful questions, feels lgbtqia+ people are misunderstood, has many identities, ignores lgbtqia+ discrimination, ignores mean comments, ignores or changes topic when witnessing homophobia, ignores people, learns and empowers self, leaves a heterosexual presenting marriage, listens and supports lgbtqia+ family, lives open, manages difficult situations, no longer needs to pass as straight, not bothered by negative perceptives, observes cousin having "difficult time telling his extremely catholic family," observes cruelty towards gay coworker, observes deadnames in systems, observes lgbtqia+ discrimination, observes harassment of queer people, observes homophobia and politics at work, observes individuals hiding lgbtqia+ identity as needed, observes lgbtqia+ co-worker bullied into quitting, observes transphobia, resists pressures, seeks safety, self-reflects, sets boundaries, speaks out, stays "deeply private about it despite being out," steps away from lgbtqia+ discrimination because triggering, surrounds self with positive people and queer

people, tries to educate and hold space for other points of view despite personal conflict, tries to normalize diverse genders and sexualities, understands bollywood is transphobic, uses a "dont ask dont tell" approach, uses open communication, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses term 'partner' to describe relationship(s), withholds compliments towards other males in order to prevent suspicion about sexuality

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Humor*

**Underlying Codes:** feels that "people might label me as a blue haired pronoun social justice warrior," laughs to get along, leans into misperceptions as needed for safety, as a nonbinary person resisting constraints shouts "fuck you" from the rooftop

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** acts straight and leans into misperception of having girlfriend, acts straight as needed, as a nonbinary person deals with trauma, avoids "boystown or west hollywood because it's overwhelming," avoids friction, avoids lgbtqia+ flags signals or topics, avoids public displays of affection like holding hands or kissing in public, avoids talking about relationships, avoids talking sex or romance, blames, checks in on target of abuse, deals with it "by not giving a shiiii and telling them to go rot," deals with mean jokes or slurs, deals with regressive unsupportive culture, deals with stares, deals with toxic masculinity, develops thick skin, does not flaunt, fears, fears bullying or violence, fears danger or discomfort, feels defensive, feels lucky can hide sexuality as a bisexual, fights back with words or by throwing things, goes along to get along, hides having two mothers, hides lgbtqia+ identity as needed, hides rainbow phone, hides whole self, holds back, ignores mean comments, ignores people, leans into misperceptions as needed for safety, manages difficult situations, masks, obscures self, passes, prevents bad reactions, protects partner from uncertain people, remains closeted as needed, reports discrimination, resents, resists pressures, seeks safety, self-censors, shouts as a nonbinary person resisting constraints shouts "fuck you" from the rooftop, stays "deeply private about it despite being out," steps away from lgbtqia+ discrimination because triggering, talks with target of abuse, understands bollywood is transphobic, uses a "dont ask dont tell" approach, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses term 'partner' to describe

relationship(s), withholds compliments towards other males in order to prevent suspicion about sexuality

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** acts straight and leans into misperception of having girlfriend, acts straight as needed, adapts attitudes or behaviors to situation, avoids friction, avoids lgbtqia+ flags signals or topics, avoids public displays of affection like holding hands or kissing in public, avoids talking about relationships, avoids talking sex or romance, considers sexuality an "on a need to know basis," does not flaunt, feels sexuality is not a big deal but does not warrant sharing, goes along to get along, hides having two mothers, hides lgbtqia+ identity as needed, hides rainbow phone, hides whole self, holds back, ignores or changes topic when witnessing homophobia, leans into misperceptions as needed for safety, masks, obscures self, plays into stereotypes, prevents bad reactions, protects partner from uncertain people, refers to lesbian girlfriend as a roommate, remains closeted as needed, self-censors, sets boundaries, stays "deeply private about it despite being out," steps away from lgbtqia+ discrimination because triggering, uses a "dont ask dont tell" approach, uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses term 'partner' to describe relationship(s), withholds compliments towards other males in order to prevent suspicion about sexuality

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** assimilates into dominant culture, camouflages, changes behavior, changes diet, code-switches, controls impulses, drinks alcohol to ease social anxiety, guards communication, impersonates others, lies, lies about abilities, masks, masks all the time, matches energy and speech patterns of others, mimics, mimics neurotypicals, mirrors, overcompensates or works harder, people-pleases, plans and prepares for interactions in head, plays up eccentricity, prepares for social interactions, pretends or performs for others, pretends to not need accommodations, restricts social events, scripts, scripts (quoting movies/tv/videos) even when they don't quite fit the situation, scripts exactly what to say, scripts for every formal event or obligation, scripts for small talk, suppresses feelings in front of others, thinks through situations, tries to act neurotypical, tries to act normal, tries to distract mind from the body

reactions, tries to fit in, uses a polite and calm facade, uses organizational tools, works harder or overcompensates, works longer hours off the clock to review new tasks

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates, advocates for children's IEP (accommodations) needs, asks for help, asks questions, asserts and communicates needs, builds confidence, calls others out for discrimination, confronts problems, does not sit still, learns and empowers self, learns to take care of self better, observes gaslighting/erasing/bullying people, sets boundaries, shamelessly asks for accommodations, stims, sways back and forth, uses music, uses open communication, wears headphones, wears noise dampeners

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates, advocates for children's IEP (accommodations) needs, asks for help, asks questions, asserts and communicates needs, avoids eye contact, breaks tasks into smaller steps, breathes, brushes things off, builds confidence, calls others out for discrimination, camouflages, changes circumstances (self and environment), code-switches, collects self, concentrates for 20 min then takes a break for 5 min, confronts problems, connects with family, connects with peers, controls exposure to social situations, controls impulses, deals with a lack of accommodations, deals with disruptions, deals with internal struggles, deals with pressure to perform neurotypically, delegates time, dims lights, does not hide, does one task at a time, does what needs to be done to regulate and feel comforted, dreams, educates others about neurodiversity, educates people, escapes, establishes routines, exercises, experiences cathartic transformation by "finally understanding why I am the way I am," expresses needs, feels carefree when alone, forgets feelings, gets psychological counseling, goes to a safe space, guards communication, handles own issues, helps AuDHD roommate go to the grocery store to buy food, helps people, hopes for the best, isolates or withdraws, isolates to avoid overstimulation, isolates to decompress, jerryrigs workarounds, learns and empowers self, learns to take care of self better, lets things go, listens to ASMR, listens to music, looks up instead of keeping eye contact, manages difficult situations, manages symptoms, no longer hides, obtains job that allows movement and relieves burden of symptoms, overcomes avoidance, plans and prepares for interactions in head, practices mindfulness, practices

empathy and grace, practices resilience, prepares for social interactions, processes things in safe spaces with people who care, pushes through things, quits job, quits the drinking previously used to mask and blend in, recognizes triggers, reduces sensory, reminds self that "everyone thinks they are in their own world and they are the main character so relax," rereads to process and understand, scripts exactly what to say, scripts for every formal event or obligation, scripts for small talk, seeks comfort and safety in-group, seeks comfort and safety watching shows and videos, seeks support, self-reflects, self-soothes, sets boundaries, shares about neurodiversity when asked, shares neurodivergent experience with people to ease pressures, sleeps it off, slows pace, socializes, socializes "because loneliness can worsen the symptoms of many mental illnesses," socializes to reduce stress levels and alleviate symptoms, speaks out, stays mindful of wellbeing, steps into situations with respect and patience, sublimates, supports neurodivergent friends, sways back and forth, takes care of own needs, takes care of wellbeing, takes copious notes to avoid forgetting, takes medication, talks to family and friends for help, talks to friends to pull through, tells people what is happening, tempers impatience with neurodivergent people, thinks through situations, tries to comfort people, tries to remove sugar from diet, unlearns the masking, uses accommodations, uses fidget toys, uses laughter and jokes "to downplay how I truly feel," uses music, uses open communication, uses organizational tools, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses self-confidence, uses Speechify to listen to papers, uses therapy, uses to-do lists, watches lectures asynchronously if possible, wears headphones, wears noise dampeners

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates for children's IEP (accommodations) needs, asks for help, asks questions, breaks tasks into smaller steps, breathes, brushes things off, builds confidence, changes behavior, changes circumstances (self and environment), changes diet, code-switches, collects self, controls exposure to social situations, deals with a lack of accommodations, deals with being perceived as "off," deals with being perceived as antisocial, deals with disruptions, deals with hurt feelings, deals with ignorance, deals with internal struggles, deals with pressure to perform neurotypically, deals with stigma, deals with stigma of weakness, delegates time, disassociates or disengages, dreams, educates others about neurodiversity, educates people, escapes, establishes routines, experiences cathartic transformation by "finally understanding why I am the way I am," forgets feelings, gets psychological counseling, goes to a safe space, handles own issues, jerryrigs workarounds, learns and empowers self, learns to take care of self

better, lets things go, listens to ASMR, makes it "hard enough on myself," manages difficult situations, manages symptoms, no longer hides, no longer suffers, observed neurodivergent manager ostracized for trying to create useful structures, observes autistic friend struggle with social scenarios opting instead for one-on-one time, observes brother with ADHD and OCD try to "act normal" because of bullying, observes gaslighting/erasing/bullying people, observes masking, observes neurodiversity "he brings up politics or certain ethnic topics in situations where it is entirely inappropriate," observes prejudice/discrimination against people on the autism spectrum, observes sister isolate or withdraw or mask, obtains job that allows movement and relieves burden of symptoms, overcomes avoidance, practices mindfulness, practices empathy and grace, practices resilience, prepares for social interactions, processes things in safe spaces with people who care, quits job, quits the drinking previously used to mask and blend in, recognizes triggers, resents disadvantages, resents people, seeks support, self-reflects, self-soothes, sets boundaries, shamelessly asks for accommodations, shares about neurodiversity when asked, shares neurodivergent experience with people to ease pressures, sleeps it off, slows pace, socializes, socializes "because loneliness can worsen the symptoms of many mental illnesses," socializes to reduce stress levels and alleviate symptoms, speaks out, stays mindful of wellbeing, steps into situations with respect and patience, takes care of own needs, takes care of wellbeing, tells people what is happening, tries to remove sugar from diet, unlearns the masking, uses accommodations, uses an alternate persona to get by, uses fidget toys, uses music, uses open communication, uses organizational tools, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses self-confidence, uses Speechify to listen to papers, uses therapy, uses to-do lists, watches lectures asynchronously if possible

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Humor*

**Underlying Codes:** brushes things off, makes fun or jokes around, uses laughter and jokes "to downplay how I truly feel"

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids drawing attention to self, avoids judgement, avoids looking like a "poser or as if I am participating in a trend," avoids medication because of stigma, avoids seeking accommodations (because guilt), avoids situations, avoids things that overwhelm and

cause burnout, binge-watches TV to escape from everything, camouflages, code switches, disassociates or disengages, distracts, does not ask for help, does not cope, does not express needs, does not express self, does not share, does not talk about diagnosis, doesn't express needs, drinks alcohol to ease social anxiety, engages in maladaptive daydreaming, escapes, feels no one can help "there is nothing anyone can tell me about myself that I do not already know," finds self-medicating anxiety-inducing and unsustainable, forgets feelings, goes nonverbal, guards communication, hides circumstances, hides depression, hides details or protects privacy, hides diagnosis from those who are closed minded, hides medication, hides mental health, hides needs, hides neurodiversity, hides scars (from cutting), hides stimming, hides symptoms, hopes for the best, impersonates others, isolates or withdraws, isolates to avoid overstimulation, isolates to decompress, jerryrigs workarounds, keeps condition to self, keeps secrets, keeps to self, laughs at help, lies, lies about abilities, makes it "hard enough on myself," masks, masks all the time, matches energy and speech patterns of others, mimics neurotypicals, mirrors, neglects own feelings, neglects own needs, overcompensates or works harder, overeats in overstimulating situations, overplans, people pleases, pisses and moans, pretends or performs for others, pretends to not need accommodations, quits job, refuses help, refuses medicine, rejects help, restricts social events, self-medicates, tries to act normal, tries to distract mind from the body reactions, tries to fit in, uses an alternate persona to get by, weaponizes spite (frustration with neurotypical pressures) as a performative tool, withdraws sometimes, works longer hours off the clock to review new tasks.

## Experience with NEURODIVERSITY Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** assimilates into dominant culture, avoids drawing attention to self, avoids eye contact, avoids frictions, avoids judgment, avoids looking like a "poser or as if I am participating in a trend," avoids medication because of stigma, avoids normies, avoids overstimulation, avoids overthinking, avoids seeking accommodations (because guilt), avoids situations, avoids things that overwhelm and cause burnout, believes perceived as offensive, believes prayer is the path to overcoming neurodivergent crutch, believes using neurodivergence as a crutch is limiting and individuals need to find a way through, binge-watches TV to escape from everything, camouflages, changes behavior, code-switches, deals with being perceived as antisocial, deals with hurt feelings, disassociates or disengages, distracts, does not ask for help, does not cope, does not express needs, does not express self, does not share, does not talk about diagnosis, drinks alcohol to ease social anxiety, engages in

maladaptive daydreaming, escapes, experiences exhaustion and depression from masking, experiences meltdowns, experiences microaggressions, fears, fears being perceived as incapable, feels afraid to ask for flexibility or accommodation, feels no one can help "there is nothing anyone can tell me about myself that I do not already know," feels sad and moves on, feels shame about needing medication to be "normal," finds self-medicating anxiety-inducing and unsustainable, forgets feelings, goes nonverbal, guards communication, hides circumstances, hides depression, hides diagnosis from those who are closed-minded, hides medication, hides mental health, hides needs, hides neurodiversity, hides scars (from cutting), hides stimming, hides symptoms, hides whole self, hopes for the best, impersonates others, isolates or withdraws, isolates to avoid overstimulation, isolates to decompress, jerryrigs workarounds, keeps condition to self, keeps secrets, keeps to self, laughs at help, lies, lies about abilities, looks up instead of keeping eye contact, makes it "hard enough on myself," masks, masks all the time, matches energy and speech patterns of others, mimics, mimics neurotypicals, mirrors, neglects own feelings, neglects own needs, observed neurodivergent manager ostracized for trying to create useful structures, overcompensates or works harder, overeats in overstimulating situations, overplans, people-pleases, pisses and moans, plans and prepares for interactions in head, plays up eccentricity, pretends or performs for others, pretends to not need accommodations, pushes through things, quits job, refuses help, refuses medicine, rejects help, resents disadvantages, resents people, restricts social events, scripts, scripts (quoting movies/TV/videos) even when they don't quite fit the situation, scripts exactly what to say, scripts for every formal event or obligation, scripts for small talk, self-medicates, self-soothes, sleeps it off, stays quiet, struggles with stigma, sublimates, tries to act neurotypical, tries to act normal, tries to distract mind from the body reactions, tries to fit in, tries to remove sugar from diet, uses an alternate persona to get by, uses laughter and jokes "to downplay how I truly feel," weaponizes spite (frustration with neurotypical pressures) as a performative tool, withdraws sometimes, works harder or overcompensates, works longer hours off the clock to review new tasks

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** acts white, assimilates into dominant culture, benefits from black-sounding nickname, blends in, changes eating, changes name or uses nickname, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, controls first impressions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, eats socially

acceptable foods (like a sandwich), has white name, leans into assumptions, lies, looks white, loses native tongue, lost native tongue, mimics, mirrors, mirrors discriminator, observes "colleagues & staff members/professors use nicknames for some of my black friends," passes, plays up different ethnic identities depending on context, simplifies identity for others, stays quiet to avoid attention, stays silent, takes care to not appear "ghetto," takes great care in communication to prevent racism, uses attributional distancing, uses deodorant after cooking and eating, uses eurocentric standards, uses racial ambiguity, uses room freshener after meal, wears western outfits, whitewashes self, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** attends protests for equity of all races/ethnicities, builds resilience, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges racist boss, confronts problems, deals with and resists pressures to "act my race," feels pride, feels that "calling out other white people is hard!," fights back against passive forces that lead to injustice in this country, fights racism, gains class consciousness, intervenes, intervenes in race/ethnicity discrimination, laughs it off, learns and empowers self, learns mother tongue, learns Spanish language, leaves racist roommate situation, listens to racists in attempt to influence, participates in social justice activities, proves people wrong, proves them wrong, rejects ignorance to protect mental health, remains calm, reports discrimination, resents people, resists or confronts race/ethnicity discrimination, resists pressures, self-advocates, sets boundaries, stands up for self, understands that "the offender and silent bystanders are ignorant or narrow-minded," uses intelligence to beat hate, uses open communication, uses privilege to advocate for others, uses selective disclosure, uses self-care, uses self-confidence, uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates, aligns with principled people, amplifies identity or culture or heritage, approaches prejudice with empathy and does not get offended, asks questions, attends protests for equity of all races/ethnicities, avoids harmful situations, believes assumptions are "a reflection of them not me," benefits from black-sounding nickname, brushes it off, builds resilience, calls security, celebrates heritage, centers skills and knowledge rather

than race/ethnicity, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges racist boss, code-switches, confronts problems, connects with own culture, connects with peers, controls first impressions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, creates distractions to protect victims, deals with and resists pressures to "act my race," educates people, emphasizes strength and growth, encourages respectful curiosity, feels pride, fights back against passive forces that lead to injustice in this country, fights racism, finds comfort and reliability in-group, forgets, gains class consciousness, helps people, ignores comments, ignores people, ignores prejudice and ignorance, ignores race/ethnicity discrimination, ignores racial discrimination, ignores racism, intervenes, intervenes in race/ethnicity discrimination, keeps an open mind, learns and empowers self, learns and shares, learns mother tongue, learns Spanish language, leaves racist roommate situation, lets things go, listens, listens to racists in attempt to influence, looks past obstacles, makes fun or jokes around, makes light of race/ethnicity discrimination experiences, manages difficult situations, manages overt and covert racism, no longer acts white, no longer assimilates, no longer changes name or uses nickname, obtains education, participates in social justice activities, practices authenticity, proves them wrong, recognizes bias and discrimination and barriers, recognizes internalized racism, recognizes intersectionality, recognizes own privilege, rejects ignorance to protect mental health, remains calm, remains cautious at first, reports discrimination, resists or confronts race/ethnicity discrimination, resists pressures, rides the waves with conversations, seeks support, self-advocates, self-reflects, sets boundaries, sets goals, stands up for self, stays in-group, studies history and sociology, supports wronged party or victim, tries to be cautious and aware of surroundings, uses intelligence to beat hate, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses privilege to advocate for others, uses selective disclosure, uses self-care, uses self-confidence, uses therapy, uses vigilance to protect self from violence, uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator, works and lives in Latinx and Black neighborhoods so observes implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination, works on own biases, works on self

