

UNDERSTANDING PRIVILEGE

Identity and Privilege Handout

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Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated within the category your group is assigned. Take note and record Yes or No to each listed privilege

Category 1: Race

Category 2: Gender

Category 3: Sexuality

Category 4: Religion

Category 5: Ableism

Category 6: Socioeconomic

Category 7: Immigration

Race

Look through the list below and note if you can choose “Yes/No” to each item. Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated in the category your group is assigned. Are there other privileges you would add to the list?

- I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time, especially at work.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
- I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
- I grew up reading books by authors of my race.
- I can choose public accommodations without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
- I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s story books, magazines featuring people of my race.
- If a cop pulls me over, I can be sure I haven’t been singled out because of my race.
- I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
- If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure I would be able to rent and buy a house without worrying about my race.
- I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
- When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
- I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
- I can go home from most meetings or organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

Gender

Look through the list below and note if you can choose “Yes/No” to each item. Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated in the category your group is assigned. Are there other privileges you would add to the list?

- If you have a bad day or are in a bad mood, people aren't going to blame it on your gender.
- You can be a careless driver and not have people blame it on your gender.
- As a child, you were able to find plenty of non-limiting, non-gender-role-stereotyped media to view.
- You can expect to be paid equitably for the work you do and not paid less because of your gender.
- You can expect to be paid equitably for the work you do and not paid less because of your gender.
- You can generally work comfortably (or walk down a public street) without the fear of sexual harassment.
- You can generally work comfortably (or walk down a public street) without the fear of sexual harassment.
- You can go on a date with a stranger without the fear of being raped.
- You can dress how you want and not worry it will be used as a defense if you are raped.
- You can decide not to have children and not have your masculinity questioned.
- You can balance a career and a family without being called selfish for not staying at home (or being constantly pressured to stay at home).
- If you're not conventionally attractive (or in shape), you don't have to worry as much about it negatively affecting your social or career potential.
- I can turn on the television or glance at the front page of the newspaper or politics, and see people of my own gender widely represented.
- Even if I sleep with a lot of women, there is no chance that I will be seriously labeled a “slut,” nor is there any male counterpart to “slut-bashing.”

- I do not have to worry about the message my wardrobe sends about my sexual availability.

Sexuality

Look through the list below and note if you can choose “Yes/No” to each item. Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated in the category your group is assigned. Are there other privileges you would add to the list?

- I talk openly about my relationship, partner, vacations, family planning, about my lover/partner without worrying who I am sharing that information with.
- I can easily find a neighborhood in which residents will accept how you have constituted your household.
- I can raise, adopt, and teach children without people believing that I will molest them or force them into my sexuality.
- I can go wherever I wish knowing that I will not be harassed, beaten, or killed because of my sexuality.
- I can express love to my partner freely in public without worrying where I am and who is watching.
- I can freely express my sexuality without the fear of being prosecuted for breaking the law.
- Belonging to the religious denomination of your choice and knowing that your sexuality will not be denounced by its religious leaders.
- I will not be asked by my child’s school to only send one parent to back-to-school night so as not to upset the other parents by having two same-sex partners in the class together.
- I don't have to “come out” (explain to people that you’re straight, as they will most likely assume it).
- I do not have to worry about where you can move, alone or with your spouse, and have equal job opportunities abroad.

- I do not have to think about whether your kid's friend's parents will flip out when they pick their kid up from a play date and are greeted by me and my partner.
- I do not have to worry that people won't let their children play with my children because of my sexuality.
- I can travel anywhere with my partner without worrying about my sexuality.

Religion

Look through the list below and note if you can choose "Yes/No" to each item. Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated in the category your group is assigned. Are there other privileges you would add to the list?

- You can expect to have time off work to celebrate religious holidays.
- Music and television programs pertaining to your religion's holidays are readily accessible.
- It is easy to find stores that carry items that enable you to practice your faith and celebrate religious holidays.
- You can worship freely, without fear of violence or threats.
- A bumper sticker supporting your religion won't likely lead to your car being vandalized.
- Positive references to your faith are seen dozens of times a day by everyone, regardless of their faith.
- Politicians responsible for your governance are probably members of your faith.
- Politicians can make decisions citing your faith without being labeled as heretics or extremists.
- You can reasonably assume that anyone you encounter will have a decent understanding of your beliefs.
- You can practice your religious customs without being questioned, mocked, or inhibited
- You are never asked to speak on behalf of all the members of your faith.

Ableism

Look through the list below and note if you can choose “Yes/No” to each item. Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated in the category your group is assigned. Are there other privileges you would add to the list?

