

“It Goes Both Ways”: Negotiating Passing, Identities of Liminality,
and Everything In-Between

Passing has been a subject of discussion within the social sciences for decades. In the American context, passing has most prominently been talked about in terms of race, with “white-passing” as the default manner of passing. More recently, however, sociological discourse around passing has expanded to include categories of gender and sexuality (as well as mundane, everyday forms of passing such as using a fake ID). Scholarly conversation around passing has also shifted to account for the notion that passing does not necessarily only occur in one direction; rather, passers often move between passing for different identities (both intentionally and unintentionally).

Passer’s identity conflict and negotiation points to the way societal categories enforce liminality onto people. In this way, passers are emblematic of constructed and fixed ideas of identity, which they trouble through their lived experiences expressions of identity. This paper seeks to explore how passers articulate their identities in terms of “in-betweenness” and ambiguousness. I argue that passers’ identities are situated “in-between”—in between multiple perceived identities, in between the passers’ own perceptions and the perceptions of others, and in between privilege and oppression—and explore the implications for this sort of identity liminality.

METHODS

For this paper, we (myself and two members of a research team) collected data by conducting six in-depth semi-structured interviews and one focus group. We wanted to make sure we interviewed people who passed across different identity categories and in different ways. Thus,

the interviews consisted of a mix of race, gender and sexuality passers. In total, we spoke to three biracial women, two white nonbinary/gender non-conforming people (one of whom was assigned male at birth, while the other was assigned female at birth), and one white bisexual man. Our focus group consisted only of white gender and sexuality passers: one trans woman, one asexual woman, one bisexual woman, and one nonbinary person.

We utilized a convenience sample, drawing primarily from the student body of undergraduates with whom we attend college (although some of our interviewees were recruited from other social or familial circles). All of our interviewees were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four. We interviewed people we knew personally and used snowball sampling techniques as well as publicly advertising for informants via Facebook posts to obtain our sample. All of our interviews were between forty-five to ninety minutes long and were all audio-recorded and transcribed by the respective interviewer (each of us individually conducted, recorded, and transcribed two interviews). Although we collected data as a team, we each analyzed our data individually and wrote up separate reports. I hand-coded each interview transcript, using open coding and then focused coding, and later created a coding scheme with several main themes.

In addition, I analyzed Facebook posts of passers as well as pop feminist articles, blog posts, and news articles related to passing. I looked at Facebook statuses and updates from my own Facebook friends who passed in some way (mostly in terms of gender or race) and also looked at the Facebook profiles of people who I knew to be passing (both on my own friends list as well as more public figures) and analyzed how/if they claim their identity on social media. Additionally, I found several blog posts and articles from well-known social media and news outlets that explicitly talked about passing or shared testimonials from people who pass.

FINDINGS

Between Identities: "Those are lines I have to walk"

Passing identities exist in liminal spaces and definitions. Although arguably all people's identities and sense of selves are fluid and constantly developing, passers' identities are in flux to a much clearer extent; while non-passers can cling to larger identity categories throughout most or all of their life—such as "white," or "male," or "female"—passers experience transience or conflict within these larger fields of identity. Because, for people who pass, these major identity categories are not secured on one place, the liminality of passers' identity is brought into much sharper relief than it is for non-passers. For our respondents, this liminality manifested in feeling an "in-betweenness" in terms of their passing identity; they feel as though they are situated between two or more projected identities.

For some passers, this "in-betweenness" meant passing for just one aspect of their identity. For example, biracial passers sometimes passed for one race or sometimes passed for the other, and often struggled with feeling in-between these two aspects of their identity and thus unable to place themselves securely within one. Maria felt she was "not Latina enough to be one of the Latinas, and not white enough to be one of the whites. I've always felt like I don't fit in either place." Jasmine categorized herself as "neither one of those things [black or white]; I am both. And that is-- in my eyes, it is a different identity than being white, and it's a different identity than being black." Later, Jasmine stressed that having to choose between identifying as black or white meant having to choose between a parent or an entire side of her family.

For other passers, passing was not about balancing two aspects of their identity, but balancing their authentic identity with their inauthentic (perceived or projected) identity. Most nonbinary or gender non-conforming passers did not necessarily feel as if they were situated between femininity and masculinity, but outside of them. Thus, their primary identity struggle was negotiating between "being something and pretending to be something" (Jefferson). Jefferson

described this process by saying simply, “those are lines I have to walk,” indicating that this can often feel like an impossible identity balancing act. As a nonbinary person, he has “nothing to pass as,” because his identity is situated in-between—or outside of the confines of—maleness and femaleness, and thus he cannot properly assume one fixed identity within the larger, dominant gender binary scheme.

