



## Lesson 4

# Self-Assessment

### Learning Objectives

At the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Define the relevance of self-assessment for working in complex environments
- Identify four questions used in self-assessment
- Identify how self-assessment relates to perception management

This lesson provides civilian, military and police leaders with an understanding of their capacities and lack of capacities, and how others perceive them. Self-awareness is an important element of adaptive leadership and cross-cultural communication in complex environments. Self-awareness enables civilian, military, and police leaders to coordinate effectively to support human security.

### 1. What is self-assessment?

Self-assessment<sup>10</sup> is a process to become more self-aware of one's strengths, weaknesses, capacities and lack of capacities. Self-assessment is a key element of adaptive leadership and cross-cultural communication and trust building. Adaptive leaders who are able to respond to new and challenging circumstances in a complex environment know their capacities and also their limits. They are confident to describe who they are, but they also recognise that others may view them differently. Lack of self-awareness is a characteristic of unpopular and ineffective leaders. In surveys of the effectiveness of leaders, the number one complaint against leaders is "lack of self-awareness." Civilians, military and police often hold stereotypes of each other. Self-assessment can help each individual and each group to

become more aware of how others view them and what they can do to reduce or overcome these negative stereotypes to improve civil-military-police relations.

**2. Self-assessment is also necessary for multi-stakeholder coordination.**

No one group can do everything. Groups are most able to coordinate when each group is clear on what it can do and what it cannot do. This requires each group do a self-assessment.

**3. Self-assessment requires identifying the gaps in your knowledge.**

How well do you understand the local context, language, cultures, religions, etc.? Do you know and recognise the limits of your knowledge of the local cultures, languages, and systems? Do you know what you don't know?

Identify the limits of your understanding of the local context. List types of information on the local context you do not have access to and describe how you will continue to gather information about the context.

**4. Map your capacities as well as your lack of capacities.**

No one group is capable of doing all the different types of activities required to support peace and security in a complex environment. Governments, security forces, the business sector, and civil society each have a role to play. Assessing the capacities and lack of capacities of each group is a necessary step in recognising the need to build respectful, trusting relationships with other groups.

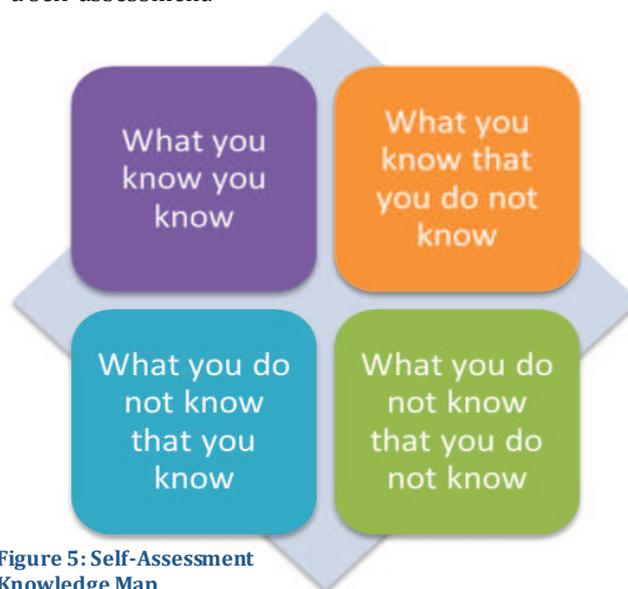


Figure 5: Self-Assessment Knowledge Map

**Self-Assessment Capacity Chart: What you Can and Cannot Do**

| Your Capacity:       | Your Extended Capacity:   | Your Lack of Capacity:         |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| What you can do well | What you can do if you need to, but you would prefer to have someone else do it | What you do not know how to do |

**5. Assessing the impact of your actions.**

Most people view themselves positively and believe they are motivated by good intentions. But often the gap between “intent” and “impact” is large. Even when people set out to do good, they inadvertently harm others.

For example, an NGO may arrive in a village to provide healthcare. They may not be aware that three other groups are already in the village and the village feels obligated to host and feed the visiting NGO, which creates a stress on community resources. In another example, a military representative may come to visit an NGO office with the good intention to start a dialogue, but he does not realise that his mere physical presence may put the NGO at risk of being seen as taking sides in the conflict.

Analysing the potential harm your activities may cause helps to avoid such negative impact. All too often, groups examine the problems and capacities of others in the conflict without looking inward at their own problems or limits.