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Reflection, Learning, Growth, Change*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with principled people, amplifies identity or culture or heritage, approaches prejudice with empathy and does not get offended, asks questions, avoids harmful situations, believes assumptions are "a reflection of them not me," brushes it off, builds

resilience, centers skills and knowledge rather than race/ethnicity, challenges or manages stereotypes, connects with own culture, deals with and resists pressures to "act my race," disassociates or disengages, does not blame self, educates people, emphasizes strength and growth, encourages respectful curiosity, feels pride, feels that "calling out other white people is hard!," forgets, gains class consciousness, ignores comments, ignores people, ignores prejudice and ignorance, ignores race/ethnicity discrimination, ignores racial discrimination, ignores racism, keeps an open mind, laughs it off, learns and empowers self, learns and shares, learns mother tongue, learns Spanish language, leaves racist roommate situation, lets things go, listens, listens to racists in attempt to influence, looks past obstacles, manages difficult situations, manages overt and covert racism, navigates two different cultures within, no longer acts white, no longer assimilates, no longer changes name or uses nickname, not sure if racism or something else, observes "Americanized" names, observes "colleagues & staff members/professors use nicknames for some of my Black friends," observes acting out and struggles, observes Black woman standing up for self, observes code-switching, observes discrimination against Black people and people of color, observes friends dealing with insensitive comments, observes masking, observes negative talk about India and Indian food, observes racism, observes racist customers, observes social segregation or in-group congregation, observes "Americanized" names, obtains education, opts out or skips class if hair isn't looking Eurocentric, participates in social justice activities, practices authenticity, processes racism, proves them wrong, recognizes bias and discrimination and barriers, recognizes internalized racism, recognizes intersectionality, recognizes own privilege, regrets, regrets not exploring culture early on, remains cautious at first, resents people, resists pressures, rides the waves with conversations, self-advocates, self-reflects, sets boundaries, sets goals, stands up for self, studies history and sociology, taught to not make waves but now has to be assertive in corporate America to be rewarded, understands racism is rooted in mental health issues, understands that "the offender and silent bystanders are ignorant or narrow-minded," uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses privilege to advocate for others, uses self-care, uses self-confidence, uses therapy, uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator, works and lives in Latinx and Black neighborhoods so observes implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination, works on own biases, works on self

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Humor*

**Underlying Codes:** laughs it off, makes fun or jokes around, uses self-deprecating humor

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** acts white, assimilates into dominant culture, attempts to rationalize racist behavior, avoids ethnic colors, avoids eye contact, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, avoids looking "fresh-off-the-boat," avoids unwanted additional aggression, believes racism is rare, benefits from black-sounding nickname, blames, blends in, brushes it off, calls security, centers skills and knowledge rather than race/ethnicity, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges racist boss, changes eating, changes name or uses nickname, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, confronts problems, controls first impressions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, creates distractions to protect victims, deals with "international student" assumption, deals with and resists pressures to "act my race," deals with being called "exotic," deals with being mistaken with other Asian co-worker, deals with being singled out by security, deals with bullying, deals with complexity of being adopted, deals with harassment, deals with intersectionality (race and disability), deals with intersectionality (adopted and Chinese), deals with intersectionality (race and gender), deals with model minority myth, deals with racist jokes, deals with racist jokes or slurs, disassociates or disengages, does not cope, does not see color, downplays life experience, eats socially acceptable foods (like a sandwich), experiences erasure, experiences identity misattribution and/or passing fatigue or friction or discomfort, experiences linguistic gatekeeping or heritage language discrimination (Cuban does not speak Spanish), experiences microaggressions, experiences model minority stereotype, experiences race/ethnicity policing, experiences racial bias at work, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at church, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at home, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at home (roommate), experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at school, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination at work, experiences racial or ethnic discrimination in retail, experiences racism during COVID, fears, feels afraid or haunted, feels annoyed and angry when group called out, feels defensive, feels different, feels hated, feels it is impossible to eliminate race/ethnicity discrimination, feels spite, feels victimized and disadvantaged, feigns indifference, fights racism, forgets, gets angry and ruminates, goes into shell, hides adopted status around Asian peers, hides caste, hides culture or heritage or traditions, hides DACA status, hides ethnicity, hides food, hides home life, hides language, hides opinions, hides race or ethnicity, hides race or ethnicity for the time being, hides religion, hides

whole self, "I have no choice but to tolerate it," identifies as white, ignores comments, ignores people, ignores prejudice and ignorance, ignores race/ethnicity discrimination, ignores racial discrimination, ignores racism, internalizes racism, isolates or withdraws, laughs it off, leans into assumptions, lies, listens to racists in attempt to influence, looks white, loses native tongue, lost native tongue, makes fun or jokes around, makes light of race/ethnicity discrimination experiences, mimics, mirrors, mirrors discriminator, name keeps resume safe, navigates assumptions about hijab as a Hispanic Muslim, not sure if racism or something else, obscures self, observes racism, opts out or skips class if hair isn't looking Eurocentric, passes, people-pleases, plays up different ethnic identities depending on context, pretends to be aloof and hard to approach, processes racism, proves people wrong, proves them wrong, puts white people at ease, regrets, regrets not exploring culture early on, rejects own culture to fit in, remains cautious at first, reports discrimination, resents "virtue signaling" and "woke culture," resents people, shuts down, simplifies identity for others, singled out, stays quiet to avoid attention, stays silent, struggles, takes care to not appear "ghetto," takes caution, takes great care in communication to prevent racism, tolerates disrespect, tolerates race/ethnicity discrimination because no choice, tries to be cautious and aware of surroundings, understands racism is rooted in mental health issues, uses attributional distancing, uses deodorant after cooking and eating, uses Eurocentric standards, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses racial ambiguity, uses room freshener after meal, uses self-deprecating humor, uses vigilance to protect self from violence, wanted to be white, wears Western outfits, whitewashes self, works and lives in Latinx and Black neighborhoods so observes implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination, works harder or overcompensates, worries

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** acts white, assimilates into dominant culture, attempts to rationalize racist behavior, avoids ethnic colors, avoids eye contact, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations, avoids looking "fresh-off-the-boat," avoids unwanted additional aggression, blends in, centers skills and knowledge rather than race/ethnicity, changes eating, changes name or uses nickname, changes voice or tone or manner of speaking, code-switches, controls first impressions, controls impressions through grooming or personal hygiene, controls impressions using clothing or makeup, disassociates or disengages, downplays life experience, eats socially acceptable foods (like a sandwich), feigns indifference, finds comfort and reliability in-group,

forgets, gets angry and ruminates, goes into shell, has white name, hides adopted status around Asian peers, hides caste, hides culture or heritage or traditions, hides DACA status, hides ethnicity, hides food, hides home life, hides language, hides opinions, hides race or ethnicity, hides race or ethnicity for the time being, hides religion, hides whole self, identifies as white, ignores comments, ignores prejudice and ignorance, internalizes racism, isolates or withdraws, leans into assumptions, leaves racist roommate situation, looks white, loses native tongue, lost native tongue, mimics, mirrors, mirrors discriminator, name keeps resume safe, obscures self, opts out or skips class if hair isn't looking Eurocentric, passes, plays up different ethnic identities depending on context, pretends to be aloof and hard to approach, puts white people at ease, recognizes internalized racism, sets boundaries, shuts down, simplifies identity for others, stays in-group, stays quiet to avoid attention, stays silent, takes care to not appear "ghetto," takes caution, takes great care in communication to prevent racism, tolerates race/ethnicity discrimination because no choice, uses attributional distancing, uses deodorant after cooking and eating, uses Eurocentric standards, uses privacy (hides details or protects self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses racial ambiguity, uses room freshener after meal, uses selective disclosure, uses self-confidence, uses self-deprecating humor, uses vigilance to protect self from violence, wears Western outfits, whitewashes self, works harder or overcompensates

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Whiteness or Passing*

**Underlying Codes:** acts white, assumed competent because white, has white name, identifies as white, leans into assumptions, looks white, passes as white, uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator, whitewashes self

## Experience with RELIGION Experience

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Assimilates/Conforms to Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** accommodates religious family members at times, agrees to disagree as needed, as a Jewish person removes Star of David necklace to avoid tensions, as a Muslim feels at times that "I can't pray in public," as an atheist performs according to group norms (covers self etc) as needed, as an atheist performs according to group norms as needed, as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, as an atheist pretends to believe to avoid conflict, as non-practicing Catholic pretends to care or understand, assimilates as needed, avoids prayer in

public, avoids triggering people, avoids wearing hijab when traveling, code-switches, does not share Catholic beliefs at work, fakes it, goes along to get along, makes a point to present as "progressive" Christian, masks, pretends to be religious to avoid conflict, uses fake name when working in public to avoid religious assumptions

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes Using Performance (Resists/Rejects Social Norms)*

**Underlying Codes:** acts as an ally, agrees to disagree as needed, as a Muslim uses inner voice to lift self, as a spiritual person avoids anything religiously demanding, as a spiritual person works hard to be open about my Muslim upbringing and family, as an agnostic stays true to self, as an atheist argues morals and ethics do not need religion, as an atheist believes "I can think and act ethically without the threat of going to hell," as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, as a spiritual person ignores or avoids religious pressures or discrimination, avoids harmful situations and people who discriminate, believes inaction is a coping mechanism when witnessing discrimination, challenges discrimination or manages stereotypes about others, challenges or manages stereotypes, confronts problems, copes with antisemitism by laughing it off, corrects perpetrators or intervenes in discrimination, educates and helps others understand and prevent discrimination, experiences discrimination because Jewish and because not Jewish enough, feels confident, feels pride, feels religious pride or joy, hides Christian religion in liberal settings, ignores comments, ignores hate and remains indifferent, ignores Islamophobia, learns and empowers self, protects self, pushes back, rejects conversion attempt by Christian, rejects judgment about Christian beliefs, rejects or resists pressure to conform, relationship with religion changes over time, reports discrimination, resists or confronts antisemitism, resists or confronts religious discrimination, resists pressures, resists problems, separates from Pentecostal family, separates self from Jewish religion due to situation in Gaza, sets boundaries, speaks up, uses open communication, wins arguments

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes Using Adaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** accepting, accommodates religious family members at times, acts as an ally, agrees to disagree as needed, as a Christian holds compassion for those who hold prejudice, as a Christian keeps the peace and sets an example, as a Christian minority exits awkward or pushy situations, as a Muslim educates others about the faith, as a Muslim stays

resilient in beliefs and practices, as a Muslim uses inner voice to lift self, as a spiritual person avoids anything religiously demanding, as a spiritual person connects with people from many faiths, as a spiritual person works hard to be open about my Muslim upbringing and family, as an agnostic stays true to self, as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, assimilates as needed, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations and people who discriminate, avoids religious contexts, avoids triggering people, believes beliefs are personal, believes faith is a private matter, believes in freedom of religion, challenges or manages stereotypes, code-switches, connects with family, connects with peers, copes with antisemitism by laughing it off, corrects perpetrators or intervenes in discrimination, does God's work, educates and helps others understand and prevent discrimination, educates others about Hinduism, educates others about Islam, educates people, engages in theological discussions with others, experiences peace, feels a calling, feels confident, feels empathy for others, feels pride, feels religious pride or joy, focuses on alignments and wellness, goes along to get along, helps people, ignores comments, ignores hate and remains indifferent, ignores Islamophobia, ignores people, learns and empowers self, listens, listens and learns, loves to discuss religion, manages difficult situations, mediates to help supply context and avoid miscommunication and assumptions, meditates, not religious but celebrates holidays, only practices Jewish religion with family and friends, opens discussion to understand relationship with church, practices allyship at work and respects and supports religious holidays, practices kindness and is a good neighbor that helps kids, practices prayer and penance, practices resilience, practices self-control does not feel anger or rejection as Buddhist, prays, protects self, pushes back, rejects or resists pressure to conform, reports discrimination, resists or confronts antisemitism, resists or confronts religious discrimination, resists pressures, resists problems, respects and celebrates differences, respects people, respects the emotions of others, seeks support, self-reflects, separates from Pentecostal family, sets boundaries, speaks up, stays in-group, stays positive, sublimates, supports religion if it is not harming anyone, talks through things, unpacks church experiences, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides agnostic details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides Jewish details to protect self), uses selective disclosure

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes Using Learning, Growth, Change*

**Underlying Codes:** accepting, accommodates religious family members at times, agrees to disagree as needed, agrees with criticism of Christianity, aligns with some religions but not

others, as a child experienced aggression due to family's religion, as a Christian observes religious generational divide, as a Muslim educates others about the faith, as a Muslim uses inner voice to lift self, as a spiritual person ignores or avoids religious pressures or discrimination, benefits from left-wing Buddhist values, benefits from privileges afforded to Christians in the U.S., challenges discrimination or manages stereotypes about others, challenges or manages stereotypes, disassociates or disengages, educates and helps others understand and prevent discrimination, educates others about Hinduism, educates others about Islam, educates people, engages in theological discussions with others, experiences or observes antisemitism, experiences or observes blasphemy and anti-Christian sentiment, experiences or observes Islamophobia, experiences or observes religious tensions, experiences or observes xenophobia, experiences others being curious about Wiccan religion, experiences/observes discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination, experiences/observes religious discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination in public, feels a calling, feels empathy for others, feels fear or dread about Islamophobia and xenophobia, focuses on alignments and wellness, forgets feelings, has developed strong opinions about specific religions and religious people, hides Christian religion in liberal settings, ignores comments, ignores hate and remains indifferent, ignores Islamophobia, ignores people, learns and empowers self, listens, listens and learns, loves to discuss religion, manages difficult situations, no longer an evangelical Christian, not religious but celebrates holidays, opens discussion to understand relationship with church, practices prayer and penance, practices resilience, practices self-control does not feel anger or rejection as Buddhist, relationship with religion changes over time, resents assumptions, resents people, resists or confronts antisemitism, resists or confronts religious discrimination, resists pressures, resists problems, respects and celebrates differences, self-reflects, separates from Pentecostal family, separates self from Jewish religion due to situation in Gaza, sets boundaries, unpacks church experiences, uses open communication, uses privacy (hides agnostic details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides Jewish details to protect self), wonders if prioritizing certain holidays is discrimination

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes Using Humor*

**Underlying Codes:** copes with antisemitism by laughing it off

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes Using Maladaptive Strategies*

**Underlying Codes:** as a Christian minority exits awkward or pushy situations, as a Jewish person does not attend public religious events, as a Jewish person feels afraid, as a Jewish person hides religion, as a Jewish person removes Star of David necklace to avoid tensions, as a Jewish person suffers does not cope, as a Muslim feels at times that "I can't pray in public," as a Pagan experiences disrespect and erasure, as an agnostic/ex-Catholic criticizes Catholicism to avoid association, as an atheist avoids conflicts or confrontations, as an atheist conceals truth, as an atheist performs according to group norms (covers self etc.) as needed, as an atheist performs according to group norms as needed, as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, as an atheist pretends to believe to avoid conflict, as a non-practicing Catholic pretends to care or understand, assimilates as needed, avoids frictions, avoids prayer in public, avoids religious contexts, blames, considers sexuality a woke religion, copes with antisemitism by laughing it off, deals with mean jokes or slurs, disassociates or disengages, distracts, downplays life experience, experiences discrimination because Jewish and because not Jewish enough, experiences or expresses distress related to religion, experiences or observes religious tensions, experiences/observes discrimination from Christians, experiences/observes religious discrimination, experiences/observes religious discrimination in public, fears, fears antisemitism, fears being assumed Zionist because Jewish, fears for safety, feels "a little embarrassed by my participation in religion," feels angry, feels defensive, feels fear or dread about Islamophobia and xenophobia, feels frustrated, goes along to get along, hides body, hides Christian religion in liberal settings, hides food, hides holy diet (no beef), hides religion to prevent political polarization tactics, hides whole self, ignores comments, ignores hate and remains indifferent, ignores Islamophobia, ignores people, judges others, makes a point to present as "progressive" Christian, manages difficult situations, masks, obscures self, only practices Jewish religion with family and friends, pities those who are religious and thinks it's preposterous that people still believe in 2000-year-old fairy tales, pretends to be religious to avoid conflict, rejects or resists pressure to conform, resents assumptions, resents atheism, resents not being able to say the word retard, resents people, resents science, resists or confronts antisemitism, resists or confronts religious discrimination, resists pressures, resists problems, separates self from Jewish religion due to situation in Gaza, stays in-group, stays silent, sublimates, takes caution, uses fake name when working in public to avoid religious assumptions, uses privacy (hides agnostic details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses privacy

at times (hides Jewish details to protect self), uses selective disclosure, waits until marriage to have sex, wins arguments

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes By Hiding or Avoiding*

**Underlying Codes:** accommodates religious family members at times, agrees to disagree as needed, as a christian minority exits awkward or pushy situations, as a christian tries not to get offended by insults or taunts, as a jewish person does not attend public religious events, as a jewish person hides religion, as a jewish person removes star of david necklace to avoid tensions, as a muslim avoids heated discussions, as a muslim feels at times that "i cant pray in public", as an atheist avoids conflicts or confrontations, as an atheist conceals truth, as an atheist performs according to group norms (covers self etc) as needed, as an atheist performs according to group norms as needed, as an atheist practices ambiguity as needed, as an atheist pretends to believe to avoid conflict, as an atheist pretends to believe to avoid conflict, as non-practicing catholic pretends to care or understand, as spiritual person ignores or avoids religious pressures or discrimination, assimilates as needed, avoids difficult situations, avoids discussing religion or religious topics, avoids frictions, avoids harmful situations and people who discriminate, avoids prayer in public, avoids religious contexts, avoids triggering people, avoids wearing hijab when traveling, believes faith is a private matter, code-switches, copes with antisemitism by laughing it off, distracts, does not share catholic beliefs at work, fakes it, goes along to get along, hides body, hides christian religion in liberal settings, hides food, hides holy diet (no beef), hides religion to prevent political polarization tactics, hides whole self, ignores comments, ignores hate and remains indifferent, ignores islamophobia, ignores people, makes a point to present as "progressive" christian, masks, mediates to help supply context and avoid miscommunication and assumptions, obscures self, practices self control does not feel anger or rejection as buddhist, pretends to be religious to avoid conflict, protects self, sets boundaries, takes caution, taught to claim particular religious affiliation, uses fake name when working in public to avoid religious assumptions, uses privacy (hides agnostic details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides details to protect self), uses privacy at times (hides jewish details to protect self), uses selective disclosure

## Appendix E:

### Theme 4 Insights, Categories, and Codes

This document provides the codes, categories, and insights informing Theme 4.

#### Theme 4: Coping Strategies: Social & Relational Support

This theme collects and explores relational coping mechanisms participants use to navigate identity-related challenges and preserve their well-being in social scenarios.