Many passers reported feeling conflicted or unsure about their identity. Maria indicated that she had felt white most of her life and was confused when someone pointed out the fact that she passed; before then, she had never felt connected to her Latina identity. Diane indicated that they weren’t sure what their gender actually was or how to articulate it in a way that represented how they felt. Echoing these feelings of identity conflict, a trans woman writer talks about Eddie Izzard’s representation of this identity ambiguousness:

I become an ardent fan of Eddie Izzard, who describes himself as a “male lesbian.” Though many accuse him of internalized transmisogyny—■afraid to call himself trans■—■I at least admire his rejection of the constant attempts to squeeze his identity into a universal taxonomy that other people decided on. I admire his focus. I admire his courage when he wears dresses onstage. I respect his position when television forces him into a suit. I admire his willingness to be something confusing. (Coates)

This “willingness to be something confusing” is something all passers must confront, as their identities are inherently ambiguous and often unclear. For all passers, navigating identity is a balancing act of trying to locate their authentic identities within liminal identity spaces.

Identity in Motion: Agency & Authenticity

In many circumstances, passers exhibit agency in terms of which aspects of their identity they choose to highlight or downplay. Many passers use tools—such as clothing, makeup, the sound of their voice, hormones, etc.—to move between their true identity and their passing identity. This is often intentional:

It took me a long time to accept my curly hair and to appreciate that and to live fully in that, and for such a long time I did-- I guess in middle school and high school, I was straightening my hair all the time to pass as one of the-- all the other white girls. (Jasmine)

I think I can lower my voice if I need to pass if it's ... kind of like a dangerous situation, like I can pull it off. (Daniel)

The use of tools can also be unintentional, or not consciously linked to actively or strategically passing, as with Chris, who spoke about how the way he dresses allows him to be perceived as heterosexual:

More often, I feel like [my appearance is] what you associate with the straight jock type. Even though I don't really think of myself as a jock type. I just dress that way, so I think that helps with my passing, with other people's perception of me.

The fact that passers are able to make decisions in regard to their performance demonstrates their ability to move more freely about their identity than non-passers.

These decisions to use tools to pass are not always made with complete agency, however. Many respondents reported feeling like they needed to pass in certain situations to feel safer, to make others feel more comfortable, to avoid discrimination, or simply for ease or convenience. Jefferson talks about making an effort to pass as a cisgender male when walking home from the bus stop at night:

But if I'm walking back, and it's night, and I walk home, I take my cape and my witch hat and I put 'em in my backpack and I keep my hands in my pockets. And I walk home like that. And I change the way I walk... I walk heel to toe, I swagger more, I move my hips less, and I make sure that I'm looking around ... You know, I mean I lived most of my life thinking I was a cisgender male, so I have the performance down pretty well. It never felt good, and I can't really do it as well as people who are actually cis, but I can do it pretty well, I can do it pretty damn well.

In contrast, when in queer spaces, Jefferson tries to appear more "nonbinary" so as to make people around him more comfortable:

I don't want to be perceived as a threat in those spaces. So then I have to work really hard. Then I put on my mascara and make sure my nails are done really well [laughs]. And then I go out into those places and I wear a lot of jewelry, and I put on a pink shirt and like a big flowy thing.

Four of our respondents worked with children; while the two gender-passers who worked with children felt as if they needed to pass in order to make their identity understandable to children, the two race-passers wished that they could represent their race better to the children with whom they worked, while simultaneously acknowledging the ways their white-passing allowed them for more job opportunities.

For passers, this navigation of identity brings up questions of authenticity. Maria described feeling as if she's lying to herself by upping her level of Latina-ness; because her identity exists somewhere between whiteness and Latina-ness, she feels she cannot fully claim her Latina side. Jefferson questions what his "authentic" identity even is; he exists between (and outside of) perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and has no one permanent identity category to cling to. In light of these questions of authenticity, some passers even felt guilty or irresponsible adhering to one identity category or claiming their identity as fixed and thus erasing the liminality and nuance in their identities:

I think that it's important to note that I identify as mixed, I don't identify as black, because I do feel like that sometimes I -- it's unfair for me to say that I am black. I mean, I could never dream of saying, like, yeah, I'm a black person, when I have this white skin and I can pass, I have the privilege of passing. And so it is, I feel, irresponsible of me to take on that stance when I can pass. (Jasmine)

Maria felt guilty as well, noting that she felt as if she was intruding on other people's spaces:

Because of the struggle and, like, the complications that come with being [Latina] and generally having a darker skin shade or skin tone... I feel guilty that I get to identify as Latina but get to look white. So I feel that I am taking up someone else's space.