**6. Understanding how others perceive you.**

When others see you, what aspect of your identity do they see? Lesson 3 on Intercultural Competence introduced the diagram of identity and cultural

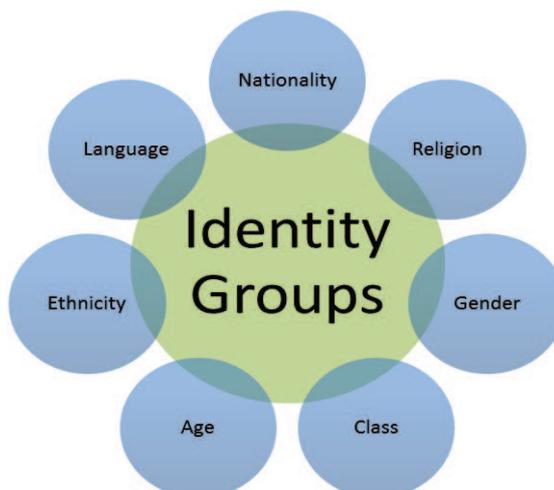


Figure 6: Identity Groups

groups. How do other stakeholders perceive your identity? How do key stakeholders view your organisation based on their perceptions and experiences? Have public figures or media outlets commented on your motivations? How will these perceptions shape their interest and support for your efforts in a complex environment?

You may need to carry out research to determine how stakeholders perceive your group. Useful questions to ask are:

- a. Which other stakeholders do you relate to?
- b. Who else might be affected by your presence? This may include individuals who inadvertently benefit from your presence such as hotels, drivers, food providers, etc, and those that may feel threatened by your efforts or goals.
- c. How do your interests connect with other stakeholders' needs and interests?
- d. How do other stakeholders perceive your interests and objectives?
- e. How are you managing other stakeholder's perceptions of you by explaining your motivations and addressing criticisms or suspicions of your motives by others?

### **7. Perception management first requires self-assessment.**

Adaptive leaders in complex environments want to influence and control how other groups perceive them. This is called *perception management*. Leaders manage perceptions by how they behave, as actions speak louder than words. Rather than asking "what can we do to change them" adaptive leaders ask "what can we do differently so that they can better understand our role in the conflict?"

### **REVIEW**

This lesson identified the importance for stakeholders to do a self-assessment of both their capacities and lack of capacities. This is necessary for him or her to be able to build trust and coordinate with each other so that each stakeholder contributes where they have the most capacity.

### **Citations**

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen Robbins. *Self-Assessment Library 3.4*, (New York, New York: Prentice Hall, 2008). See online-self-assessment tools at [http://www.pearsonhighered.com/sal\\_v3\\_demo/](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/sal_v3_demo/) accessed January 2016.

## Lesson 4

## Learning Exercises

### Anchor

10 minutes

Anchor the content in this lesson with an open question. Participants can share in groups of two or three people their response to these questions:

- What choices do you make that shape how others perceive you?
- What do you wear or how do you travel that impacts how others view you?
- Do others view you positively or negatively? How do you know how they perceive you?
- What impact do other stakeholder's perceptions of you have on your work?

### Add

20 minutes

Present the PowerPoint slides or ask participants to discuss the lesson readings in a small group.

### Apply

25 minutes

The goal of this exercise is to practice using self-assessment tools. The president of the country in your scenario is coming to visit to assess the capacity of different groups. Each scenario stakeholder team will have two minutes to answer the following three questions the president has sent out to all of the stakeholders. Based on point three in this lesson, do a self-assessment of your scenario group.

- What can your group do well?
- What is your "extended capacity?"
- What is your lack of capacity?

The president then asks the groups to refute or challenge each other. The president is looking for honesty and humility, as well as capacity to respond. Which of the stakeholder teams can best demonstrate an accurate self-assessment of their capacities that other groups do not challenge?

See the "Scenario-based Learning" section in the [Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum](#) for explanation of the scenarios and teams.

#### Alternate Exercise:

This exercise aims to help security personnel and civilian leaders identify how other groups perceive them so that they can make choices that better influence and build positive perceptions.

A carload of NGO workers drives up to a checkpoint where security forces meet them.

What choices could each of the NGO workers make in terms of their appearance and their behaviour? What will increase trust? What will decrease trust in what they say, what they do, and how they look?

What choices do security forces make in terms of their appearance and their behaviour? What will increase trust? What will decrease trust in what they say, what they do, and how they look?

What might the use of sunglasses, smoking, cursing, or loud music communicate to the other group?

### Away

5 minutes

In a large group, participants can discuss these questions:

- What is the gap between how you see yourself and how those outside of your group see you?
- What would you do differently to manage perceptions of you and your group?
- How will you explain your motivations and address criticisms or suspicions of your motives by others?

This Lesson is part of the *Handbook on Human Security* found at [www.humansecuritycoordination.org](http://www.humansecuritycoordination.org)

**Please cite lesson number and title along with this citation.** Schirch, Lisa (editor). *Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC, Kroc Institute, March 2016.

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