

Social GRACES

What is it?

The Social GRACES is a tool designed by John Burnham & Alison Roper-Hall (1993, 1998) as a starting point for examining elements which make up our identities. I use the word 'starting point' as there are so many complexities to people's identity that it cannot be completely held within the tool and the words may mean something different to each person (e.g. 'ability')

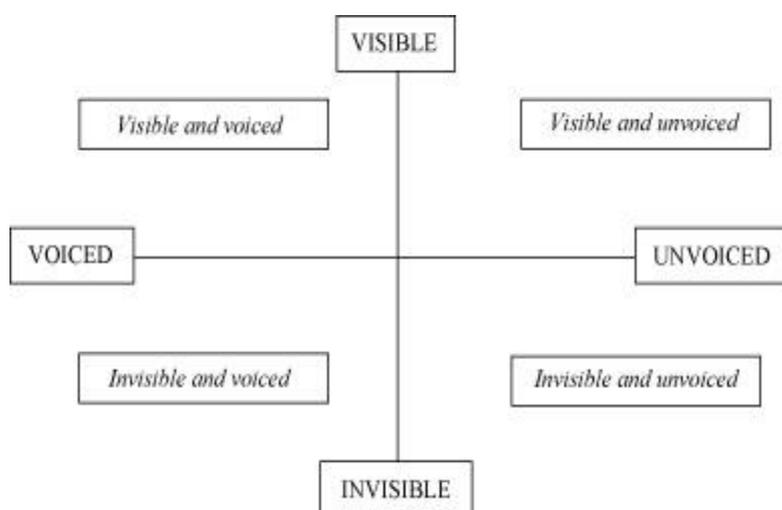
The GRACES exist in a 'social' world and are in themselves socially constructed parts of our identity.

Why is it useful?

Being aware of the differing elements of our own identity allows us to reflect on how we see the world, our own biases and 'comfort' zones of what we share with others or not.

Being aware of other people's identity allows space for us to ask questions and examine the impact of each of the elements on a person's day to day life and overall functioning.

Social GRACES are frequently used alongside the following tool:



It highlights that there are elements of our identity which are:

Unvoiced and hidden from view – so others cannot see it and are not aware of it as it is not voiced, such as spirituality.

Sometimes things might not be spoken about but are visible to others (*unvoiced, visible*) such as someone's age.

Sometimes we speak about our social GRACES, particularly the ones which are visible to others such as attire (clothes we wear).

Sometimes we speak about our social GRACES which are not visible to others, such as our abilities (e.g. dyslexia).

G	Gender Geography
R	Religion
A	Age Ability (Physical, intellectual, Social & Emotional) Appearance Attire Accent
C	Culture Colour Class
E	Education Ethnicity Employment Economics
S	Spirituality Sexuality (orientation & Expression)

Using the Social GRACES

In supervision:

Which of the social GRACES are important to you?

Which ones have you not considered before?

Which one of the social GRACES is impacting on how you view the family you are working with?

Which social GRACES are visible to others?

Which social GRACES are invisible which may need talking about?

Which social GRACES do you have similar or different to the family you are working with? What impact does this have on your work?

With Families:

Which of the social GRACES are helping maintain the problem?

Which ones are going to be strength related and will encourage resilient against a problem?

Which of the social GRACES are you, the worker, most comfortable/uncomfortable sharing/discussion/asking about with the family?

Which of the social GRACES remain hidden from your view?

Personally:

Use the social GRACES to constantly reflect on the impact these have on your thoughts, feelings and actions within the world; what you are sharing and what you are not, and WHY.

They are always present and could help either build a relationship with someone or be the reason you are struggling to do so.

References:

Burnham, J. (1993) Systemic supervision: The evolution of reflexivity in the context of the supervisory relationship. *Human Systems*, 4, 349- 381

Burnham, J. (2013) Developments in Social GRRRAACCEEESSS: Visible-invisible, voiced-unvoiced. In I-B. Krause (ed.) *Cultural Reflexivity*. London: Karnac.

Burnham, J. & Roper-Hall, A. (2017) Commentaries on this issue. *Context*, 151, 47-50.