

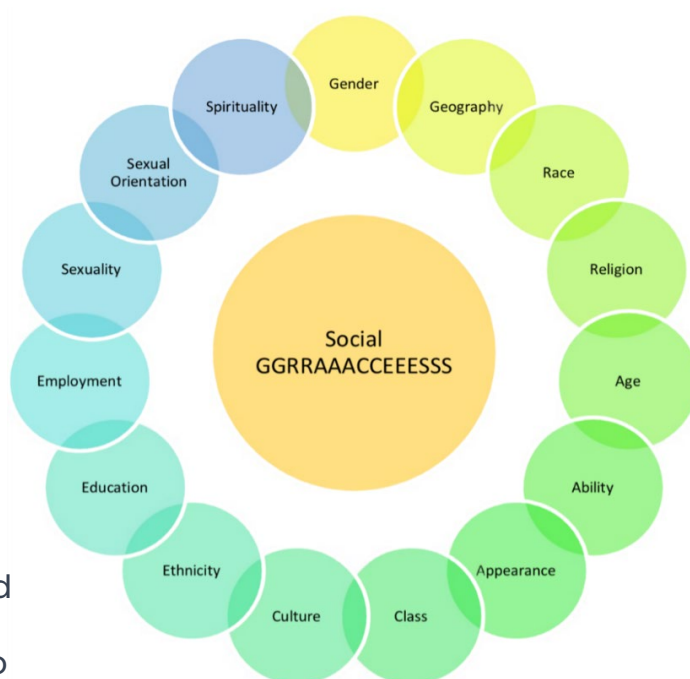
Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

The term social GRRRAACCEESSS is an acronym that describes aspects of personal and social identity which afford people different levels of power and privilege. The term was developed by John Burnham, Alison Roper-Hall and colleagues in 1992. The acronym was developed to represent aspects of difference in beliefs, power and lifestyle.

What are the Social Graces?:

The 'social graces' have grown since their original development and currently represent aspects such as gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation and spirituality. The above picture is how the social graces are most commonly seen, however there are additional dimensions sometimes included such as disability, health, migration, housing.

Originally, the letters were arranged as 'disgraces' to highlight the fact that such inequalities were 'disgraceful', but it was feared this could be rather off-putting. So, over time, the 'dis' was dropped, and the 'social' added to the front, to highlight the fact that the graces have an impact not only on an individual level but are active within our communities.



Why are they useful?

Separating our identity into parts allows us to explore more fully the influence of particular aspects of our lives that may have a dominant presence or, alternatively, may be invisible or unnoticed. We need tangible tools we can use to fight against prejudice, to acknowledge privilege, and to redistribute power. The Social Graces is one of the tools which can help us to achieve this.

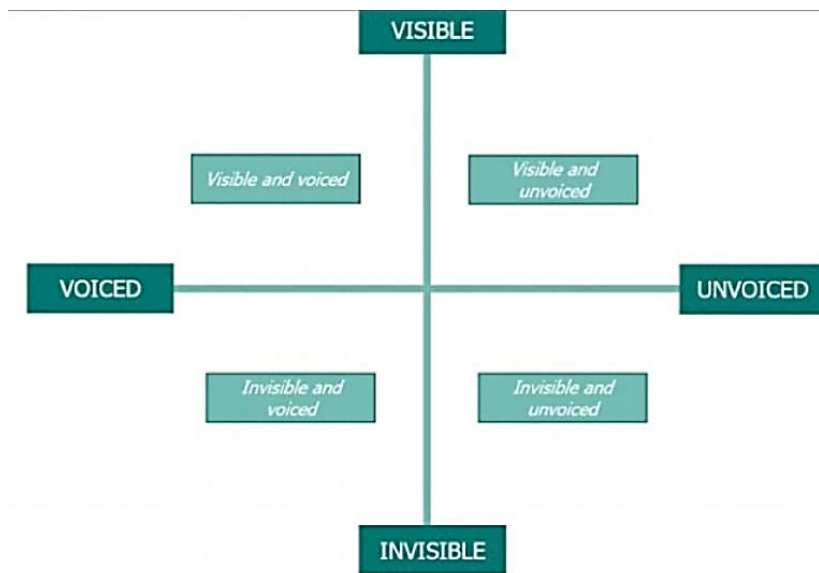
Being aware of our own Social Graces and showing curiosity to understand those of the children and families we work with, can support us to build better quality relationships. Your own graces will likely influence your own value base and how you interpret and ultimately assess certain situations. Equally, they will influence how family's function and respond to us as professionals.

Visible / Invisible – Voiced / Unvoiced

Social Graces can be **visible** and **invisible**, **voiced** and **unvoiced**.

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

Some may be more visible than others at different times and can be shifted into different quadrants just by talking about them. The distinction between voiced and unvoiced aspects refers to whether certain elements of a person's identity or experience are actively talked about (voiced) or remain unspoken, hidden, or taken for granted (unvoiced). Examples of voiced or unvoiced Social Graces could include cultural heritage, sexual orientation or disability. Reasons for someone not voicing.



parts of their Social Graces could be due to fear of stigma or unawareness if they have not reflected on this aspect of their identity, for example class privilege

Visible Social Graces are aspects of our identity or experience that are easily observable or externally apparent to others, often without the need for someone to tell you. These aspects are often subject to immediate judgments, stereotypes, or biases. Examples include race, gender presentation, age and some physical disabilities.

Invisible Social Graces are aspects of identity or experience that are internal, hidden, or not immediately obvious to others unless they tell you. Examples include sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, mental health and learning disabilities. These aspects are often misunderstood or ignored. People may choose to keep these aspects private due to stigma or fear of discrimination. Which is when they would become invisible and unvoiced.

How can we apply them to practice?

Social Graces can be used within direct work with children and their families. Practitioners can take a copy of the Social Graces diagram and ask the person they are working with to identify which of these aspects they are most or least drawn to, exploring each of them in further detail. This supports practitioners to gain a more holistic understanding of someone's identity and what they consider most important to them. This gives a richer discussion and really helps us get to know the people we support, instead of making assumptions about who they are as this is easy to do. People can be full of surprises!

Social Graces can also be used within assessment work, case recordings and Genograms. They are also an excellent concept to reflect upon during supervision sessions with managers and colleagues.

If you would like further information about the Social Graces and how to apply them to practice, please contact us at relationalpracticeleads@newcastle.gov.uk