#### Theme 4: Underlying Identity Dimension Insights

##### Age Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate age-related identity challenges and struggles. Emotional support happened through relationships with trusted individuals, as participants *“talked to peers or family”* and *“vented with friends.”* In addition, *“intergenerational relationships”* supported learning, growth, and understanding. Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection including authentic communication and thoughtful engagement: *“expressed love”* and *“involved [themselves] in more serious discussions.”*

Participants coped with age-related identity challenges and struggles by actively supporting and empowering others, as in *“lifts or protects people.”* Advocacy and intervention for psychological safety were key elements. Participants described *“reporting age discrimination at work”* and *“taking formal action against discrimination.”* They also challenged the pressures of misaligned norms, with one participant stating how they *“resented and rejected assumptions (that every woman has children).”* Self-reflection was another strategy. Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: *“self-reflects to understand [their] own place in time”* and to *“stay true to [themselves] and see others the same way.”*

## Class Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate class-related identity challenges and struggles. Emotional support occurred through relationships with trusted individuals, as participants *“asked for help or sought support from friends and family.”* In addition, *“support networks”* supported reliability and belonging. Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection by sharing how they *“talked to people”* and *“translated for [their] immigrant family”* to navigate challenges together. Acts of kindness were also valued, as participants noted they *“took care of others,” “took care of self and others,”* and *“tried to put empathy and sensitivity into practice.”* Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection including the amplification of values and ethics: *“sought out love and kindness”* and worked to *“align with principled people.”*

Participants coped with class-related identity challenges by actively supporting and empowering others. They described how they *“gained class consciousness”* and *“discussed differences”* to challenge societal assumptions about class. Advocacy and education were central strategies, as participants shared how they *“educated others”* and *“worked with impoverished youth.”* Relational care extended to acts of kindness and generosity, with participants explaining how they *“practiced hospitality”* and *“practiced inclusivity.”* Additionally, participants addressed emotional needs by *“protecting others’ feelings by concealing information”* and *“listening”* to their concerns. Self-reflection was another strategy. Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: *“gave back”* and *“disarmed class expectations.”*

## Disability Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate disability-related identity challenges and struggles. Seeking help and connection were central strategies, as participants shared how they *“asked for help”* and *“connected with others who share similar experiences.”* Emotional support from trusted individuals provided comfort, with one participant explaining how they *“talked to [their] brother and some close friends.”* Participants emphasized care and solidarity within the disability community, noting how they *“participated in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health”* and *“validated their feelings.”* Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection including the prioritization of dignity: *“took care of a disabled friend”* and *“worked with disabled children.”*

Participants coped with disability-related identity challenges by actively supporting and empowering others. Advocacy was a key element, as participants explained how they *“advocated for accessibility and inclusion”* and *“tried to speak up against ableism.”* Education and empathy were recurring patterns, as participants shared how they *“educated”* others and *“practiced kindness and empathy.”* Participants also challenged societal biases, with one participant noting how they *“shamed people when they were ableist.”* Supporting marginalized groups and making change were central strategies, as participants shared how they *“studied marginalized communities”* and *“worked to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies.”* Self-reflection was another strategy. Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: *“connected with others who can empathize”* and *“respected and cared for disabled people.”*

## Gender Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate gender-related identity challenges and struggles. Psychological and social support was sought through trusted relationships, as participants shared how they *“talked to others about harassment to cope with it,”* *“sought care/safety/support/validation in-group with friends or allies,”* and *“connected with friends who talk through sexist experiences.”* Supportive networks and relationships were central to participants’ strategies, as they described efforts to *“keep a fun friendship bubble of diverse and authentic people”* and *“keep loving relationships (partner and friends).”* Creating safe spaces emerged as another pattern, with participants sharing how they *“created comfortable workplaces for women”* and *“supported those who endure gender-based discrimination.”* Some participants mentioned learning from others, *“learns from [a] co-worker who is a transgender man.”* Representation and challenging expectations played a role in providing meaningful presence and affirmation, with one participant purposefully *“consum[ing] media that represents people like me to feel less excluded from society,”* and another *“took action to prove gender does not define a person.”* Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection including acts of kindness and compassion: *“cares for kids and animals,”* and *“supports other women.”*

Participants coped with gender-related identity challenges by actively supporting and empowering others. Advocacy was a key element; many described how they *“advocated for self and others”* and *“supported gender and LGBTQ equality,”* *“stood up against gender discrimination,”* or *“called out sexism,”* while others *“reported to authority.”* Practical and

insightful acts of kindness were also evident, with one participant explaining how they “shared clothes to help others with body dysmorphia.” Self-reflection was another strategy. Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: “educate[d] self on realities of gender-based discrimination,” and “welcome[d] curiosity and questions.”

## LGBTQIA+ Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate LGBTQIA+ identity challenges and struggles. Many participants shared how they “engaged with a support system of people who understand.” Validation within trusted groups was essential, as participants explained how they “surrounded [themselves] with positive people and queer people” and “sought safety or comfort in-group.” Coming out in safe environments was another coping mechanism, with participants reflecting on how they “came out in safe spaces with trusted people.” Acts of solidarity further contributed to feelings of safety, as one participant shared how they “embraced LGBTQIA+ friends who were once closeted,” while another emphasized the importance of “listening and supporting LGBTQIA+ family.” Communication within the community also played a key role, as participants described how they “talked to people in the LGBTQIA+ community” and “talked with target[s] of abuse.” Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection including safety, again: “finds safety around other queer people.”

Participants coped with LGBTQIA+ identity challenges by actively supporting and empowering others. Many participants shared how they “acted as ally” and “contributed to inclusive norms by using progressive nongendered language,” or “does not believe that LGBTQIA+ people have a mental disorder which can be treated with medicine.” Advocacy efforts extended to public actions, with participants explaining how they “spoke out in support of LGBTQIA+ people” and “created [an] accepting environment.” Challenging harmful assumptions was central to their strategies, as one participant reflected on how they “educated others who hold harmful opinions about the LGBTQIA+ community.” Personal growth was another recurring pattern, with one participant sharing that they “felt straight but was unsure and explored sexuality in the past.” Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: from “tries to normalize diverse genders and sexualities,” and respecting “difference,” and “multiculturalism,” to making “no assumptions and relied on individuals to share names and pronouns.”

## Race/Ethnicity Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate race/ethnicity-related identity challenges and struggles. One participant shared how they “*connected with [their] own culture*” to reaffirm their identity and values. Others highlighted the importance of in-group solidarity, explaining how they “*found comfort and reliability in-group*” and “*stayed in-group.*” Seeking emotional and social validation was a recurring strategy, with participants noting how they “sought safety/validation/support from friends or family” and “rides the waves with conversations.” Learning also served as a source of connection and resilience, with one participant reflecting on how they “*learned and shared*” and another describing their efforts to “*learn mother tongue*” to connect with heritage and community. Participants emphasized relational care and meaningful connection including intervening or addressing violence: “supported wronged part[ies] or victim[s].”

Participants coped with race/ethnicity-related identity challenges by actively supporting and empowering others. Advocacy and solidarity were central to participants’ strategies, as they described how they “*attended protests for equity of all races/ethnicities*” and “*supported wronged part[ies] or victim[s].*” Participants also highlighted creative methods of protection, with one explaining how they “*created distractions to protect victims*” in vulnerable moments. Some participants used their privilege to intervene directly, with one sharing how they “*used white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator.*” Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: “worked and lived in Latinx and Black neighborhoods so observed implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination.”

## Religion Identity Insights

Participants described using connections to navigate religion-related identity challenges and struggles. Engaging in open discussions was a key strategy, as participants shared how they “*loved to discuss religion.*” Shared practices provided comfort and belonging, with one participant reflecting that they “*only practiced Jewish religion with family and friends.*” Seeking safety and comfort within trusted groups was another recurring pattern, as participants described how they “*sought safety or comfort in-group.*” Adherence to shared values also provided guidance and reassurance, with one participant reflecting how they “*wait[ed] until marriage to have sex*” as part of their faith-based principles. Participants emphasized relational

care and meaningful connection including neighborly love: *“practiced kindness and [were] good neighbor[s] that help kids.”*

Participants coped with religion-related identity challenges by actively supporting and empowering others. Advocacy for inclusivity and mutual respect within and across religious communities emerged. Participants reflected on their belief in *“freedom of religion”* and emphasized efforts to connect across belief systems, sharing how they *“as a spiritual person connected with people from many faiths.”* Kindness and allyship were central strategies, as participants described how they *“practiced allyship at work and respected and supported religious holidays”* to support inclusivity. Empathy also featured, with one participant explaining how they *“felt empathy for others”* in religious contexts. Participants shared their introspective and transformative journeys towards empowering or holding space for others: *“listens and learns,” “loves to discuss religion,”* and *“practices allyship at work and respects and supports religious holidays.”*

## Theme 4: Underlying Categories

### Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles

Data in this category represent social connections.

### Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Age Identity Struggles

Data in this category represents supporting others.

## Theme 4: Underlying Codes

### Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** asks for help, builds intergenerational relationships, connects with family, connects with peers, expresses love, involves self in more serious discussions, seeks support, self-advocates, self-reflects, uses open communication, uses self-care, vents with friends

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** builds intergenerational relationships, connects with family, connects with peers, demonstrates empathy and sympathy during interactions, educates people, expresses love, helps people, observes age affinity group dynamics, reports discrimination, resents and rejects assumptions (that every woman has children), respects people, speaks up, takes formal action against discrimination, uses open communication

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with principled people, asks for help, builds support networks, connects with family, connects with peers, discusses differences, practices gratitude, practices hospitality, practices inclusivity, practices kindness or generosity, recognizes parents' efforts to lift them, seeks in-group experiences and relationships, seeks out love and kindness, seeks support, takes care of self and others, talks to people, uses open communication

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with principled people, disarms class expectations, discusses differences, educates people, extends leaf to have-nots, feels guided by values, focuses on what can be controlled, gains class consciousness, gives back, helps people, listens, practices gratitude, practices hospitality, practices inclusivity, practices kindness or generosity, practices resilience, projects calm vibe, protects others' feelings by concealing information, takes care of others, takes care of self and others, talks to people, translates for immigrant family, tries to put empathy and sensitivity into practice, uses open communication, witnesses the struggles of others, works with impoverished youth

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** asks for help, connects with family, connects with others who share similar experiences, connects with peers, participates in a circle of neurodivergent friends to support mental health, practices acceptance, seeks support, shares circumstances in case there is an emergency, uses open communication, uses therapy

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates, advocates for accessibility and inclusion, calls out ableism, cares, confronts ableism and bullying, confronts or manages stereotypes, confronts problems, connects with others who share similar experiences, educates people, explains disability as needed, explains spoon theory, feels empathy, feels for people being treated unfairly, helps people, observes people staring or doing double-takes at friends walking cane, observes sibling ask for help, practices acceptance, practices kindness and empathy, reports discrimination, respects and cares for disabled people, respects people, seeks better ways to handle ableism, shames people when they are ableist, shares, studies marginalized communities, suggests listening to 'not-normal' people to improve learning, supports inclusivity, takes care of disabled friend, tries to prevent stigma, tries to speak up against ableism, uses open communication, works to end ableism through the design of assistive technologies, works with disabled children validates their feelings

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates for self and others, asks for help, connects with alternative social interactions (cares for kids and animals), connects with peers, consumes media "that represents people like me to feel less excluded from society," feels safe sharing in survey, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, keeps a fun friendship bubble of diverse and authentic people, keeps loving relationships (partner and friends), learns from co-worker who is a transgender man, seeks safety, seeks same respect given to cis people, seeks support, seeks support from allies who understand, talks to others about harassment to cope with it, tries to educate, tries to get supervisor involved, tries to relate to people, uses open communication, works with all women

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** adjusts to new names, advocates for others, advocates for self and others, assists the victim, calls out sexism, calls out sexist comments, challenges sexist remarks, copes

by including manager when coworkers are sexist, corrects the perpetrator, creates comfortable workplace for women, educates people, educates self on realities of gender-based discrimination, elevates femininity and care, faces situations, fights back, files a Title IX, grows in career and gains authority so can now be whole feminine self, helps people, identifies as feminist, includes and loves people, learns from co-worker who is a transgender man, learns the right pronouns, lifts women, practices acceptance, pushes back, respects people, serves as witness to sexist situations informally and formally, shares clothes to help others with body dysmorphia, stands up against gender discrimination, supports equality, supports gender and LGBTQ equality, supports gender equality, supports other women, supports those who endure gender-based discrimination, takes action and proves gender does not define a person, talks about gender discrimination, undermines sexist people, understands it's their problem, voices opinion about sexist behaviors at times, works with all women

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** comes out in safe spaces with trusted people, connects with peers, feels safe in San Francisco, out with partners or friends, seeks safety, seeks support, surrounds self with positive people and queer people, uses open communication

## Experience with LGBTQIA+ Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** acts as ally, acts friendly, admires queer confidence and bravery, advocates for lgbtqia+ people, appreciates multicultural activities including parades, believes awareness can help, believes understanding "those who are different than you is so important!", checks in on target of abuse, connects with peers, contributes to inclusive norms by using progressive nongendered language, creates accepting environment, does not believe that lgbtqia+ people have a mental disorder which can be treated with medicine, educates others who hold harmful opinions about the lgbtqia+ community, educates people, embraces lgbtqia+ friends who were once closeted, encourages exploration, encourages thoughtful questions, helps people, holds space, listens, listens and supports lgbtqia+ family, makes no assumptions and relies on individuals to share name and pronouns, participates in parades, protects partner from uncertain people, reports discrimination, respects multiculturalism, respects people, speaks out, speaks out in support of lgbtqia+ people, talks with target of abuse, tries to educate and hold

space for other points of view despite personal conflict, tries to normalize diverse genders and sexualities, uses open communication

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with principled people, amplifies identity or culture or heritage, connects with own culture, connects with peers, finds comfort and reliability in-group, learns mother tongue, learns spanish language, participates in social justice activities, practices authenticity, seeks support, stays in-group, uses open communication, uses therapy, works and lives in latinx and black neighborhoods so observes implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** advocates, aligns with principled people, amplifies identity or culture or heritage, attends protests for equity of all races/ethnicities, calls security, challenges or manages stereotypes, challenges racist boss, creates distractions to protect victims, educates people, encourages respectful curiosity, fights racism, gains class consciousness, helps people, intervenes, intervenes in race/ethnicity discrimination, learns and shares, listens, participates in social justice activities, reports discrimination, studies history and sociology, supports wronged party or victim, uses intelligence to beat hate, uses open communication, uses privilege to advocate for others, uses privilege to help, uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator, works and lives in latinx and black neighborhoods so observes implicit/institutional forms of racism and discrimination, works on own biases

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes Using Relationships and/or Community Support Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** as a spiritual person connects with people from many faiths, connects with family, connects with peers, engages in theological discussions with others, feels there is need for connection to support each other, focuses on alignments and wellness, loves to discuss religion, only practices jewish religion with family and friends, opens discussion to understand relationship with church, seeks support, stays in-group, waits until marriage to have sex

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: Copes By Lifting and Empowering Others Regarding Identity Struggles*

**Underlying Codes:** accepting, accommodates religious family members at times, acts as an ally, as a christian keeps the peace and sets an example, as a muslim educates others about the faith, as a spiritual person connects with people from many faiths, believes in freedom of religion, challenges discrimination or manages stereotypes about others, challenges or manages stereotypes, connects with family, connects with peers, educates and helps others understand and prevent discrimination, educates others about hinduism, educates others about islam, educates people, feels empathy for others, feels there is need for connection to support each other, focuses on alignments and wellness, helps people, listens, listens and learns, loves to discuss religion, opens discussion to understand relationship with church, practices allyship at work and respects and supports religious holidays, practices kindness and is a good neighbor that helps kids, reports discrimination, respects and celebrates differences, respects people, respects the emotions of others, self-reflects, speaks up, supports religion if it is not harming anyone, uses open communication, waits until marriage to have sex

## Appendix F: Theme 5 Insights, Categories, and Codes

This document provides the codes, categories, and insights informing Theme 5.

### Theme 5: The Roles of Privilege in Identity

This theme recognizes how examined and unexamined privilege manifests in participants' perspectives and experiences.

### Theme 5: Underlying Identity Dimension Insights

#### Age Identity Insights

One participant demonstrated examined privilege relating to age identity. They experienced, “benefits from the technology advantages of youth.” This participant recognized how youth aligns with the early adoption of emerging technologies.

#### Class Identity Insights

Participants shared perspectives on class identity, expressing both examined and unexamined privilege, as well as resistance to equity. Examined privilege was demonstrated with statements such as “able to take on unpaid career-related opportunities,” “recognizes own privilege,” “disarms class expectations,” and “tries not to show off.” Along these lines, efforts to conceal known privilege were also noted, including “cloaks wealth through clothing,” “uses privacy (hides details or protects self),” “downplays comfort,” “downplays life experiences,” and “does not act like a bratty rich kid,” reflecting self-awareness or sensitivity to class disparities.

In contrast, unexamined privilege was revealed in statements like “avoids money topics,” “makes fun of class discrepancies,” and “performs as less affluent,” indicating disengagement or lack of critical engagement with class inequities. Some participants expressed active resentment toward equity, as reflected in comments including “believes this is embryonic gobbledegook,” “pretends to have an NPR mindset,” and “resents the DEI narrative.” At the extreme, privilege was characterized by the statement “supports class discrimination as a form of order.”

## Disability Identity Insights

No participants demonstrated examined privilege or revealed unexamined privilege relating to disability identity. However, one participant exemplified severe ableism and harmful rhetoric, stating, "presenting as disabled or amplifying disability themes is a flaw that encourages weakness and minimizes strength."

## Gender Identity Insights

Some male participants demonstrated examined privilege, acknowledging their "experiences of male privilege" and explaining that they "recognized their own privilege," reflecting an awareness of systemic advantages for cisgender men.

In contrast, other participants revealed unexamined privilege through aggressive and dismissive statements, including "gender is not complex. Either you are male or female," and resentment, as expressed in "I felt that female students were more focused on by the male professors as compared to Male students. Few professors used to discriminate between Men and Women, resulting in demotivation to the Male section of the class." These responses reflect binary, exclusionary perspectives as well as defensiveness. This defensiveness is further illustrated by comments like "resents concept of toxic masculinity" and "finds jabs at women jokes funny," revealing a resistance to introspection, a lack of critical awareness, and disrespect for others.

## LGBTQIA+ Identity Insights

No participants demonstrated examined privilege or revealed unexamined privilege relating to LGBTQIA+ identity.

## Neurodivergent Identity Insights

No participants demonstrated examined privilege or revealed unexamined privilege relating to neurodivergent identity.

## Race/Ethnicity Identity Insights

Some participants demonstrated examined privilege with statements "uses privilege to advocate for others" and "uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator." and

"recognizes own privilege" while recognizing the challenges of "calling out other white people." Some participants revealed unexamined privilege through "believes in meritocracy," "does not see color," and "believes racism is rare." One participant dismissed systemic inequities by stating "observes no racism." Others expressed overt racism or white supremacy with, "feels white people are victims of racism" and "resents woke culture."

## Religion Identity Insights

Some participants demonstrated examined privilege with statements such as "benefits from privileges afforded to Christians in the U.S." and "benefits from left-wing Buddhist values," indicating awareness of how some religious norms act in their favor. Unexamined privilege was evident in dismissive attitudes, such as "judges others," "pities those who are religious," and "resents science." Some conflated unrelated topics, as in "considers sexuality a woke religion."

## Theme 5: Underlying Categories

### Demonstrates or Reveals Examined Identity-Based Privilege

Examined privilege refers to a conscious recognition and understanding of the advantages or benefits someone holds due to aspects of their identity, such as race, class, gender, ability, or other social factors. It involves actively reflecting on how these advantages impact personal experiences and interactions with others, often in relation to systemic structures of power and oppression.