- I can, if I wish, arrange to attend social events without worrying if they are accessible to me.
- If I am in the company of people that make me uncomfortable, I can easily choose to move elsewhere.
- I can easily find housing that is accessible to me, with no barriers to my mobility.
- I can go shopping alone most of the time and be able to reach and obtain all of the items without assistance, know that cashiers will notice I am there, and can easily see and use the credit card machines. I also don't have to worry about finding a dressing room I can use, or that it's being used as a storage room.
- I can turn on the television and see people of my ability level widely and accurately represented.
- I am not called upon to speak as the token person for people of my ability level.
- I can advocate for my children in their schools without my ability level being blamed for my children's performance or behaviour.
- I can do well in a challenging situation without being told what an inspiration I am.
- If I ask to speak to someone “in charge”, I can be relatively assured that the person will speak directly to me and not treat me like I am stupid.
- I can belong to an organization/class/workplace and not feel that others resent my membership because of my ability level.
- I do not have to fear being assaulted because of my ability status.
- I can be reasonably assured that I won't be late for meetings due to mobility barriers.
- As I grow up from childhood I will not feel that my body is inferior or undesirable, and that it should be “fixed”, allowing me to feel confident in my current and future relationships.
- When speaking with medical professionals, I can expect them to understand how my body works, to answer my questions, and respect my decisions.
- My neighborhood allows me to move about on sidewalks, into stores, and into friends' homes without difficulty.
- People do not tell me that my ability level means I should not have children. They will be happy for me when I become pregnant, and I can easily find supportive medical professionals and parents like me.

Socioeconomic

Look through the list below and note if you can choose “Yes/No” to each item. Using the handout, discuss and identify the privileges associated in the category your group is assigned. Are there other privileges you would add to the list?

- I grew up not worrying about my next meal.
- I grew up not fearing being hungry or homeless.
- I am free of the burden of debt.
- I have the freedom to waste.
- I do not have to worry about how emergencies will impact my spending requirements.
- I can live a less stressful life because I can afford costly short cuts.
- I can see myself as being above doing housework.
- I anticipate that those whom I employ will consider me a "good customer" and give me preferential service; I can even feel entitled to such service.
- I can anticipate my retirement years without financial anxiety.
- I can give my children an inheritance so their road is easier than the road of others.
- I could probably advance my career or social contacts' careers by pulling strings.
- I have the advantage of suitable clothing when seeking employment.
- I can choose to work or not to work, and for the most part not be criticized or attacked for that choice.
- I usually have access to services provided by highly qualified service providers.

Immigration

1. Most, if not all of the time, I am able to surround myself with people who share a common or collective history, who understand the norms of U.S. society, who speak the same language that I do, and who understand my culture.
2. I am not worried on a daily basis about being “discovered” and deported along with, or have legal authority to be in the U.S.
4. I can apply for a passport that will allow me to travel back and forth to most countries in the world.
5. I can think nothing of crossing the border to visit Tijuana, Mexico, for a day of shopping and sightseeing, while Mexican citizens must qualify economically to obtain even a

tourist visa to

enter the U.S., and there are a great many who do not qualify.

6. If I want to get a driver's license, it's a simple matter of bringing along my birth certificate, social security card, insurance card, and taking the test. There's no need to worry about whether I have the proper documents to get a driver's license. Usually, a long line is all I have to worry about.
7. Once I have my driver's license, I know that I can use it to travel domestically across the U.S. without the fear of TSA asking me for my passport or further documentation.
8. If I apply for a job, I do not have to worry about what to write under "Social Security Number."
9. When Social Security and Medicare are taken out of my paycheck, I have a reasonable hope that someday either my dependents or I will receive the benefit of those taxes.
10. I can go into any bank and set up a checking account without fear of discrimination, thus knowing my money is safer than on my person or elsewhere.
11. If a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my perceived immigration status.
12. I can be reasonably sure that if I need legal, medical advice, or help, my citizenship status will not be a consideration.
13. I can vote in any local or national election on policies or for people who will make laws affecting my way of life and my community.
14. I may consider running for political office to serve my community.
15. I have not been forced to ask myself what would compel me to risk my life to enter the U.S. Whether crossing a barren desert for days without food or water, traveling overseas in the hull of ship, or any other dangerous form of transport, I have not been forced to leave my family, my home, and my roots behind me to enter a country that not only feels hostile to me, but is also difficult to understand at times.
16. If am treated violently or inappropriately by a federal entity, I have some hope of legal recourse.
17. I can choose whether or not I take part in discussions surrounding how my lifestyle or the actions of my government have impacted the lives of those in other countries.
18. If I decide to organize politically or speak out about my country's unjust policies, I am likely to be addressing systems that I was raised around and understand. Also, those in power are more likely to listen to me and credit my arguments than a non-citizen.

19. I qualify to apply and receive state and federal insurance to help cover my health care. I qualify to apply and receive state and federal loans to help pay for my education.
20. I can ask for help or services (police, firefighters, doctors, etc.) without the fear of deportation.