Movement in passers' identities also occur throughout the life course. For many passers, there was some sort of shift (for most of them, it was after high school or in college) in which they

were alerted about their passing or decided to begin passing. Two biracial passers indicated that their biggest moment where they had to face her own passing was when filling out college applications and deciding whether or not to claim their identity to gain access to affirmative action and race-based scholarships. Many gender and sexuality passers discussed how being at college and being exposed to a more liberal environment allowed them to discover their true identity or to express it more fully than they were able to before.

Between Perceptions: "It's hard to prove yourself to society all the time"

Passers' identities are situated between others' perceptions and their own perceptions of themselves. Thus, passers construct their identity in opposition to and in accordance with the perceptions of those around them. All passers talked extensively about being perceived by others, particularly in ways that were not true to how passers perceived themselves. This often leads to conflict between passers and those around them (or inner conflict for the passer, who might feel invalidated in their identity or unsure whether to make any kind of identity claim). In most personal interactions, there seems to be some sort of cost-benefit analysis that occurs for the passers in which they determine whether to claim their identity or not. Sometimes, claiming one's identity can result in questioning or challenging on the part of the other person involved in the interaction. Most passers felt frustrated or annoyed with this invalidation and with having to justify themselves to others:

Most people are not okay with the ambiguity; they either want to categorize me as "White" or "Other." They want to tell me what I can and can't identify as. (Khan)

In my head, it's like, okay, get ready for your-- you know, your responses. Because I know, almost always, that I'm gonna have to justify, I mean *always*, I'm gonna have to justify my... my identity. And that's absurd to me. [laughss] But yeah. Usually I always know that there's gonna be-- there's gonna have to be questioning, and then I'm gonna have to justify myself. (Jasmine)

The anticipation of conflict or contradiction is one reason why many passers choose to opt out of claiming their identity or to just “go with the passing.” Some passers also feel that they are made into a trope or stereotype when they try to assert their identity; Jefferson spoke about not wanting to be perceived as “angry male,” while Diane expressed that they did not want people to write them off as an “angry woman.” Sometimes passers simply don’t feel like undergoing the process of claiming their identity or “coming out.” Diane expressed being frustrated about having to figure out when would be “a good time to come out,” and the vulnerability that comes with asserting their pronouns, even to their close friends. Daniel spoke to the frequency with which they felt they had to go through the process of explaining their identity:

I feel like it’s just a lot of educating, it’s a lot of...just explaining myself over and over and over again even if I feel like I said it a hundred and fifty thousand times already. It’s just constant, constant education.

Because their identities are not clearly visible and are often mistaken, passers seem to experience a heightened awareness of their identity in various social situations. For example, Jasmine expressed being “aware of how light my skin is, and...um...and I am kind of hyper-aware of how much privilege I have in having light skin.” This hyper-awareness led to a tension for most passers in terms of how they fit into the respective communities around their passing identities. For example, when with her black family or friends, Jasmine expressed being “aware of how light my skin is, and...um...and I am kind of hyper-aware of how much privilege I have in having light skin.” However, when asked about whether or not she felt isolated in black communities, she said that she did not. Similarly, Maria described feeling “weird” and “wrong” when she was identified by a fellow Latina friend as her “Cubana.” At the same time, she relied on this Latina friend as someone to participate in Latina culture and feel solidarity with.

Between Privilege and Oppression: Violence Vs. Validation

Most passers we spoke to felt that their passing identities granted them some privilege, while also being oppressive in other ways. Many passers do experience discrimination in moments or spaces where they don't pass. Maria talked about being the subject of racist jokes directed at her for being a Latina. Jefferson talked about being in an Uber and having his driver make transphobic comments, as well as being catcalled while walking home. Jasmine talked about being at an airport with the black side of her family and being racially profiled. However, passers also acknowledged the ways in which passing allowed them to escape discrimination or having to justify their identity:

I don't have to worry about somebody crossing the street because of the color of my skin. I don't have to worry about somebody denying me business because of the color of my skin. I don't have to worry about people talking down to me because of the color of my skin. I don't have people questioning my professionalism because of the color of my skin. (Jasmine)