### Demonstrates or Reveals Unexamined Identity-Based Privilege

Unexamined privilege refers to a lack of awareness or reflection on the advantages or benefits someone holds due to aspects of their identity, such as race, class, gender, ability, or other social factors. It often involves taking these advantages for granted, without recognizing how they contribute to personal experiences or create disparities for others.

## Theme 5: Underlying Codes

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** benefits from technology advantages of youth, checks own bias, recognizes own prejudice, shares age to signal maturity

## Experience with AGE Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** experiences/observes no ageism

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** able to take on unpaid career-related opportunities, believes showing wealth is showing off, cloaks wealth through clothing, disarms class expectations, does not act like a bratty rich kid, does not deal with facades, downplays comfort, downplays life experience, dresses down, feels both shame and luck, feels guilty, lives in middle class bubble, observes assumptions of wealth/comfort, performs as less affluent, protects privilege or wealth, recognizes own privilege, recognizes parents' efforts to lift them, tries not to show off

## Experience with CLASS Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids class indicators or signifiers, avoids money topics, believes this is "embryonic gobbledegook," blames, cloaks wealth through clothing, deals with being taken advantage of, does not act like a bratty rich kid, downplays comfort, downplays life experience, dresses down, experiences barriers due to color of white skin, experiences/observes no classism, hides political and economic beliefs, indicates white fragility, performs as less affluent, pretends to have an NPR mindset, protects privilege or wealth, resents people, resents the "DEI narrative," rewards self, supports class discrimination as form of order

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** None

## Experience with DISABILITY Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege (ableism)*

**Underlying Codes:** believes "going above and beyond to make people feel like they're no different than anyone else makes them feel like they're different than everyone else," believes "those who are disabled don't pity themselves and feel offended when you pity them," believes presenting as disabled or amplifying disability themes is a flaw that encourages weakness and minimizes strength, experiences/observes no ableism, indicates lack of empathy

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** experiences male privilege, ignores gender issues, recognizes own male privilege

## Experience with GENDER Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege (sexism)*

**Underlying Codes:** believes "gender is not complex. either you are male or female. there is no third gender. this is a fact.", believes "girls create babies and boys do not. the proliferation of the falsehood that you can change that fact is damaging to children.", believes "if I'm hated for being male it's usually by someone who wishes they could be male like me", believes "males & females are different", believes "professors used to discriminate between men and women resulting in demotivation to the male section of the class", believes "some places feel unjustifiably hostile towards men", believes "there is a lot of misandry right now", believes "you're setting people up to fail in the real world once they leave your daycare 2.0 college scene", believes females who are mentally/physically well don't need to cope with gender, believes in minding own business, believes questions about gender discrimination indicate a failure of education, blames, conflates gender and sexuality, conflates gender diversity with "type of sex people have", deals with "masochism and teasing but nothing serious", describes LGBTQIA+ people as "alphabet people screaming their butt off", does not care about gender, experiences male privilege, experiences/observes no direct gender discrimination, experiences/observes no gender discrimination, feels excluded "because I am a hetero white male", feels othered as a white religious man, finds "jabs at women" jokes funny, finds pronouns and transitioning difficult to follow, gender essentialist, indicates male fragility, indicates sexism

or misogyny, indicates toxic masculinity, labels people snowflakes, resents concept of toxic masculinity, resents diversity, resents LGBTQIA+

## Experience with CIS-HET Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** acts as ally, advocates for LGBTQIA+ people, feels straight but was unsure and explored sexuality in the past, listens and supports LGBTQIA+ family, recognizes privilege of heterosexuality and being cis-gendered

## Experience with CIS-HET Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** avoids being perceived as a Jesus-freak, avoids discussing religion, blames, conflates gender/sexuality with religion, describes self as wokephobic who rejects all woke ideas, experiences/observes no LGBTQIA+ discrimination, finds it appalling to be "renamed as cisgendered," indicates aggression and hate, perpetrates prejudice or says things that are prejudiced against people in the LGBTQIA+ community, resents diversity, resents LGBTQIA+ identities

## Experience with NEUROTYPICAL Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** None

## Experience with NEUROTYPICAL Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** "ADHD is so common people joke about it" (says person who is not disabled or neurodivergent), believes "neurodivergent" is used to "other" people, believes prayer is the path to overcoming neurodivergent crutch, believes using neurodivergence as a crutch is limiting and individuals need to find a way through, experiences/observes no neurodiversity discrimination, expresses ableism, observes neurodiversity "her brings up politics or certain ethnic topics in situations where it is entirely inappropriate

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** assumed competent because white, believes racism cannot affect white people, benefits from black-sounding nickname, creates distractions to protect victims, experiences privilege, feels that "calling out other white people is hard!", name keeps resume safe, recognizes own privilege, uses privilege to advocate for others, uses privilege to help, uses white skin color to gain access and intervene as a mediator

## Experience with RACE/ETHNICITY Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** "I've never personally witnessed or experienced racism", "raised in an environment where racism was very rare", as white person chooses "would prefer not to" option for race question on surveys, avoids "ideologues" and "woke" people, believes racism is rare, believes white people are victims of racism, blames, deals with being made fun of for being pale, describes post-Obama liberal as "useful racially-masochistic tool", does not see color, experiences "whims of genetics" and privilege, experiences/observes no racial or ethnic discrimination, feels it is impossible to eliminate race/ethnicity discrimination, feels misandry, feels skin color not important, feels spite, feels victimized and disadvantaged, ignores race/ethnicity discrimination, ignores racial discrimination, ignores racism, indicates white fragility, no experience with racial or ethnic discrimination, observes "racism consistently in education expecting that black and brown people cannot compete or achieve without lowering standards", observes "racism that expects whites to feel ashamed of themselves", observes peers dealing with racism using confidence and being happy, resents "virtue signaling" and "woke culture", resents that "white people are the enemy in history", supports meritocracy

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: examined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** benefits from left-wing Buddhist values, benefits from privileges afforded to Christians in the U.S.

## Experience with RELIGION Identity

*Category: unexamined privilege*

**Underlying Codes:** aligns with some religions but not others, as a Jewish person feels afraid, as a Jewish person suffers does not cope, as a Muslim avoids heated discussions, as a Muslim feels at times that "I can't pray in public", as a Pagan experiences disrespect and erasure, as a Roman Catholic experiences "suffocating secularism", as an atheist argues morals and ethics do not need religion, blames, considers sexuality a woke religion, doesn't care, experiences/observes no religious discrimination, judges others, pities those who are religious and thinks it's preposterous that people still believe in 2000-year-old fairy tales, resents atheism, resents not being able to say the word retard, resents science

## Appendix G: Theme 6 Categories and Data

This document provides the categories and raw data informing Theme 6.

### Theme 6: Identity Meanings

This theme considers the data captured in the final survey question: “This is the last question. Identity is a complex interplay of empowerment and vulnerability. What would you like to add to a conversation about identity? Your input, experiences, and perspectives are deeply appreciated.”

### Theme 6: Underlying Categories

Identity is: Affirming, Belonging, Burden, Care, Complex, Contextual, Confusing, Culture, Difficult, Diversity, Divine, Experience, Family, Feeling, Fluid, Choice, Individual, Interesting, Intersectional, Power, Problematic, Psychological, Social, Parasocial, Serious, Sticky, Struggle, Transformation, Truth, Worldview.

### Theme 6: Underlying Raw Data

#### Identity is Affirming

I think that the experience of dating a woman made me reflect the most on my own femininity. It gave me the space to feel free to perform gender exactly how I wanted to and be supported.

#### Identity is Belonging

I have struggled with categorizing myself my whole life. such as not knowing where I fit in or how I'm perceived by others. But I have had the chance to explore that part of my identity after moving to the city, and DePaul/the university experience as a whole has really helped me find my place in terms of friendships and community.

Identity is indeed a complex and multifaceted concept, encompassing various aspects such as cultural, social, personal, and more. It plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions of themselves and their sense of belonging in the world.

## Identity is Burden

I prefer not to belong to any group or identity. I would rather be the only one responsible for how people see me and I have a strong dislike for faking my behavior to gain social inclusion.

## Identity is Care

Just starting and having the conversation to make everyone feel included is a step in the right direction.

I love everyone so much. I love that I'm typing this and that a living soul will read this. I LOVE YOU.

Coming to understand my own identity and all its complexity has made me into a more accepting, loving, kind individual and has had nothing but positive effects on my life in the long term.

I grew up being born to a disabled parent with a brain injury that has shaped and molded my life and have been heavily discriminated against for having to make compromises socially to put my mother first in my life as though she were my child. So the culture that comes with being a caregiver is one that is internal to my identity.

I just think people need to be nice and accepting. That's truly the bottom line. If someone is brave enough to express who they are, all that we should say is ok and accept them.

Someone's own identity is deeply personal. Treating another person's identity with respect and dignity is an extremely low bar to clear, and I have little patience or interest in interacting with people who refuse to do so.

## Identity is Complex

People assume all trans/nonbinary/gnc people are part of the same group and that our identities are the same. They are not.

My identity is more than what I look on the outside. I can guess what other people think when they see me but I try to live my life the best I can.

I often find that I'm non-binary about a lot of things other than gender. I am non-binary in my economic values, for example, because I value some parts of capitalism and some parts of socialism but I am neither a capitalist nor a socialist. I wonder if thinking about parts of ideas instead of two opposing, whole ideas is itself an identity or way of being.

My own experience with being treated differently due to my conditions (ASD in particular) led me to the conclusion that discrimination on other factors (like sexual orientation and race) was inherently wrong, but I also developed an inferiority complex that I tried to combat by proving myself "superior" to my neurotypical classmates. In short, I was a hypocrite, and while I have since learned to hold my identity in a healthier way, identities can be something of a double-edged sword.

Identity is weird and complicated. I think that we, as a society, need to give people more grace and understanding as they explore their identity.

Identity forms the human experience. Identity is complex because it is a collection of the things that make us up since the day we are born. The experiences, the labels, the relationships we create, and so much more.

An individual's identity is shaped by their life experiences, passions, values, beliefs, ideology and lots of other things. It is a broad spectrum. My identity is composed of hundreds of things, and all of these things have played a role in making me the person I am today.

## Identity is Contextual

How I identify may change depending on who I am with. When people ask what I am I usually say I'm Mexican American, when other Mexicans or Latinos ask what I am I am usually more specific, I say my family is from Puebla specifically.

Salient pieces of my identity come out differently depending on where I am, who I'm around, etc. Some of my identities have also changed over time.

## Identity is Confusing

My identity is confusing.

## Identity is Culture

I believe culture too impacts identity. During a conversation, people should be open to respect other cultures which makes the speaker confident and builds his/her own identity.

## Identity is Difficult

I wish gender didn't have to be such a big thing. I just want to be human, you know. But I love expressing myself, especially through clothes. Just like why do people care so much about how people want to identify? Sorry this is probably not that helpful, just my final thoughts I guess.

I think we should have open spaces where people with "un-orthodox" (using it as a dig) identifies can come out comfortably.

I have found that identity is more scary than it is affirming.

I wish that more people knew that us jews do not equal zionists or Israel. I feel like I cannot be myself right now without people assuming the worst of me. I also wish more people cared about invisible disabilities. I feel alone on campus and afraid to take up space in disabled communities because no one looks at me and sees that I am in pain.

I am a feminine presenting woman in tech. The amount of times, implicitly and explicitly, I come across people who don't think "a pretty girl can be smart," is enraging. One can wear pearls, lipstick, heels and still be an expert in her tech field.

I have no problem with people having specific gender identities. That makes some people happy. I respect other people's pronouns and gender identities: that's their own life experience, I can't say anything about that. But I don't like being expected to feel the same way about my own gender. I don't see why I have to identify as a man, woman, nonbinary. I feel like people assume that I'm touchy about it because I'm "confused". I'm not confused. I just don't personally get anything out of labeling my identity; I'm not just going to do something I don't want to do because it makes other people happy. I get nothing out of it.

Being biracial is very difficult.

It would be nice to live in a world where I don't feel like there's an expectation about my identity. As a trans woman, it would be nice to be able to just identify as a woman rather than a trans woman and not have it be a big deal in society.

Personally I'm still a little confused about the criteria that makes up some identity terms. For example I've been wondering if I'm trans for years now, but I'm having a lot of trouble coming to a good conclusion because I'm just not sure how to know. I get that not everybody always has the same signs but fuck I just wish it was a little easier. Also it's just important for me to have a term to identify with so that I can feel valid in that. Having no identity terms to identify yourself, for me, sounds very difficult, but those same terms can box people in, I've found, so it's a commitment to identify with a term in the first place. Really identity to me just seems so damn tough. I respect all that can find their identity and be satisfied with it.

I find that there are few safe places for straight men to exist without the criticism of others. A cynic may say, "men control everything so everywhere is a safe place." That would be naive.

fringe identities can be isolating. disabled people have trouble connecting with other disabled people and it can be scary to feel like you are the only one experiencing these things.

Being discriminated against because of your identity feels horrific. I have been discriminated against for my gender the most, and also on occasion for my sexuality or disability. It feels disgusting and awful. And I know that people who are marginalized racially go through it ten times more than I do. In my opinion, racial marginalization is the biggest issue right now in America specifically and we must listen to the racially marginalized, especially women and queer people of color.

All identities are important. How one identifies through their ethnicity, their name, their job, their country, whatever. These are the ways we feel about ourselves in that we are a tribe. The biggest thing to me is that the same precautions and programs and special privileges that some groups get should at least be applied in some way to EVERYONE, including whites. I'm mostly German, and the stereotype that Germans are Nazis hurts sometimes, like that's all our history

and culture is. Some say this isn't true, but whites have become a bit of an enemy in the eyes of some people and in certain industries. Saying whites have a culture only of pillaging and conquest, is like saying blacks have a culture of stealing and death. That language isn't only for one side of the coin, and the sooner people realize that, the better we'll all get along.

Only hoping this doesn't get way too far and separate people like how religion and caste did!

I'm tired of all of the labels. Please let people be themselves. It's hard getting up some days and the additional hatred or isms take away people's self-esteem and love for themselves.

### Identity is Diversity

My wife is Hindu, mom is Buddhist, father was Roman Catholic, step mother Baptist and Stepfather was Jewish and became an Atheist. I have been to church, temples and the synagogue. I think if people had this thought process we could all be happy and help one another get to where we'd like to go in life.

### Identity is Divine

I found that I have a greater identity in God than myself.

I would like to add that just because one's identity is different it shouldn't be subject to discrimination or oppression. One's identity is divine, beautiful, and unique, I think it was intentional from God.

### Identity is Experience

Identity is rather developed based on experiences. I do not connect my identity to social, economic based traits, rather as a human and the nature and personality traits I developed over the years.

Identities keep changing based on experiences.

I think identity is closely tied with our individual upbringings. Our personal growth from children into adults largely dictates our identity and how we interact with the world. Identity is multi-faceted and very complex, but that's what makes each of us so unique.

[Identity is] personal experiences and hardships.

I cannot define myself with a lack of life experience. Think about Sylvia Plath's fig tree metaphor — choosing a single identity, or path of life means losing everything else that could have been. I have not yet chosen my fig, yet I am being pressured by society.

## Identity is Family

Despite the struggles I faced growing up, having loving parents was something that I did not think about often that now grown up, I appreciate deeply. I had support from my parents emotionally which allowed me to focus on school even when we were struggling.

I think the environment plays a big role in Identity.

I was adopted and raised by two single mothers. They are two undeniably strong and independent women. I have had strong women as role models and feel this has truly impacted my identity. I feel entitled to my opinion and value myself, sometimes to a fault, but my mothers have taught me to be compassionate and stand up for what I believe in.

My parents wanted a better life for my sister and I in America. They emphasized that we learn English, so we lost our ability to speak our national language, Tagalog, fluently (I still can understand it). This represents the pressure to assimilate one's identity to what is acceptable. I experienced my share of racial slurs and blatant discrimination growing up and only was able to stand against this when I became confident and proud of who I am. This pride and confidence came from accepting all of who I am, both Filipino and American.

I think the concept and definition of identity has changed. I used to struggle in trying to define who I was because to my family I wasn't fully Mexican (because I held American values) and I wasn't fully American because a lot of my identity was shaped by my Mexican background . When I was younger I thought I had to choose between being one or the other. Now we see more of a blend of what used to be conflicting identities and people embrace their roots more enthusiastically. I'm latina and Mexican American. I'm shaped by my experiences, my roots, my culture and by the life I want for myself.

Family dynamic might be an interesting topic to explore identity influences. Like nature vs nurture. Maybe exploring how parental identities influence their children and maybe how anxious attachment styles play a role in identity development.

I feel like childhood family or family structure shapes my identity. But everyone's different.

## Identity is Feeling

Emotions and feelings play a vital role in shaping an individual.

## Identity is Fluid

I think there are aspects of identity that are difficult/impossible to control (like age, race, etc) and other aspects that are fully in our control (tomorrow I can decide that being a runner is part of my identity). It's nice to know that we can change these perceptions of ourselves through our identity.

I identify as a part of the universe. No pronouns, no identity, just some atomic material with a lot of space stitched together into a person who thinks they could be anything else. As for identity, my consciousness will die someday, may persist or may not, while my physical material rejoins the universe someday.

In terms of my own understanding of identity, I am coming to terms with the concept of fluidity the more I read and understand different perspectives. Although I really want to hang on to the essentialism argument, I am more convinced that we are a product of our time, culture, and life events and that these all influence who we are today and who we become tomorrow.

There should be no boundaries or binaries with identity, and the concept itself is a fluid movement between individual people. Why terms like “masculine” or “feminine” exist is still shocking to me as I only see people instead of men or women. People can do whatever they want and there is no need to live in the box you were assigned to at birth.

It doesn't matter and we don't have to identify as anything or we could identify as everything.

Identity is as fluid as the person it is attached to. I just wish people were more accepting and willing to allow those around them to be as static or ever-changing as they'd like to be.

I think people need to be more open minded, realize it's not as big a deal as it is, especially when it comes to pronouns, who is sleeping with who, or even different religions. I cannot wait for the day that people are able to identify as whatever they want, be, with whoever they want, be with, however, many people they want, and they feel safe, protected, and loved.

## Identity is Choice

Having a choice and a space to share about identity is a must-have feature. It is more than a feature for any product. It gives control and space to be able to put yourself out as and when you get the strength to do that. And as many people join this thing, it can be a snowball effect that now many people are less afraid to put themselves out.

People should be given complete freedom to choose their identity.

The only thing I'd really have to add is this: from my perspective and my own experiences, people should be free to live their own life the way that they so choose. With that though, they shouldn't shove their preferred lifestyle in other people's faces or judge others for the way they choose to live their life. No path in life is better than another, each path can only be truly chosen by the individual, and no one should feel ashamed to be who they are or who they want to be as long as they respect others' decisions for their own path in life. I'd also say that it's ok to not know where you stand in your identity or what your purpose is in life, choose a path that feels right to the specific individual and follow it however far you want. It's always ok to change paths later down the line if the path you thought was right at one point is no longer the path you see for yourself as you've grown older. It's alright to be who you are and it's alright to change, but it's not alright to be disrespectful of other people's choices for their own life just because you don't agree.

## Identity is Individual

Everyone expresses their identity in a way unique to them, and I think in an ideal world everyone would be able to express themselves in a way that empowers them.

