identity

(we wanted to say identitea, but you get the picture.)
what is identity?

Identity is the fact of being who or what you are. It simply means is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person who they are, or the group or social category what it is.

Many different things come together to constitute a person's identity: their sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, colour, race, caste, nationality, sexual orientation, belief, profession, hobbies / interests and other similar factors.
what is identity?

Since many different factors come together to comprise an individual's identity, it is not necessarily possible for one to assume that identity is homogeneous or uniform across the board. For instance, it is not necessary that two people identifying as believers of a religion practice or evaluate the religion in the same way.
your identity

Your identity is really what you identify it to be. You get to be in charge of determining what makes you who you are, and what you are.

Of course, there are some aspects of one's identity that cannot be changed: such as ethnicity and race.

But most aspects are flexible, such as religion, gender, nationality, profession and the like.

Regardless of what can change and what can't, you get to decide what counts as your identity.
why does identity matter?

As social animals, we interact and live among other social animals. How we interact, what we choose to interact with, and how we respond to an interaction that is initiated by another are all defined by our identities.

It is also important to remember that our identities can also shape our choices, our needs and our wants.
why does identity matter?

Look at all these people here. Each person appears to have a different identity - but, if you probably met them and spoke to them, you might find that there are similarities, and even differences that are not apparent.
why does identity matter?

Since identity does affect the way we go about our lives, it goes without saying that identity also affects the way we think.

Our identities may sometimes define our histories and may define the way we handle our relationships with other identities.
why does identity matter?

Since identity does affect the way we go about our lives, it also affects the way a policy, a legislation or a program operates, and has its impact on our lives.

Personally, we get to question a policy that affects our identity. And as a policy / law maker, we have a responsibility to understand how a policy or law can affect people of different identities.
respecting identities

Identities are a person's manner of expressing themselves, and a person's manner of defining how they want to relate to the world around them. Each person has the freedom of choice, and has the right to express their identities in the way they choose to. Just as you have a right to identity, so too does everyone else.

Being respectful is key! If you don't understand, question, but do so respectfully. There's no shame in admitting ignorance and dispelling it with information!
references