I mean I definitely gain convenience in situations where I don't want to explain things. Like if I don't want to explain something, I don't have to explain something, so there's a convenience factor that's gained. (Daniel)

Many passers expressed their passing identity as one on which they could fall back in order to avoid discrimination, violence, or discomfort. Larger political and socio-cultural context comes into play as well as the recent election of Donald Trump and the ensuing political climate cause some passers to re-consider the option of passing. Sara explicitly mentioned "the election that we just had" in evaluating the risk of passing as white versus passing as Latina, mentioning that she that she didn't want to have to "emphasize one race over the other ... unless something happens that makes me reconsider that." On Facebook, an agender person posted a status the day after the election, exploring the potential implications of being able to pass:

I am also going to wake up and still be in a better off position than those I love and hold dear because I know I can make myself slip into the folds of 'passing' if things get too hard. I can omit my needs to survive and

that is a great privilege. It is a violence but it is a privilege.

Passers have the ability to move between and within identities, but in doing so they are often representing themselves inauthentically, a process which inevitably causes various sorts of psychological harm and even trauma.

Many passers illustrated this tension between privilege and oppression when asked if they would choose not to pass if given the choice (i.e. if they were somehow able to obtain a darker skin tone, if they had a permanent sign above them declaring their pronouns, etc.). Some passers, like Diane and Titus, emphatically decided that they wouldn't want to pass. Other passers, like Jasmine and Kurt, initially said that they wouldn't want to pass, but then acknowledged that this decision might be different if they didn't already have the privilege of passing anyway. Some passers didn't know what they would do. Other passers didn't care. All passers, however, acknowledged the benefits and disadvantages to passing, putting privilege and oppression into complex dialogue with one another to a deeper extent than mainstream discourse on privilege and power often allow for:

The violence inflicted by being inside those cages can't be understated. My inability to properly connect with the gender I was told I was meant to be was an experience filled with anxiety, confusion, self-loathing, and other significant injury... And yet, it was also an experience that allowed me to escape (and even enact) the same types of violence that my sisters and mothers experienced at the hands of men. My ability to easily put on male drag, which is not a privilege afforded to every other non-binary person (in fact, "male drag" can not only be damaging to force oneself into, for some it is practically an impossibility), allowed me many opportunities. (Ziyad)

But I don't want to say it's more disadvantaging to pass as male than it is as beneficial. Like yeah, I have psychological and emotional damage daily that I have to combat just every interaction, every noninteraction, I always have to combat being read as male. And that's damaging, like, absolutely. Psychologically, and emotionally ... But, at the same time, I also don't want to minimize the benefits that one gets from passing as male ... Like, those are considerable fucking benefits, to pass as a straight cis white male. Although I'm not sure to what extent I pass as straight to strangers, but, you know. I mean those are considerable benefits, like. I don't want to minimize that. (Jefferson)

CONCLUSION

The word “passing” has its etymological roots in transience and movement. Indeed, passers experience a great deal of motion and liminality, which is illustrated in their own articulations, narratives, and expressions of identity. For passers, navigating their own identity and negotiating it with the people around them can be confusing, exhausting, and isolating. But, as many passers, point out, the liminality in their identities allows them to “hide” in ways that non-passers with stigmatized identities cannot.

A more comprehensive study on passing might look at more diverse ways of passing, utilizing a wider sample, and a broader range of identity categories. Additionally, literature on symbolic interactionism, intersectional theory, and other fields within the social sciences could be used to broaden and deepen this analysis. Overall, studying and analyzing passing allowed us to gain, in many ways, greater insight into the complex nature of intersectionality and identity politics. These passers’ narratives of their identity complicate the idea that there is an “Oppression Olympics” or that one stigmatized identity can be isolated and analyzed as if it does not interact with other identities. More broadly, analyzing passing also leads us to a deeper understanding of the tension and ambiguity inherent in all forms of identity, the fluid nature of identity itself, and the absurdity and unrelenting rigidity of the boxes that dominant societal and cultural forces attempt to construct around identity.