For me, identity is how you carry yourself.

Identity is entirely self-constructed. It heavily involves the person themselves and outside opinions should not have any bearing on identity

Everyone has an inner life. Everyone has their own thoughts and experiences that make them who they identify as, and your perception of them might not match up with their own perception of themselves.

Identity is a personal journey and no one should try to conform to certain ideas in order to identify how they might think other people want them to.

Our identity is unique and always revolving. There are no two same identities, not even identical twins. We're our own person because of the different things we experience, the opinions we form, the things we learn and go through in life.

I'm not sure if this connects but an identity conversation I like is the idea of self love. How much does one really love themselves and do they love themselves inside and outside?

You may identify as one thing or another, but at the end of the day it's your own thing. You make your own identity and live life the way you want people to see you.

I'm glad to see people start to respect how an individual self-identifies rather than how people in the past have grouped us.

Identity is unique to that individual, and that individual only.

A person should be comfortable in who they are and disregard what other people say in order to avoid being impacted by unalterable public opinions.

The whole idea of someone's identity has been water down in recent years. In fact, the whole idea of the individual isn't even real. Not to say we don't have individual right and autonomy, I'm not arguing for collectivism. But I want highlight that unity is important. From the moment you're born you are defined not as an individual, but as a son or a daughter, or a brother or a sister.

Point being, no man is an island. We all rely on other people and people rely on you. That interdependence under a common culture what used to uphold society. If you only focus on individualism like we have been doing for decades, there is nothing left to unify people. No shared language, no shared culture, no shared religion, no shared value framework. The only thing we have in common is that we have nothing in common. But it's okay, because we're all individuals! Ask a man to tell you about himself in healthy times. He says he's a Christian, a father, a son, a proud citizen of his nation. Ask a man this question now and he'll answer with his favorite shows and fast food chains. This is what Individualism does. It reduces identity into that which can be commercialized.

Identity is whoever YOU personally are. Nothing else but yourself defines who you are, don't let other people determine who you are/will be.

I feel like identity is something so personal that no one except the individual truly knows how they identify. I think a lot of people keep things private about themselves and that's a part of their identity that stays secret to them.

Thank you for this survey. It has been good to reflect on who I am, and what I believe in. I think identity is up to each individual, and that it is incredibly fluid; it can change every day if that is what the individual feels. Ultimately, it is up to them and their feelings.

A person's identity is unique to them and should not be based on what labels they have attached to them such as their gender. Instead of using stereotypes for groups we should learn what is unique about each individual person when we interact with them.

## Identity is Interesting

I'm curious about where the line between personality and identity lies. Along a similar vein, I wonder about measuring how much these things mean to my identity personally (for instance, being a woman might be a huge part of someone's identity, but a small part of someone else's). These scales are interesting to me.

I think there obviously is a lot more to a person than the organizational classes and identities society has created for them to sort themselves into so I think it would be really interesting to

explore the sense of self people develop outside of those factors and how possible it is to develop a self mostly unbiased by these factors.

I would definitely love the answer to why so many people think they are/should be the center to it all. I have some theories that it could be the vastness of humanity's ego to the philosophical reasonings that humankind wants to be remembered when they are gone. Personally, I just love asking questions around those lines because the answers always either change, surprise me, or both.

I think identity is fascinating - as humans, we aggressively cling to who we are and yet that is often so complex we could not even explain it ourselves.

Another aspect of identity I think about often is how some people try so hard to be unique (since society places a certain value on it) and yet one of the most human urges I can think of is to fit into a group. It's why we love taking personality quizzes so much - we get personalized results that make us feel seen while recognizing that there is a whole population out there who got the same result. Anyway, I think the power of identity resides in how it can make us feel so unique yet give us a group to belong to and relate to at the same time.

## Identity is Intersectional

It is difficult to not feel shame when both parts of my identity seek to invalidate one another in some form.

No single aspect of an individual's identity exists on its own. It's crucial to examine identity within the context of all its components, to see how each influences the other.

I'm biased, I believe anyone who sits at the intersection of multiple identities has the most in-depth insight. This is why intersectionality is important.

Identity is a delicate balance of empowerment and vulnerability. Embracing the intersections of my Japanese heritage, womanhood, and experiences abroad has enriched my perspective.

I think identity plays a crucial part in many aspects of life. For example, access to good resources, maybe jobs or even awareness of one's mental and physical well-being. Due to

identity, I think people are ignored, not respected and are pushed behind. From a cultural perspective, having various identities is not even accepted as a concept. I think there is a need for good support for those who are ignored and are away from basic needs like income source, health and gratitude.

It's a dynamic and multifaceted aspect of human existence that evolves over time and can be deeply personal and nuanced. One important aspect to consider in discussions about identity is the intersectionality of various social identities.

I've never felt comfortable talking about my identity as an Asian-American. I feel more "at home" in a room full of white Americans than I do a room full of Asian-Americans, and it's taken me an incredibly long time to even begin to feel welcomed by the Asian-American community. As a Chinese girl adopted by white parents, I've never felt part of any conversations revolving around racial or cultural experiences because my own feel so vastly different from everyone else's

I like to think that I am confident in my identity, but as a queer muslim woman living in a homophobic household, it feels as though I am not being genuine sometimes. I feel the most comfortable when I'm with friends I trust, and when I'm able to share my identity unapologetically.

I remember growing up it was very hard to walk the line between my Hispanic roots and having to adapt to a white world.

My identity is intersectional, being Black, Fat, Queer, Non Binary, and Neuro-Divergent. People don't often tailor spaces to be accepting to all intersectional perspectives. So experiencing racism & or fat phobia in feminist spaces or sexism & or homophobia in Pro-Black spaces, for example is a different kind of hurt.

I think culture plays a huge role in identity, especially when it comes to individualized vs collectivist countries. I grew up with both types of cultures and the journey of merging them both makes up a huge part of my identity.

I think in the discussion of identity a new term might be necessary in order to accurately convey the experience of living as an ostracized minority. "Identity" implies choice, and as an LGBT

woman of color I have no choice in the matter. Additionally, when describing who a person is, what communities they belong to, what communities they are oppressed by, I think it's important that the aspects of their personhood in question are addressed separately and critically.

## Identity is Power

Identity is absolutely something to be empowering, to be your true self.

I think identity plays a big role in power dynamics which are a very complex and natural occurrence that are influenced by a variety of factors that may include but are not limited to individual, environmental, socioeconomic, sociocultural, and situational factors. Personally, as a first generation heterosexual latino male, I strongly believe and feel that there is an unspoken responsibility where if you find yourself in a position of power to advocate and empower those who are not or may not feel that sense of power or voice, whether it be in overt or covert ways.

It is very difficult to insult me. Anything negative said towards me, I either also agree with or am eager to work to improve. Therefore, when someone tries to hurt me based on identity, they are forced into a deep reflective conversation about what I can do to improve and why they are reacting that way to a stranger in the first place. This flips the roles of vulnerability and empowerment in the confrontation, to the benefit of all.

## Identity is Problematic

Identities are a concept made up by systems that fundamentally can not describe them. The concept of categorizing elements of humanity is something that ultimately limits and restricts the mind.

Trying to pick apart every part of ourselves and putting a label on them can be even more harmful. I see this really hurting my peers. This self analysis makes us vain, self important and overthink our own selves instead of just living.

“Christ said, "Judge not, lest you be judged with the same judgment". I'm always open and willing to talk to anyone about their (or my) experience(s). I strive to have charity toward all regardless of their appearance or my previous assumptions. Please try and do the same to others even though you may view them as "rigid" or "bigoted" etc. Here is an example to

illustrate my point. In class, we once had a group discussion about tolerance. We went through all of the various identities and how people must respect people with these identities. I asked, "Should we respect a Trump supporter because of their identity as well?" (To test the limits of tolerance). A woman in the class then said "I could never respect a Trump supporter". There was no rebuttal on my part for fear of retribution. Regardless of your views on anything, this is wrong.

I think it's dumb and irrelevant.

Life is hard work. If you are not growing your own food to eat every day, then someone else is. What work are you trading for that food? How are you making the world a better place? If you are focused on yourself/identity then you are setting yourself up for depression and dissatisfaction. If you are focused on others, then in turn you will find the fulfillment that is the reason for living.

cloud/cloudself, frog/frogself is stupid. you're a human, not an object.

## Identity is Psychological

I think self introspection is most important for identity. Everyone must love themselves to truly make our society a better place for all.

## Identity is Social

Your questions addressed discrimination and coping mechanisms which had me thinking about three types of response: how others treat me as a result of the identity they perceive me to have, how I respond to others' treatment of me, and how I edit my actions by pre-empting how I think others will respond to my identity.

I really like the idea of assumed-identity in place of the idea of \_\_\_\_\_-passing. In practice this would look like someone assuming I'm white, or cis, or able-bodied and then treating me accordingly therefore temporarily giving me the privileges that come along with those things.

I think that as people it would be nice to just enjoy one another and be comfortable in our own skin.

My identity focuses on the others around me. I'd rather the group function better than focus on myself. I find it's better to change how I act around others than deal with the awkward tension

When trying to understand other people's identity, it's important that we don't go too deep in redefining new identities to a point of regression. Additionally, respecting other people's identity is essential if one wants theirs to be respected as well.

We have our own perception of our identity and there are also external perceptions of our identity.

Doing this survey has made me realize what my identities look like on paper. I wonder what the person reading this will assume I look like and act like.

Identity nowadays feels like something we can proudly demonstrate in society but with so much hate it makes it hard for some to fully show who they are.

An insurrection also occurred during a global pandemic and so much more. All of these social events have a large impact on my identity as it influences my political stances, my morales, and how I socialize with the world.

I would like others to judge me on my character but many times that's not the case, they tend to judge me on appearance, and I often don't disclose much about myself because I get curious about the assumptions they will make. I myself find that I make assumptions about people based on their appearance as well.

Declaring identities helps us find community and support, but it also makes it easy to exclude others when their definitions don't align with ours.

If I am having more than a passive interaction with a person, I think a good community should care enough to acknowledge and appreciate people's identity.

Because sometimes what we identify with is not necessarily a true representation of ourselves, but rather comes from external influences such as societal cues or the internet.

A society that respects diversity and embraces differences is not easily achieved.

I like figuring out my own identity and being able to relate to others but it seems like people have ruined the exciting part of identity by adding discrimination.

People nowadays value their identity more. I believe this can be a primary space where they can get their respect and value. On the negative side, some people also think their identity is greater than others which will again end up in racism and sexism.

I think too many grown people care about how they're perceived and judge other people's identities.

Different identities coming together in this world to combine our knowledge and power to make change for the better is a profound thing that we sometimes forget to appreciate. Instead, we may discriminate and hate on others who are different from us, but that type of ignorance is the exact roadblock that keeps us from evolving into better identities together.

I appreciate my identity and where I came from when I am with people who are like me. For me that's ethnicity or race. But to be honest I am still trying to figure out my comfort level expressing my identity, even with people who are close to me but didn't know me until adulthood.

My true humanhood lies beneath my identity, but it is my identity that allows my deeper values to be represented and acted upon. Identity is a necessary part of us, but just a part. Identity helps us to connect with like minded people who share the same interests and likes. It helps us to increase our knowledge by sharing our knowledge with others who have the same interests.

It is only through years of forming a relationship where trust and safety are established, that a person can show you who they truly are, and this includes the things you can see about them physically, or the parts of their identity you can't see.

In my personal experience, the best way to connect with someone is finding a mutual similarity in identities, and building your relationship off that.

## Identity is Parasocial

The general negativity around social media and the internet is causing a lot of young people to lose or change their identities based on what they see on there.

It has both external (what we present to the world) and internal (how we truly are when we are alone) facets. I believe that social media has made the navigation of identity more complex because of the influence of opinions, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Sites like TikTok, YouTube, and other social media platforms have provided the most understanding and information into how people from different groups feel, live, and experience society. It's made it easier for younger generations to innately understand the differences in their privilege, including myself; I was a teen at the dawn of most social media in the 2000s. Social media has also made it possible for people to find their place of connection and belonging because they can express their identities in ways that previous generations could not. It's made it possible to understand intersectionality. Last thing, social media has shed new light on what it means to be from a diaspora of people and have different experiences that make up your culture, race, and ethnicity. This is particularly true for people of color of different diasporas like the Asian diaspora, the African/Black diaspora, etc. How granular were we able to get with our identities before social media?

I feel as if social media is allowing people to cosplay or test different identities. Growing up, you had to figure out what you liked on your own and listen to your body to see what made you happy. Nowadays, you can look at aesthetics on social media and be told how to be a certain person.

## Identity is Serious

We need to provide a very inclusive environment to our children from the time of their birth. There's no other way. Once we grow, things get hard wired in our brains, and it is very tough to change track.

Regardless of whether a person's identity "aligns" with their physical characteristics and/or behaviors, taking their identity seriously is a crucial step towards connecting with the person and possibly helping them grow and/or address problems or issues.

## Identity is Sticky

Identity shifts and changes, but there are certain parts that are hard or impossible to erase.

## Identity is Struggle

Identity is something I have struggled with recently, because for a long time I felt my identity was tied to academic or corporate success. There is still some of me that feels that way, and when introducing myself to someone new I have the instinct to start with what I do for work. However, I have been working hard to try to separate what I do from who I am.

Being open to everyone talking, sometimes it feels like I get left out or talked over.

It's sad that not everyone can feel comfortable being themselves.

I want to use identity and transcend it at the same time, to get to the threads of human experience that tie us together more than apart.

I have suffered emotionally because of my identity. I don't feel I belong anywhere, even sometimes among my own people. If we could bring more grace and kindness toward each other, the world would be a better place.

I had a tough experience my whole life, lived in different communities and cultures while never had the chance to experience my own but by only the family circle. Yet until today I'm still confused as my identity is totally a mess and people can never guess where am I from or anything related to my religion etc... Therefore, I think if people from the first place never care about Identities it will save people like me a lot of time to end a circle of pain.

## Identity is Transformation

I think identity is what you are, or the lack thereof as there are a lot of people who still have trouble knowing what and who they are. I think identity is also something that is constantly changing throughout someone's life and it is not something that is a "fixed point", although it depends on the person as some people could potentially stay the same their whole life.

Your sense of identity changes throughout your lifetime. I think as a teenager you are very cautious of what other people like, or what you think you should like. As you grow older you are more at peace with loving what you love and understanding yourself.

identity is not static.

It [identity] can only be somewhat truly conveyed when another person gets to know you over a period of time.

A lot of people don't know what their identity is. I think it takes time to figure out as we grow. It could change constantly

Try not to become hyperfocused on one part and neglect the others. Embrace all parts of your identity, even the ones that are "still in the works."

In a conversation about identity, I'd emphasize the importance of embracing both the diversity of identities and the personal journey of self-discovery. Recognizing that each person's identity is multi-faceted and evolving allows for a more inclusive understanding and acceptance of oneself and others.

I feel like I cared a lot about what other people thought of my identity when I was younger but I think it really doesn't matter.

In my own experience, identity has been a journey of self-discovery and acceptance.

The older I get the more I find that identity is so complex. I'm always trying to ground myself in my identity but sometimes I don't even know what that is. It changes as you grow. I've let go of parts of my identity that I felt no longer served me. When you become an adult, you realize that a large part of your identity comes from your upbringing. Because of this, some of your beliefs are toxic or things that you don't even believe in. Things we believe about ourselves may have come from someone else. Those are the ideas we have to get rid of. Social media makes it hard to have our identity. It often feels like thousands of people on the internet are trying to tell you how to think or feel. You have to block out that noise.

I think experience, thoughts, and beliefs ultimately shape our identity but over time those things change. I think that's when people began to question "who am I?" And some people never know.

Identity is fascinating to me particularly as we age. When we are young, we try so hard to figure out who we are and what we stand for and we defend it ferociously. Then, as we get a bit older, we see how what we've stood for and defended ferociously maybe isn't working so well in our favor and we deconstruct parts of our identity or let go of them completely. Then when we age even further we get comfortable once again in this revised version of ourselves. I'm not sure if this is just me, but I'm in the dismantling and exploration part of my identity and I'm looking forward to the part where I have let go of the things in my identity that have not and will not serve me.

It's taken a long time to come into my own and not feel pushed out of a space that's rightfully mine. I don't feel threatened by having to prove myself anymore because I still grow every day in efforts that matter to me.

I used to downplay my asian identity in an effort to appear "cool" or "different." I would try to force myself into a mold I didn't necessarily fit in. After I moved away from home, I found myself missing those parts of home and I made an effort to understand the traditions I would mindlessly take part in. I'm so proud of my culture and identity nowadays and feel a need to protect those in my community.

## Identity is Truth

Identity is something you know about yourself more than anybody else does, no matter what they try to tell you. It's what I've been able to hold onto when I'm not sure of anything else. At the same time, it's a little terrifying! Sometimes (personally being trans, being white-passing), you have to justify yourself. You have to pretend like there needs to be an exact reason and explanation and decision behind every aspect of your identity, and that can be exhausting. I know what I feel. I know what I believe. Identity is different with every individual, and it can also help with finding a community to belong to. It's important- maybe more for some than others.

I would hope for people to address me the way I am.

## Identity is Worldview

Culture, identity, gender, and every other descriptive demographic or seeming "difference" are just all parts of any experience. We are made up of all kinds of things, and yet the individual "things" don't matter as much as our feelings about them. It's the feelings and how it relates to our value that matters. The details are unimportant in a way because we all have 'details'. It's just hearing a person and the value of their experience that matters. Once we zero in on that, that's when a person matters. In the end, when they feel valued, that's when it matters, and that's where acceptance can be given and shared with compassion and understanding because it's the same that we want for ourselves. I have found that the key is feeling where they are coming from and usually I'm relating to a feeling I've had in the same way even if it is about something else. All pain is the same. And so we can relate on that and find similarity. Difference isn't the point. Maybe similarity is key.

Identity is more of an umbrella term to describe one's social philosophy and larger worldviews. With that in mind, I hope identity can become a topic with less stigma and honest communication used by the general public.

I feel I am all the good things I see in society and also the bad, after all we are minute particles of the universe.

