

Exploring your Ethnic Background

Nationality – refers to our citizenship –the nation we are a member of.

Ethnicity - - refers to membership in a particular cultural group (shared cultural practices – including but not limited to holidays, food, language, customs, etc.)

People can share the same nationality but have different ethnic groups. Many U.S. citizens are of different ethnic groups. People who share an ethnic identity can be of different nationalities.

Turkish citizens of Turkey and Turkish citizens in Germany share ethnic identity but are different nationalities.

In pairs or groups of three, have participants discuss the responses to the following questions:

- 1) Is there any family significance to your name or nickname?
- 2) Where were your grandparents or great-grandparents born?
- 3) Where are you from? Your parents from?
- 4) Which generation do you represent in the U.S. for your family?
- 5) What language(s) did/do your grandparents or great-grandparents speak? What about their parents?
- 6) What holidays did they celebrate? What special customs did/do they follow? What foods did/do they eat?
- 7) Does your family now speak these languages or continue any of the traditions or practices?

Share with the larger group. Language, food, and other cultural practices are often passed down from one generation to the next. Cultural practices are learned; we are not born with a predisposition to any single language or culture. When people come to a new country, they may adopt new practices while keeping traditional ways. Have the participants generate examples. Help participants see that ethnic identity is not an "either-or" decision.

F.A.I.R. Model

FAIR___ Individuals learn to be just, equal to all, even if others are different from them.

AWARENESS___ Individuals are helped to become more aware of unfair/hurtful attitudes, action that they and others engage in.

INCLUSION___ Individuals are supported in developing a spirit of inclusiveness. No one is an outsider because of cultural differences, stereotyping.

RESPECT_____ Individuals learn to respect others, appreciate differences and identify common elements that unite us all.