APPENDIX A: INFORMANT LIST & RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Interviews:

Jefferson -- white, genderqueer, asexual, assigned male at birth

Daniel -- white, transgender, queer, assigned female at birth

Chris -- white, cisgender, bisexual, male

Jasmine --half black/half white, cisgender, heterosexual, female

Sara --half Latina/half white, cisgender, heterosexual, female

Maria --half Latina/half white, cisgender, heterosexual, female

Focus Group:

Diane -- white, nonbinary, queer, assigned female at birth

Titus -- white, trans woman, lesbian, assigned male at birth

Kurt -- white, cisgender, bisexual, female

Amelia -- white, cisgender, asexual, female

APPENDIX B: UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES – CITATIONS

Coates, Jennifer. 2016. "I Am a Transwoman. I Am in the Closet. I Am Not Coming Out." *Medium*. Retrieved December 15, 2016. <https://medium.com/@jencoates/i-am-a-transwoman-i-am-in-the-closet-i-am-not-coming-out-4c2dd1907e42#.t91r5ghs6>

Khan, Aliya. 2015. "Don't Erase My Race: 4 Affirmations to Remember When Reclaiming Your Multi-Racial Identity." *Everyday Feminism*. Retrieved December 15, 2016. <http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/02/affirming-multiracial-identity/>

Reis, Elizabeth. 2016. "Pronoun Privilege." *The New York Times*. Retrieved December 15, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/26/opinion/pronoun-privilege.html?_r=0

Ziyad, Hari. 2016. "What I Learned From Being Nonbinary While Still Being Perceived as a Man." *Everyday Feminism*. Retrieved December 15, 2016. (<http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/02/genderqueer-amab-experience/>).

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction/Background

1. How would you define passing?
2. What identity do you ‘pass’ for? How does this compare to what you might consider your authentic identity? [This question determines whether they are an unintentional or an intentional passer -- and, if intentional, if they successfully or unsuccessfully pass, i.e. their passing identity matches their authentic identity] [probe on “authentic identity”: in other words, do you feel like you “pass” for an identity that you actually identify with? Or does your “passing” identity misrepresent you in some way]
3. When you’re walking around in public, what labels do you think strangers apply to you?
 - a. How have people explicitly labeled you in the past?
 - b. How do those labels compare to the labels that you would apply to yourself?
 - c. Why do you think people label you in this way? [probe: What physical markers do you think cause people to interpret you in the way you described?]
4. For you, is passing a choice, or just what people assume about you?
5. [FOR UNINTENTIONAL PASSERS ONLY]: When did you first realize you were passing for [passing identity]?
 - a. How did you come to this realization? [probe: Can you describe a particular experience that caused you to become aware of your own passing?]
 - b. What emotions do you associate with the experience of coming to this realization?
6. [FOR INTENTIONAL PASSERS ONLY]: When did you first make the choice to pass as [passing identity]?
 - a. How did you come to the decision to pass? [Why?] [probe: Can you remember the first time you decided to pass? Did you do anything specific to help you pass?]
 - b. What emotions do you associate with the experience of coming to this decision?
7. How did your shift to passing change the way you thought about your own identity?

Identity

1. How do you feel your identity in different spaces and situations?
 - a. When you’re in class, how do you feel it? At a grocery store? A party? Spending time with immediate family?
 - b. How often do you think about your identity?
 - c. Does the way you feel your identity change when you’re in a space with others who share that identity?
 - d. How often do you think about passing in relation to your identity?
2. How would you define the group that you’re a part of? How does society see it?
3. Think about a particular thing you do--the clothing you choose to wear, the music you listen to, the way you speak, or anything else. How is that connected to your identity? [Influenced by the culture surrounding your identity?]

Relationships to Others

1. Does passing impact your relationships with people who are also passing?
 - a. Your family? Friends? Romantic or sexual relationships?
 - b. What about people who don’t share your identity?
 - c. With other people who might pass, but within a different group?
 - d. Does your closeness to those people change how your relationships are influenced by your passing?
2. Does passing affect your daily interactions with people? In what ways?
 - a. How are you aware of your identity in everyday interactions?

3. How often do you think about others' perceptions of your identity?
 - a. How do you think those perceptions shape the way others talk to you about your identity? (probe: what about the vocabulary that they use?)
4. How do you talk about or describe your authentic identity to others? [Family, friends, acquaintances, on social media]
 - a. If people wrongfully perceive your identity, do you correct them?
 - a.i. If yes: why? What does this process feel like to you?
 - a.ii. If no: why not?
 - b. How do others react when you talk about your authentic identity? (probe: are they supportive, etc. does this differ based on who you're talking to?)
5. Can you tell me about a specific time when someone assumed your identity incorrectly? [probe: How did that feel? How did you react?]
6. Do you feel as though passing is necessary for you to be accepted in different contexts?
 - a. At college, in high school, doing errands, at parties, at work, amongst family, within religious contexts?
 - b. Does that necessity cause you to change how you express your identity?
 - c. Do you perceive that necessity as a pressure, or do you understand it differently?