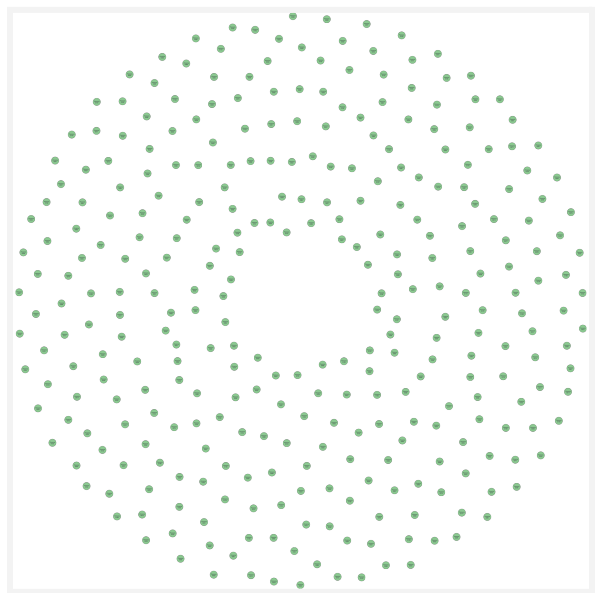

# Appendix H: Query-Driven Graph Visualization Documentation

## Introduction: Sequence and Structure

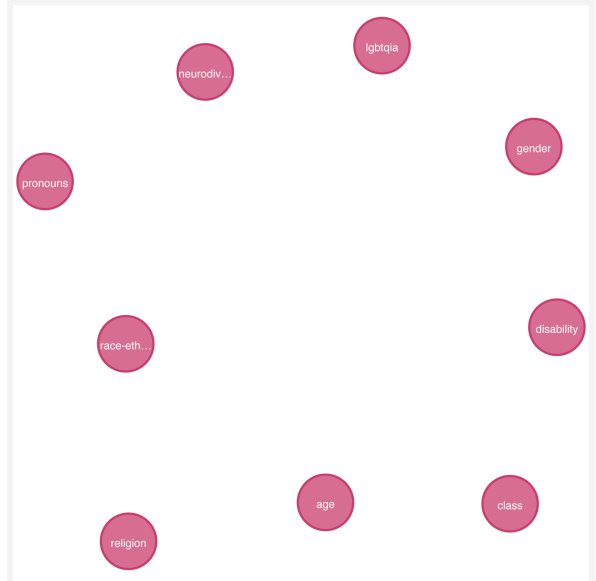
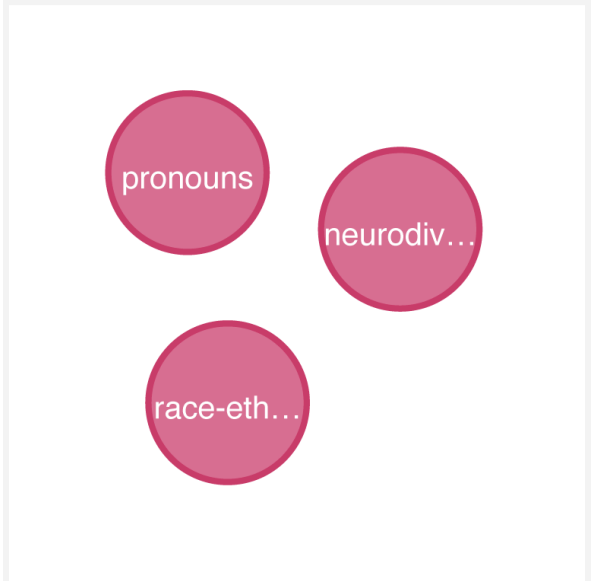
The sequence begins with foundational query results that expose the structure of the dataset—personas, identities, dimensions, and coded experiences. From there, the queries become more layered and intersectional, exploring co-occurrence patterns, identity-based themes, privilege dynamics, and finally intersectionality.

The structure moves from broad to specific. Each graph is introduced with a plain-language description of its purpose, supporting accessibility and interpretability. The goal is to show what was done, and to invite others into an analytical process—making visible the infrastructure behind the discovery process. The specific queries are available in Chapter 4 Data Analysis.

# All Project Participants

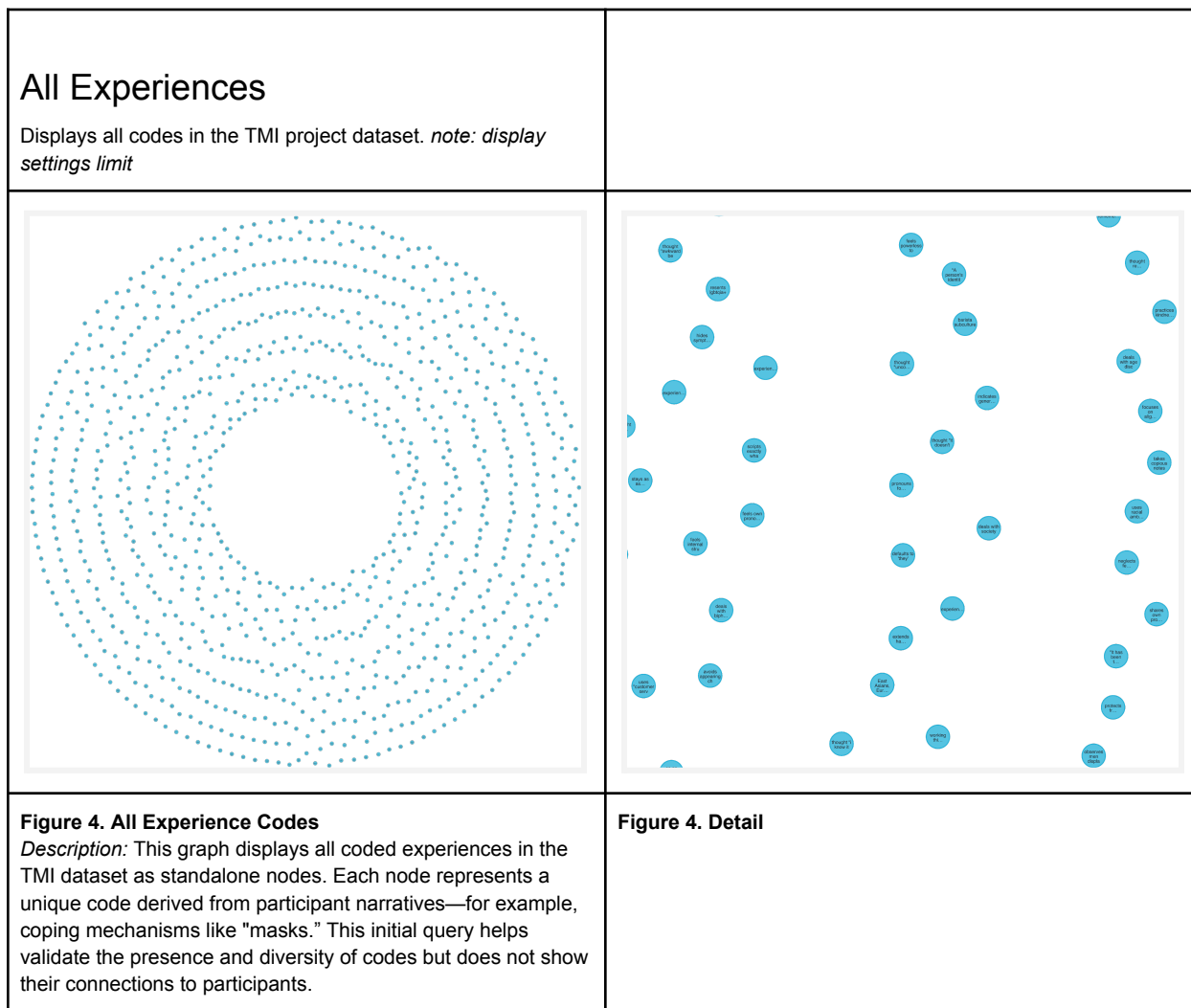
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <h2>All Personas (319)</h2> <p>Displays all personas in the TMI project dataset.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| <p><b>Figure 1. All Personas (319)</b><br/><i>Description:</i> This graph shows all personas in the TMI dataset. Each node represents a unique participant (“persona”) who engaged in the open-ended survey. This foundational query helps validate the dataset structure and visualize its scope. No edges are shown, as this query returns only standalone persona nodes.</p> | <p><b>Figure 1. detail</b></p>                                                      |

# All Project Identity Dimensions

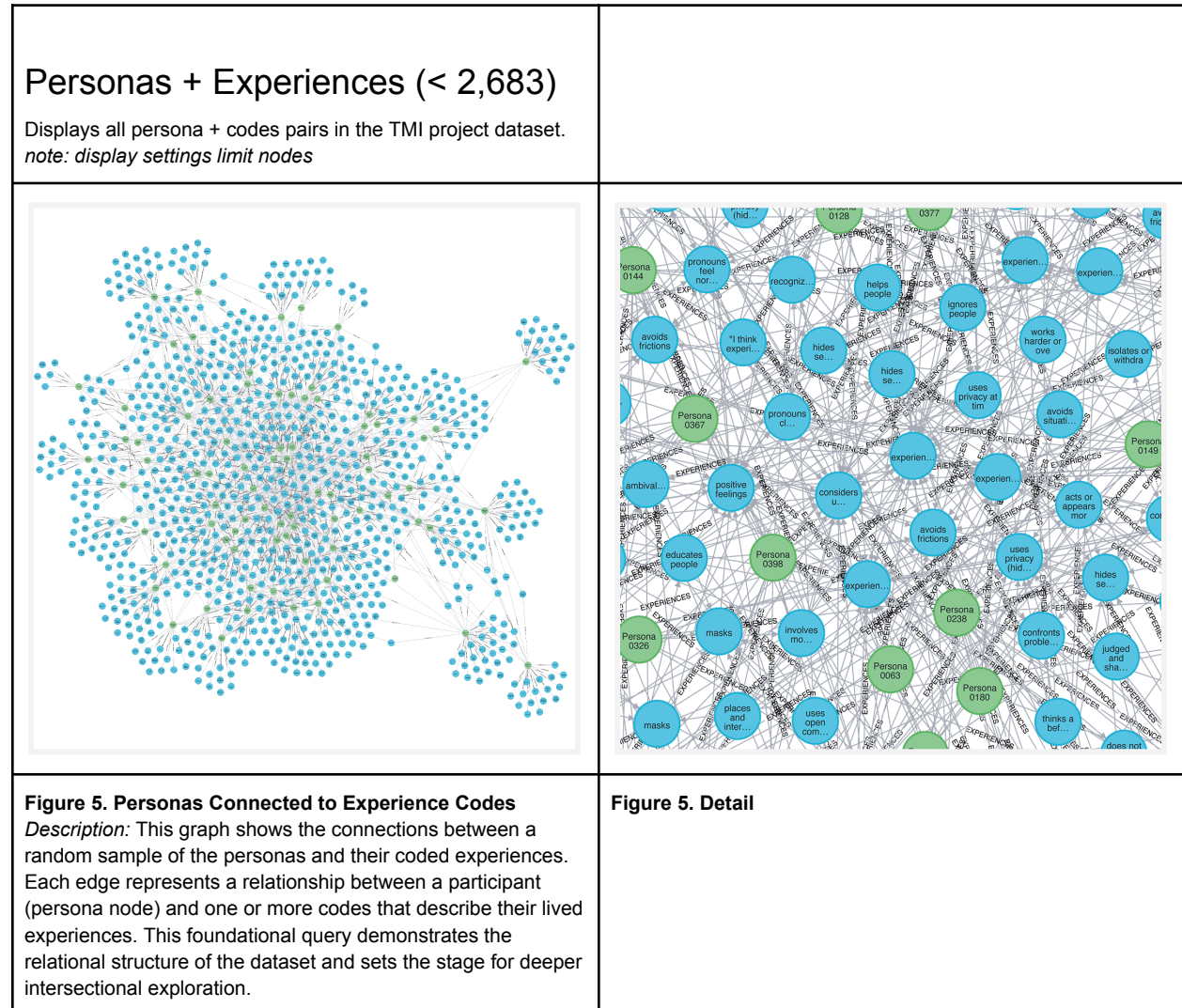
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <h3>All Identity Dimensions (9)</h3> <p>Displays all identity dimensions in the TMI project dataset.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| <p><b>Figure 2. All Identity Dimensions</b><br/><i>Description:</i> This graph shows all identity dimensions represented in the TMI dataset (e.g., age, class, disability, gender, LGBTQIA+ status, neurodiversity, pronouns, race/ethnicity, religion). Each node represents a unique identity dimension. This basic structural query confirms the presence of all dimension types and sets the stage for exploring how identity self-descriptions and experiences relate to identity dimensions. No edges are shown, as this query returns only standalone identity nodes.</p> | <p><b>Figure 2. detail</b></p>                                                      |



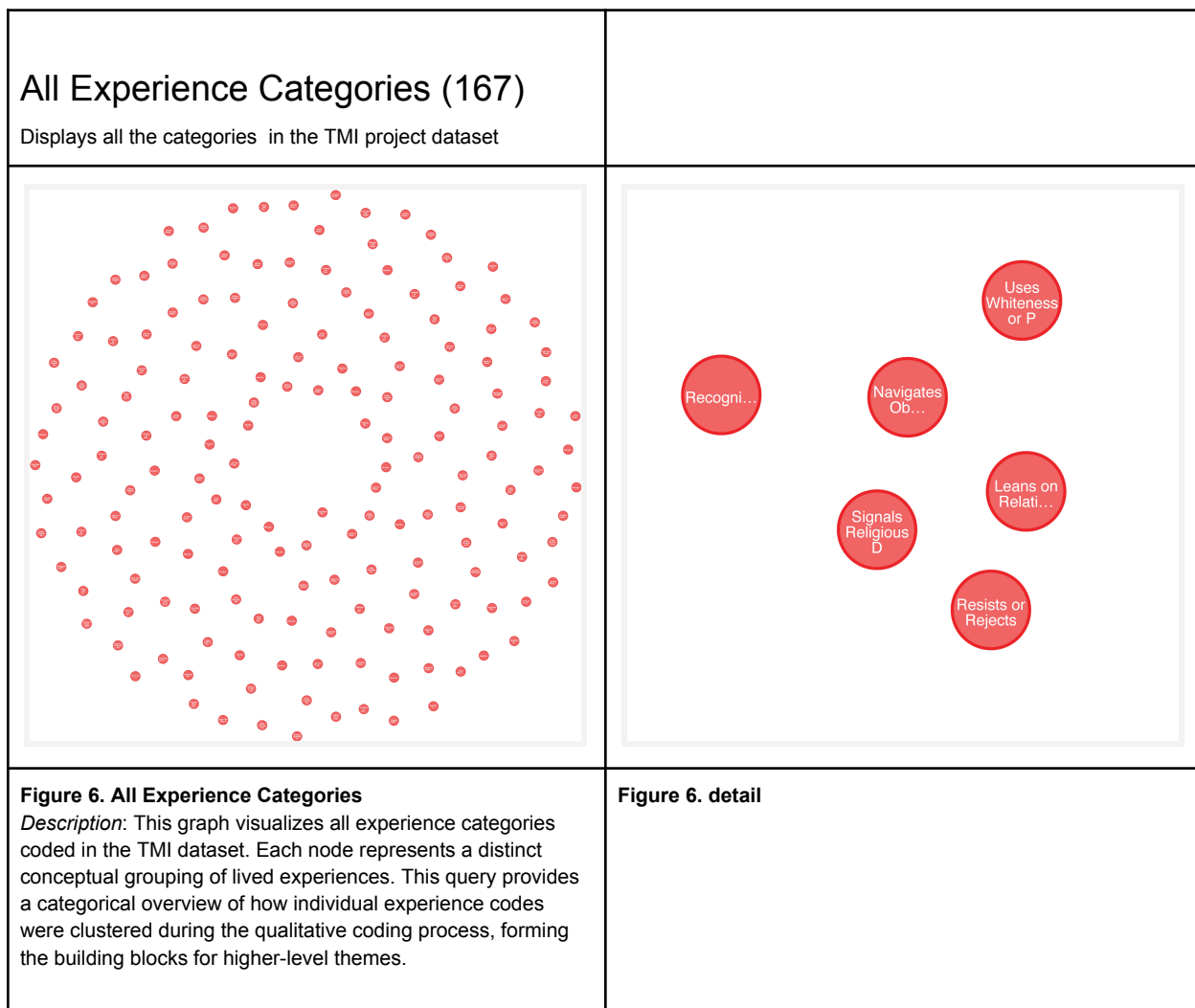
## All Participant Experiences (2,683)



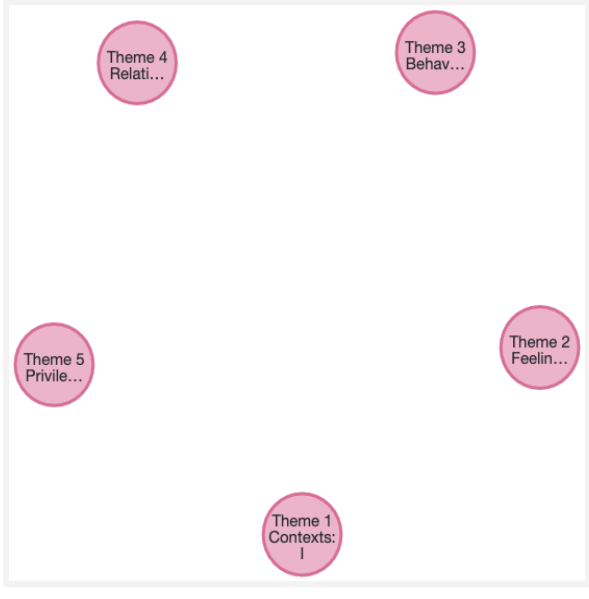
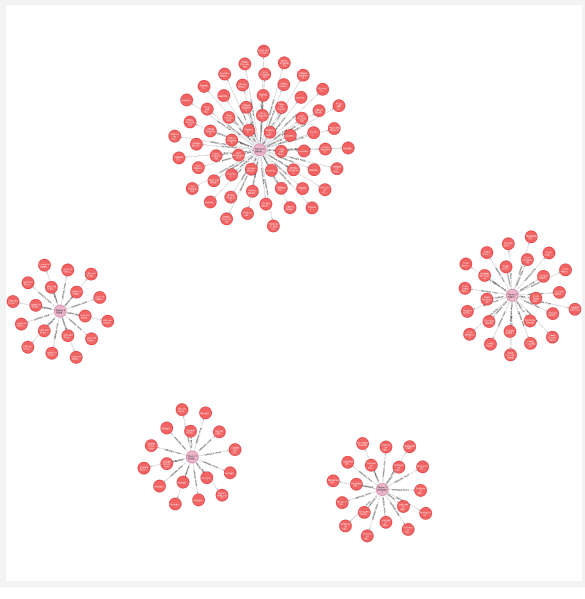
## Participants Connected to their Experiences



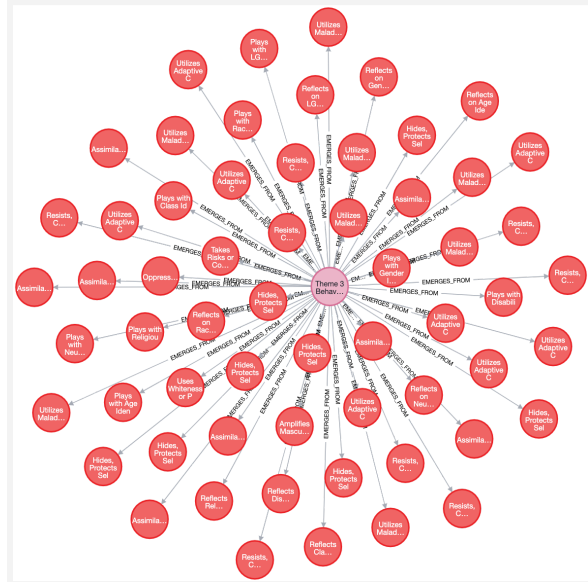

## All Experience Categories



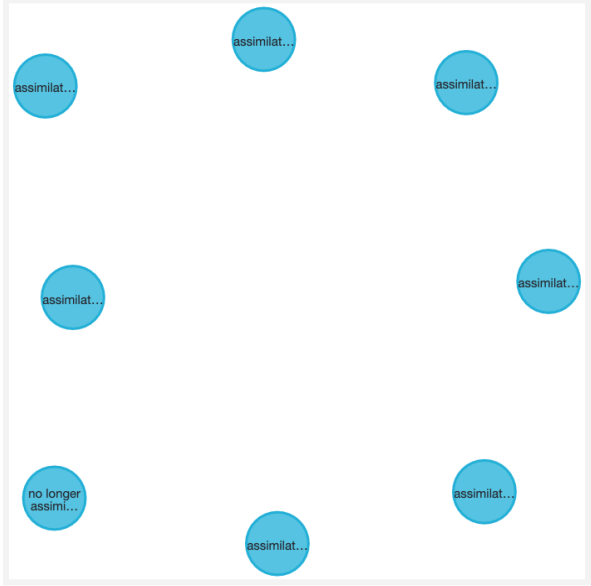
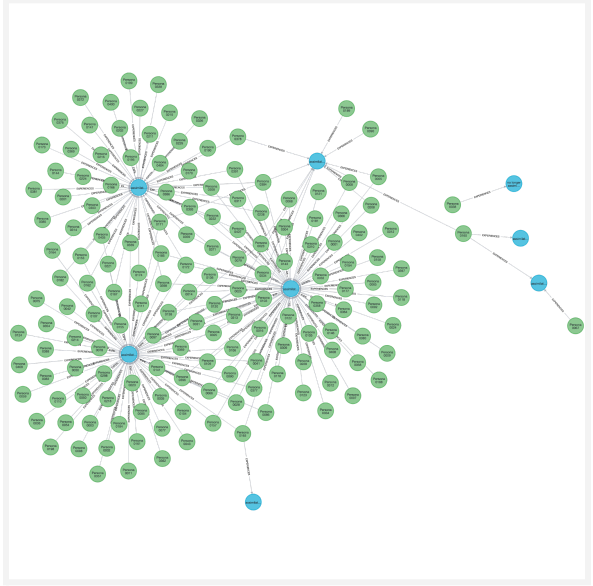
## All Experience Themes, Themes with Categories

| <h3>All Experience Themes (5)</h3> <p>Displays all the themes in the TMI project dataset</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <h3>Themes (5) + Categories (167)</h3> <p>Displays all the themes with their categories</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Figure 7. All Experience Themes</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph shows each of the six major themes that structure the TMI dataset: identity-based experiences, emotional responses, individual coping, relational coping, privilege, and identity meaning. These themes represent high-level patterns derived from qualitative thematic analysis.</p> | <p><b>Figure 8. Themes and Their Categories</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph maps the relationship between themes and the categories from which they emerged. Themes are connected to multiple mid-level categories, each representing a cluster of related codes (not shown). This visualization demonstrates the structure and traceability of the thematic analysis process, revealing how abstract concepts are grounded in more granular experiences.</p> |

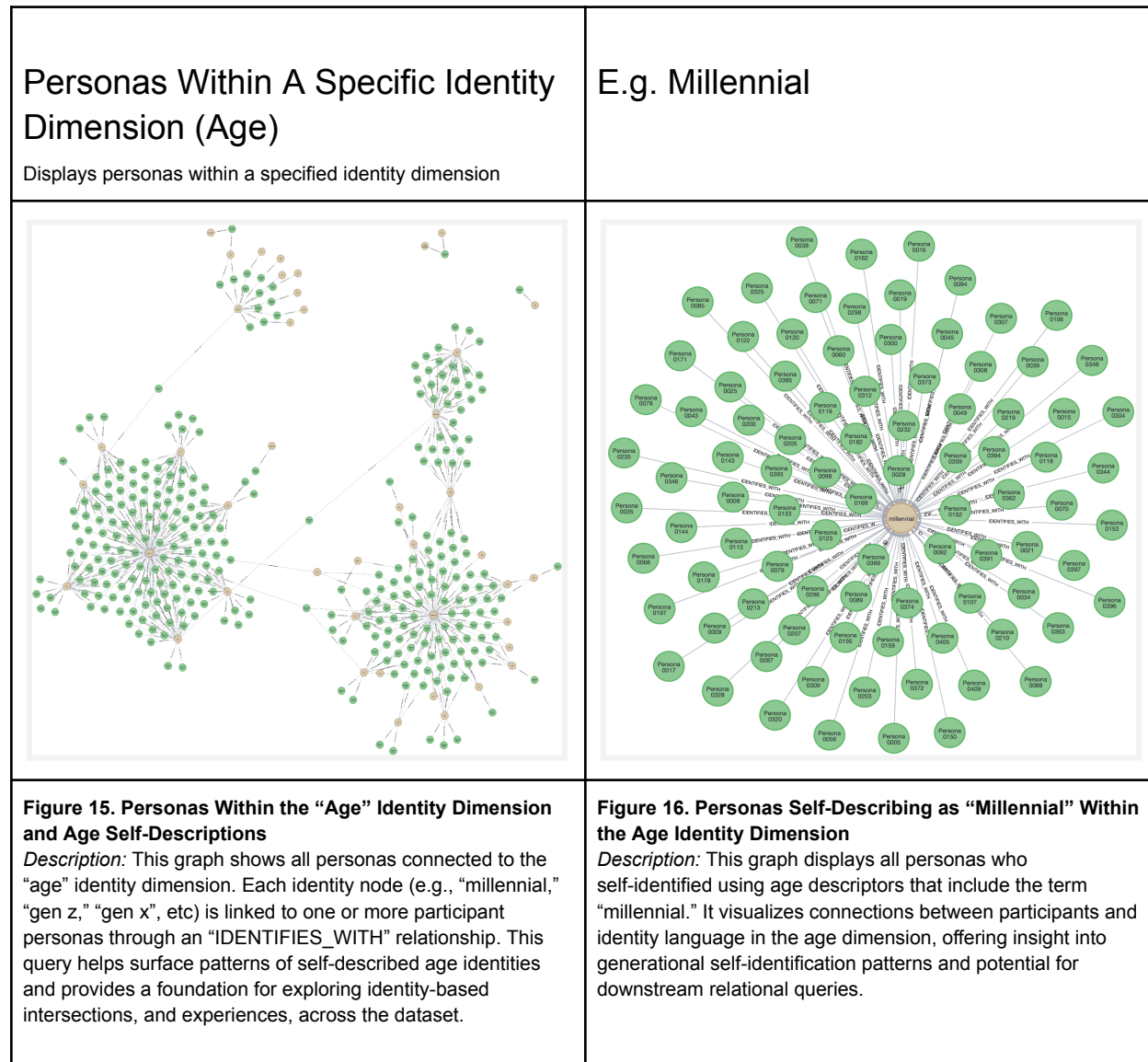
# Specific Theme with Categories, Categories Filtered

|                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <h3>Theme (1) + Categories (60)</h3> <p>Displays a specific theme and its categories</p>                                                                               | <h3>Theme Categories Filtered (18)</h3> <p>Displays a specific theme and its filtered categories</p>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Figure 10. Theme 3 with All Its Categories</b><br/><i>Description:</i> This graph displays Theme 3 and its associated categories across identity dimensions.</p> | <p><b>Figure 12. Theme 3 with Selected Behavioral Categories, within Identity Dimensions</b><br/><i>Description:</i> This visualization isolates coping behaviors categorized as assimilates/conforms, hides, protects self, prevents harm, amplifies masculinity, oppresses femininity</p> |

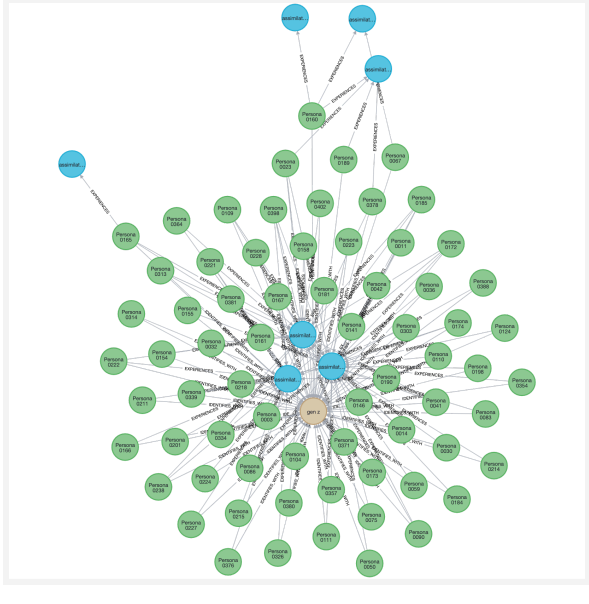
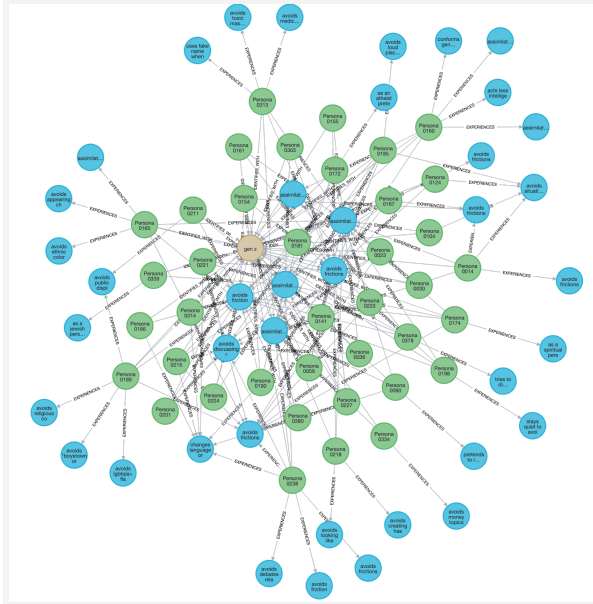
## Specific Experience, Participants Connected to this Experience

| <h3>Specific Experience</h3> <p>Displays a specific experience across identity dimensions</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <h3>Personas with Experience</h3> <p>Displays a specific experience, connected to personas, across identity dimensions</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Figure 13. Experience Node: “Assimilate”</b><br/> <i>Description:</i> This graph shows the individual experience nodes labeled “assimilate.” It serves as a searchable entry point into the dataset, representing a common behavioral coping strategy described by participants. No relationships are displayed in this query—it simply verifies the presence of a specific experience term across the dataset</p> | <p><b>Figure 14. Personas Connected to the Experience “Assimilate”</b><br/> <i>Description:</i> This graph visualizes all participant personas who reported experiences related to “assimilation.” Each node represents either a persona or the experience node, and the edges reflect an “EXPERIENCES” relationship. This structure supports analysis of how widespread certain coping behaviors are and which participants they affect—laying the groundwork for more complex intersectional queries.</p> |

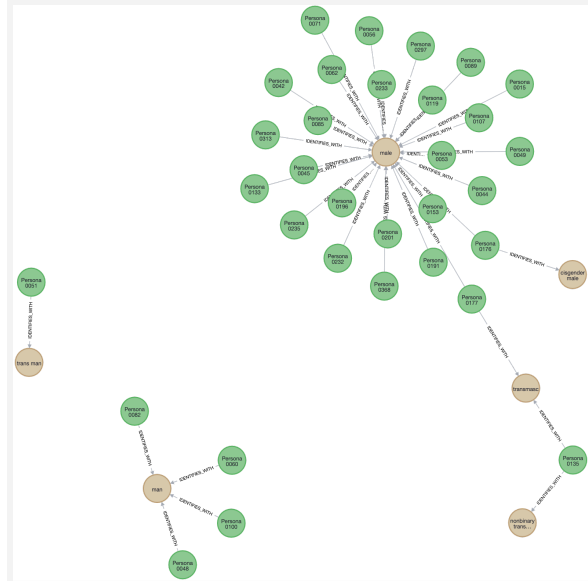
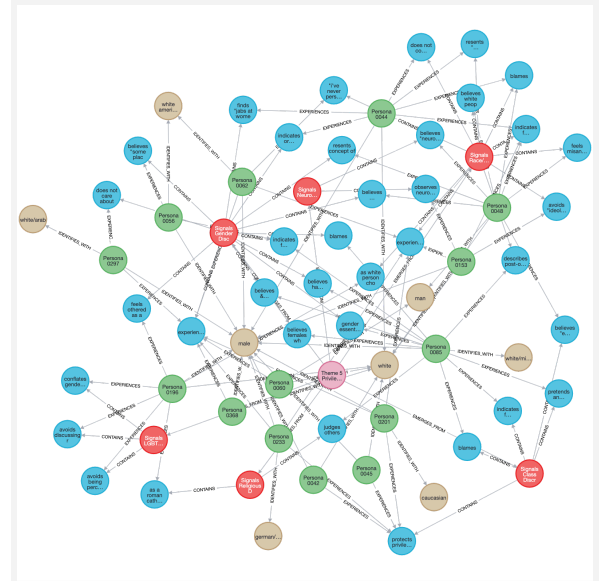
## Inside Identity Dimension, Self-Described Identities



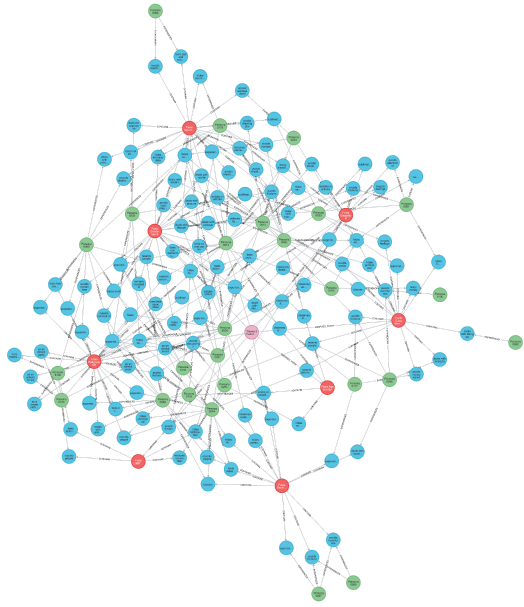
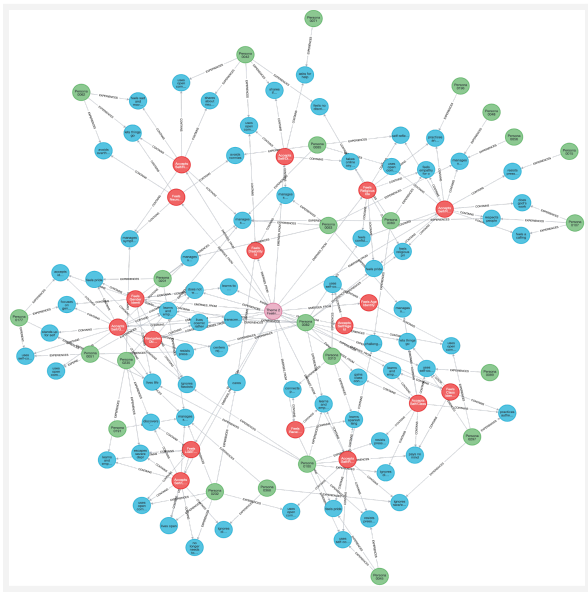
## Self-Described Identity Experience(s)

| <h3>Specific Self-Described Identity Experience</h3> <p>Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experience (using keyword)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <h3>Specific Self-Described Identity Co-Occurring Experiences</h3>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>Figure 17. Gen Z Personas and Their “Assimilate” Experiences</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph shows all personas who self-identified with the “Gen Z” descriptor and who described experiences related to assimilation. By linking identities to specific behaviors or challenges, this query illustrates how relational graph structures can surface patterns of generational coping strategies and systemic pressure.</p> | <p><b>Figure 18. Gen Z Personas with Co-Occurring “Assimilate” and “Avoid” Experiences</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This visualization identifies personas who self-identify as “Gen Z” and who reported both assimilation and avoidance as coping strategies. Each persona node is linked to both a Gen Z identity descriptor and at least two experience codes. This type of multi-experience query supports deeper analysis of behavioral complexity—revealing how individuals may navigate social scenarios using multiple strategies in tandem, which may reinforce or contradict each other. It illustrates the relational tension between conforming to norms and not.</p> |

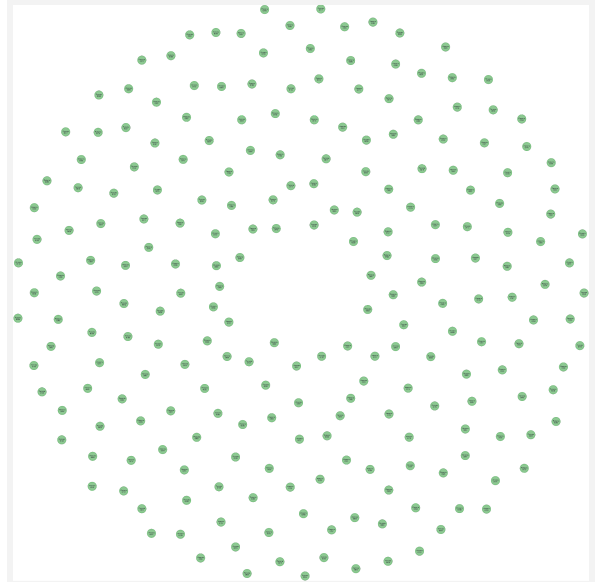
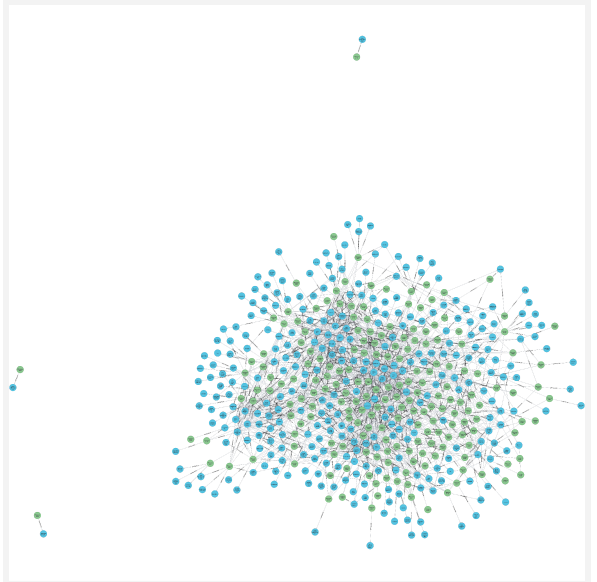
# Self-Described Identity Experience(s), Privilege, Power