Actively Passing

1. [FOR UNINTENTIONAL PASSERS ONLY]: Are there ever any situations in which you intentionally choose to pass for any reason?
 - a. Can you give me an example of a situation where you actively chose to pass?
 - b. Why did you choose to pass in that situation?
2. [FOR INTENTIONAL, SUCCESSFUL PASSERS ONLY]: Are there ever any situations in which you intentionally choose to not pass, or, to purposely pass for an identity that does not match your authentic identity?
 - a. Can you give me an example of a situation where you actively chose to not pass?
 - b. Why did you choose to not pass in that situation?
3. [FOR INTENTIONAL, UNSUCCESSFUL PASSERS ONLY]: Are there ever any situations in which you choose to pass or not to pass?
 - a. Example?
 - b. Why?
4. Do you ever use any tools to help you pass as [passing identity]? [probe: list examples of material tools: skin lightening creams, hormones, certain types of clothes, etc.]
 - a. (If yes) What do you use? (probe: What types of tools, brands?)
 - a.i. When did you start using them?
 - a.ii. How did you acquire them? (probe: do you buy them, are they gifts, etc.)
 - a.iii. When you don't use these tools, how do you feel?
 - a.iv. How have other people reacted to your use of these tools? (probe: Does this change based on who the person is?)
 - a.v. Why do you use these tools?
 - a.vi. What obstacles, if any, do you face in obtaining these tools?
 - b. (If no) Can you explain the reason you don't use tools?
 - b.i. How do you perceive people who do use them?

Privilege & Oppression

1. What are the potential risks involved in passing? In not passing?
 - a. (probe) Do you risk anything in terms of relationships? Safety? Psychologically or emotionally? Confidence in identity?

2. What do you gain or lose from passing as [passing identity]?
3. What other identity categories do you fit into? How do these interact with the identity we've been talking about?
4. Do you see passing as ultimately beneficial or disadvantaging to you, or a mix of the two?

Demographics

1. Please provide the following demographic information:
 - a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Race/Ethnicity
 - d. Sexual orientation
 - e. Socioeconomic status

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTION GUIDE

1. Ask people to introduce themselves and to talk about how they pass or how they identify, etc. (however much they want to share)
2. How would you define passing?
3. When you're walking around in public, what labels do you think strangers apply to you?
 - a. How do those labels compare to the labels that you would apply to yourself?
 - b. What physical markers do you think cause people to interpret you in the way you described?
4. How do you feel your identity in different spaces and situations?
 - a. When you're in class, how do you feel it? At a grocery store? A party? Spending time with immediate family?
5. Does passing impact your relationships with people who share your identity?
 - a. Your family? Friends? Romantic or sexual relationships?
 - b. What about people who don't share your identity?
 - c. With other people who might pass, but within a different group?
 - d. Does your closeness to those people change how your relationships are influenced by your passing?
6. Does passing affect your daily interactions with people? In what ways?
 - a. How are you aware of your identity in everyday interactions?
7. Can you explain what you have experienced when people find out or when you tell them that you are passing?
8. Can you talk about the different factors that influence how/when/why you pass?
 - a. Why do you think this is?
9. Are there any times when you intentionally choose to pass or not to pass?
10. On a daily basis, how do you talk about or describe your identity to others?
 - a. If/when people wrongfully perceive your identity, do you correct them or explain your authentic identity to them?
 - a.i. If yes: what does this process feel like to you?
 - a.ii. If no: why not?
 - b. How do others react to these conversations? (probe: are they supportive, etc. does this differ based on who you're talking to?)
11. Ultimately, what do you gain or lose from passing?/Do you see it as beneficial or disadvantaging or a mix?
12. If, somehow, a genie or a magical wish was able to grant you the ability to not pass (i.e. present as cis, have your pronouns hovering above your head at all times, etc.), would you make that wish? Or would you retain your ability to pass?

Demographics (We will hand out a sheet with these questions after the group discussion has concluded. They will hand the sheets to us directly)

1. Please provide the following demographic information:
 - a. Identity/What do you pass for?
 - b. Age
 - c. Gender
 - d. Race/Ethnicity
 - e. Sexual orientation