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <h3>Self-Described Identity White Male/Man</h3> <p>Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experience (using keyword)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <h3>Self-Described Identity White Male/Man, Signaling Bias and/or Discrimination</h3>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|  <p>A network graph with 32 nodes. The central node is labeled 'mas'. It is connected to a large cluster of green nodes, each labeled 'Persona 1001' through 'Persona 1032'. There are also a few brown nodes connected to the central node and the green cluster. The nodes are arranged in a roughly circular pattern around the center.</p> |  <p>A complex network graph with many nodes of various colors (blue, green, red, brown, pink). The nodes are interconnected with many edges, forming a dense web. Some nodes are larger than others. The colors represent different categories or experiences. The overall structure is more chaotic and interconnected than the graph in Figure 20.</p> |
| <p><b>Figure 20. White Male/Man Personas (32 personas)</b><br/><i>Description:</i> This query isolates personas who are both racially white and identify as male/man/masc. These intersections enable privilege-focused probes and comparisons across specified identity dimensions.</p>                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>Figure 25. White Male/Man Personas Signaling Privilege, Bias, Discriminatory Attitudes</b><br/><i>Description:</i> This figure visualizes personas who expressed privilege-related bias or dismissal, supporting critical insights into identity-based power structures.</p>                                                                                                                                                          |

## Self-Described Identity Experience(s), Privilege, Feelings

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Self-Described Identity White Male/Man, Fear/Distress</b></p> <p>Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experience (using keyword)</p>                                                                       | <p><b>Self-Described Identity White Male/Man, Self-Acceptance, Peace/Joy</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>Figure 27. White Male/Man Personas Experiencing Distress or Fear</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This visualization focuses on emotional coping and vulnerability among white male/man personas, expanding the analysis of privilege and other attributes like defensiveness or fea</p> | <p><b>Figure 28. White Male/Man Personas Expressing Positive Emotional States (24 personas)</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph identifies personas expressing affirmation, peace, or joy—providing a counterpoint to experiences of distress and surfacing how positive emotion relates to power and identity security</p> |

# Self-Described Identity Experience(s), Marginalized

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Self-Described Identity Member of A Marginalized Group</b></p> <p>Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experience (using keyword)</p>                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Self-Described Identity Member of A Marginalized Group, Uses Coping Mechanisms</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>Figure 29. All Personas Identifying With A Marginalized Group</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph displays all participants with one or more marginalized identities. This foundational query establishes a working definition of marginalization in the dataset, supporting subsequent analysis of identity-based coping.</p> | <p><b>Figure 30. All Marginalized Personas Who Use Coping Mechanisms</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph shows personas who identify with one or more marginalized groups and who reported behavioral coping mechanisms (e.g., masking, avoidance, code-switching). These results visualize the strategies marginalized individuals use to navigate identity-related adversity in social contexts, linking identity to survival behavior.</p> |

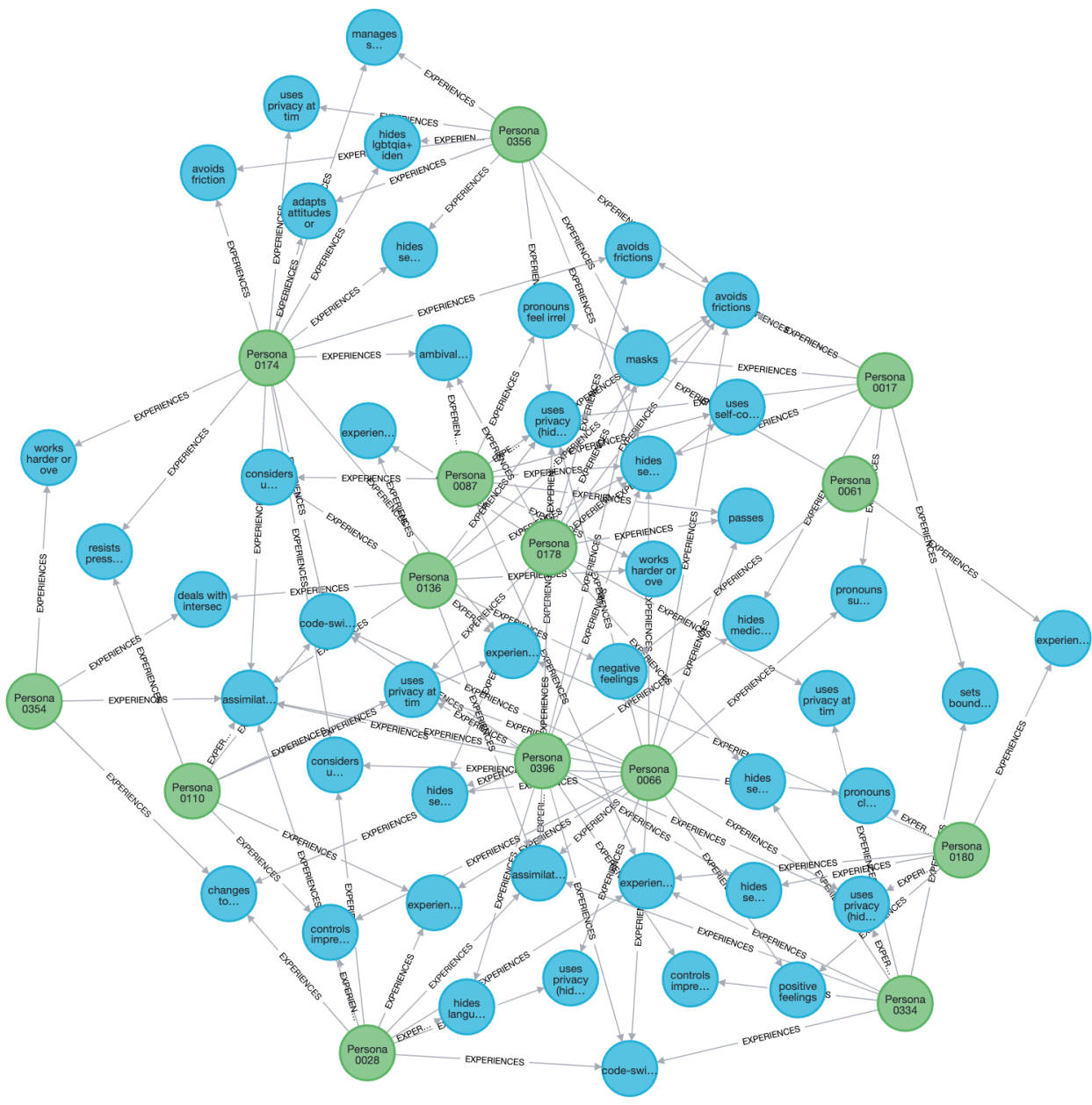
## Self-Described Identity Experience(s), Marginalized, Feelings

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Self-Described Identity Member of A Marginalized Group, Fear/Distress</b></p> <p>Displays all personas within a specified identity dimension, with a specified identity description and specified experience (using keyword)</p>                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Self-Described Identity Member of A Marginalized Group, Self-Acceptance, Peace/Joy</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>Figure 31. All Marginalized Personas Who Experience Distress or Fear</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This graph isolates personas with marginalized identities who expressed feelings of distress or fear. It highlights the emotional costs of navigating exclusion, providing insight into how systemic inequity and identity-based harm manifest psychologically.</p> | <p><b>Figure 32. All Marginalized Personas Who Experience Self-Acceptance, Joy, Peace</b></p> <p><i>Description:</i> This visualization highlights marginalized participants who expressed self-acceptance or feelings of joy and peace in relation to identity. It affirms the presence of resilience, pride, and healing despite marginalization—foregrounding identity-based resilience and will.</p> |



# Intersectionality Sample: Race/Ethnicity + Class experiences

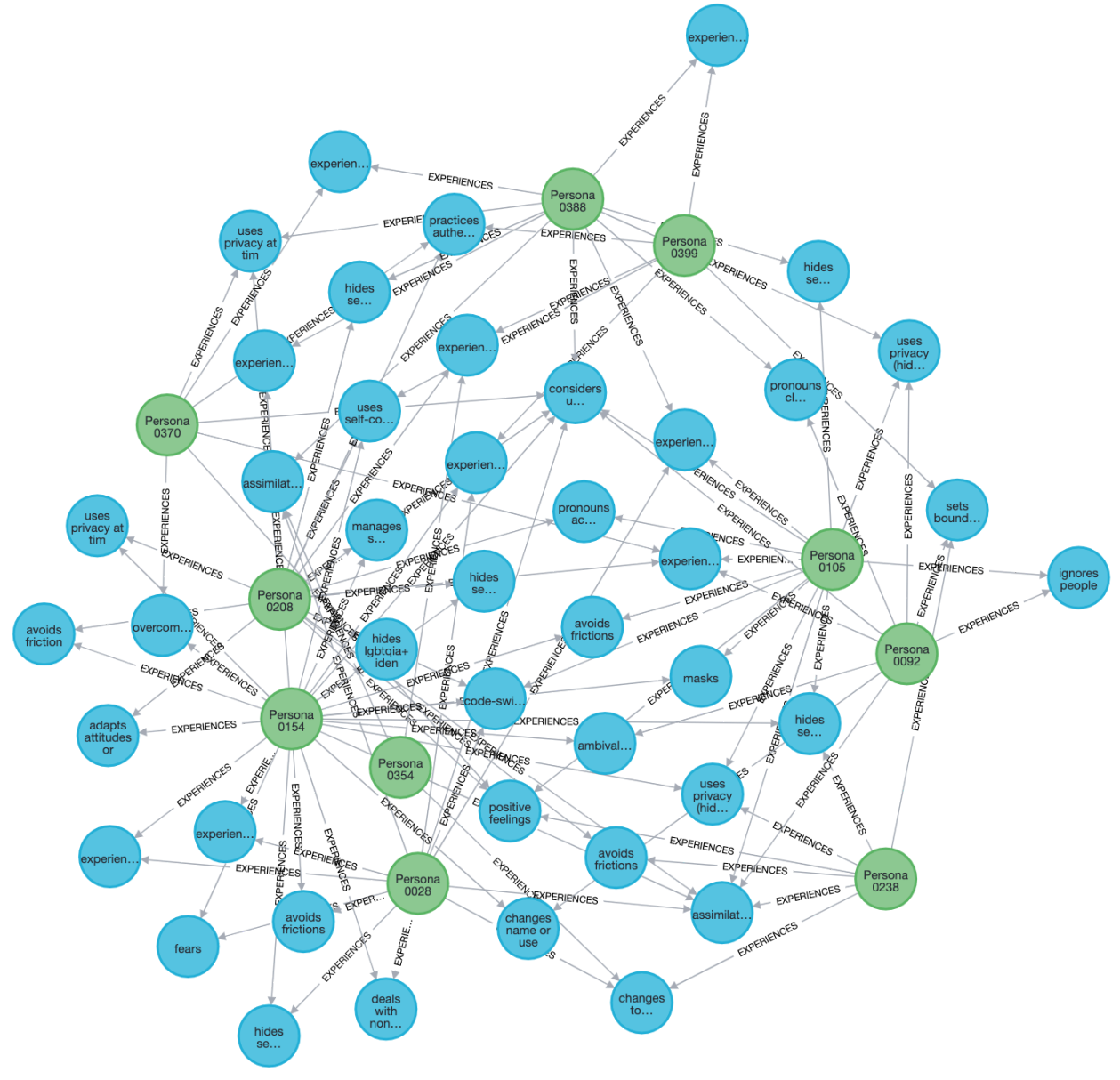
Displays all personas who identify as cuban, hispanic, latin, or mexican AND assisted, low, poor, or working class, along with their common shared experiences



**Figure 34. Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Class: Latin/Hispanic Low-Income Personas**  
*Description:* This graph shows personas who identify as Cuban, Hispanic, Latin, or Mexican and also as being in low, poor, assisted, or working-class groups. It surfaces patterns of overlapping economic and cultural marginalization, making visible the social pressures and behavioral adaptations experienced by participants navigating class and racial/ethnic barriers simultaneously.



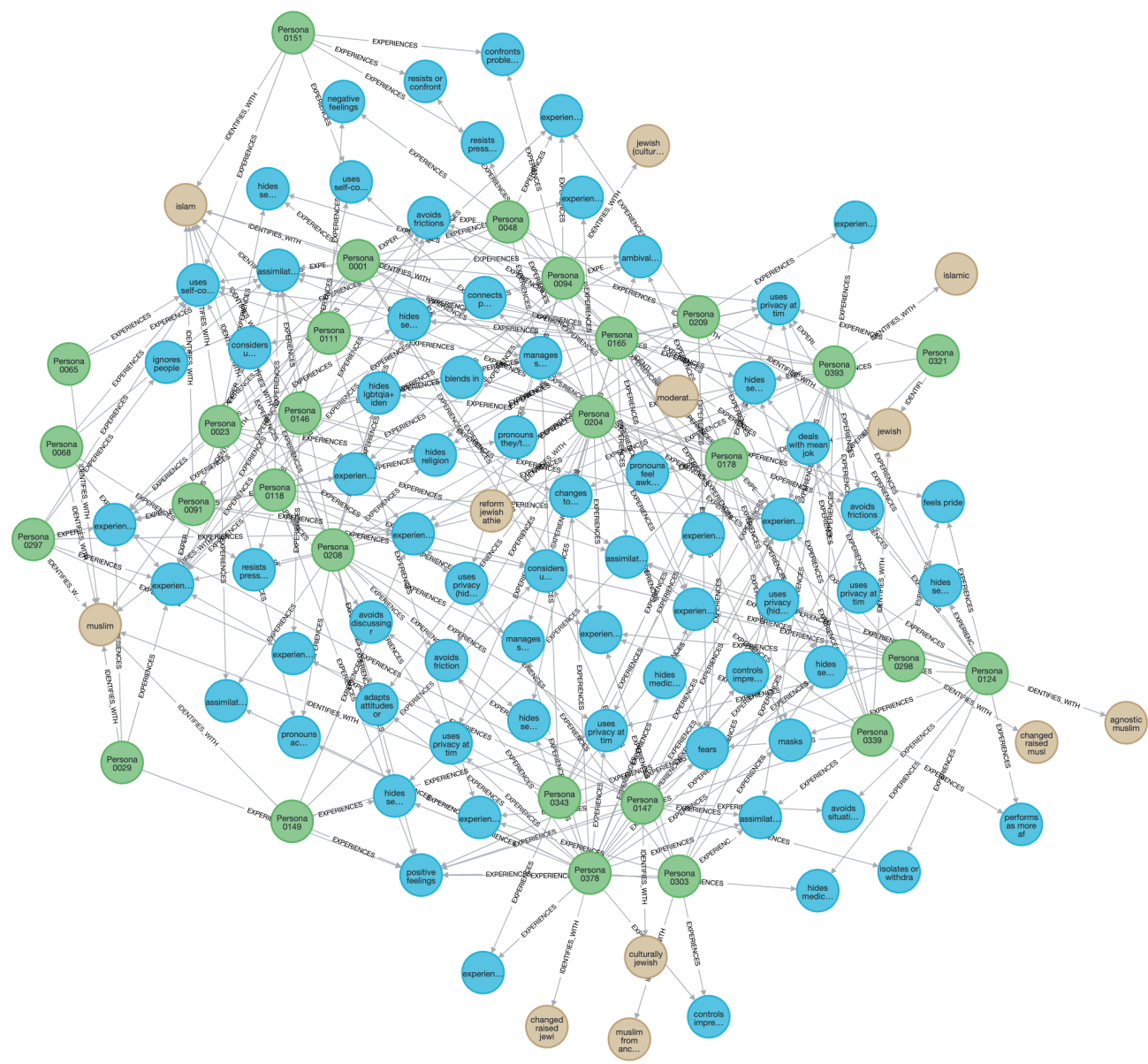
# Intersectionality: Marginalized Race/Ethnicity + Gender + Class + Religion experiences



**Figure 36. Intersectional Marginalization: Race, Gender, Class, and Religion**  
*Description:* This graph presents personas who hold three or more marginalized identities—spanning race/ethnicity, gender, class, and religion. It includes individuals who identify as women, nonbinary, or queer; people from minority race/ethnicity groups; those experiencing class precarity; and those identifying with a range of religions that does not include Christianity. The visualization reveals shared identity-based experiences that emerge at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression and provides complex insights into shared experiences.

# Intersectionality Sample: Religion - Religion experiences

Displays all personas who identify as jewish OR muslim/islamic, along with their common shared experiences



**Figure 37. Religious Marginalization: Shared Experiences Among Jewish and Muslim Personas**

*Description:* This graph highlights experiences shared by personas who identify as Jewish or Muslim/Islamic. It brings into view identity-based experiences related to religion. By focusing on religious identity across two distinct traditions, the graph reveals both parallel and divergent ways participants navigate identity-based faith-related marginalization.

# Appendix I: TMI-WEB Source Repository

The screenshot shows the GitHub profile page for the organization 'Identity Research Lab'. The profile includes a logo, a bio, and a list of repositories. The repository 'tmi-web' is highlighted, showing its description, language (Ruby), and statistics (10 stars, 5 forks, 0 issues, 6 pull requests). The page also features navigation links, a search bar, and a footer with copyright information.

**Identity Research Lab**  
 1 follower · United States of America

Overview · **Repositories 1** · Projects · Packages · People

**Popular repositories**

**tmi-web** (Public)  
 tmi-web is a social science research tool for managing, analyzing, coding, and visualizing qualitative survey data on identities. It presents identity and experience in a network graph, encouraging...

● Ruby ☆ 10 🍴 5

**Repositories**

Find a repository... Type Language Sort

**tmi-web** (Public)  
 tmi-web is a social science research tool for managing, analyzing, coding, and visualizing qualitative survey data on identities. It presents identity and experience in a network graph, encouraging tactile exploration of intersectional identities and facets of privilege and marginalization.

● Ruby ☆ 10 🍴 5 🗨 0 🔄 6 Updated 5 days ago

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The screenshot displays the GitHub repository page for `identity-research-lab/tmi-web`. The repository is public and has 10 stars and 5 forks. The main content area shows a file tree with the following items:

| File/Folder               | Description                                     | Last Commit   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <code>.github</code>      | Update rubyonrails.yml                          | 6 months ago  |
| <code>.yardoc</code>      | Increment of love                               | 10 months ago |
| <code>app</code>          | Rails models, migrations, routes, relations,... | last month    |
| <code>bin</code>          | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |
| <code>config</code>       | Rails models, migrations, routes, relations,... | last month    |
| <code>data</code>         | Rake task to generate a sample CSV for i...     | 6 months ago  |
| <code>db</code>           | Fix index in neo4j migration                    | last month    |
| <code>diagrams</code>     | Rename relation between code and categ...       | 2 months ago  |
| <code>doc</code>          | Editing codes works.                            | 6 months ago  |
| <code>lib</code>          | Export sample data works.                       | 6 months ago  |
| <code>log</code>          | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |
| <code>public</code>       | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |
| <code>spec</code>         | Specs                                           | last month    |
| <code>storage</code>      | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |
| <code>tmp</code>          | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |
| <code>vendor</code>       | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |
| <code>dockerignore</code> | What immortal hand or eye could frame th...     | last year     |

The sidebar on the right provides additional information:

- About:** tmi-web is a social science research tool for managing, analyzing, coding, and visualizing qualitative survey data on identities. It presents identity and experience in a network graph, encouraging tactile exploration of intersectional identities and facets of privilege and marginalization.
- Contributors:** 2 contributors: CoralineAda (Coraline Ada Ehmke) and dependabot[bot].
- Languages:** A horizontal bar chart showing the distribution of languages in the repository:
 

| Language | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Ruby     | 55.6%      |
| HTML     | 25.5%      |
| CSS      | 11.1%      |
| Other    | 6.0%       |