

Privilege Beads Exercise

Directions:

This activity should be done individually and in silence. At each station, take a bead for each privilege you experience. Do not talk to others. Do not overthink if you do or do NOT have the privilege. If you have to stop to think about it, then you likely DO have the privilege and should take a bead.

Religious Privilege

1. My place of work or school is closed on my major religious holidays.
2. I can talk openly about my religious practices without concern for how it will be received by others.
3. When swearing an oath, I am probably making this oath by placing my hand on the scripture of my religion.
4. I probably do not need to learn the religious or spiritual customs of others, and I am likely not penalized for not knowing them.
5. I can travel without others assuming that I put them at risk because of my religion; nor will my religion put me at risk from others when I travel.
6. My citizenship and immigration status will likely not be questioned, and my background will likely not be investigated, because of my religion.
7. I can openly display religious symbols on my body (dress, accessories) without people staring or asking questions.
8. I can easily find a place of worship in my town that subscribes to my belief.

Gender Privilege

1. I do not worry about walking alone at night.
2. If I choose not to have children, my gender will not be called into question.
3. I do not have to consider my physical safety when I accept a date.
4. I do not have to think about the message my wardrobe sends about my equal availability.
5. In general, I am not under much pressure to be thin or to worry about how people will respond to me if I'm overweight.
6. If I have children and a career, no one will think I'm selfish for not staying at home.
7. My elected representatives are mostly people of my own sex.
8. When I ask to see "the person in charge," odds are I will face a person of my own sex.

Sexuality Privilege

1. I can go for months without me or anyone else referring explicitly to my sexuality.
2. I do not have to fear that if my family or friends find out about my sexual orientation there will be economic, emotional, physical or psychological consequences.
3. I can attend most meetings, classes, and conversations without feeling excluded, fearful, attacked, isolated, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, stereotyped or feared because of my sexual orientation.
4. People don't ask why I made my choice of sexual orientation.

5. No one will ever question whether or not it is appropriate for me to have children or get married because of my sexuality.
6. If I want to, I can easily find a religious community that will not exclude me for my sexuality.
7. I can walk in public with my significant other and not have people double-take or stare.
8. I will be able to sit at my partner's death bed.

Random Privilege

1. I do not have to bother, unless I choose, to learn about other countries and cultures.
2. My dietary needs are met at most public locations.
3. My first language is spoken in most places I go.
4. I do not have to worry if there will be enough room for me in a car, airplane, or a theater seat.
5. I can sit at almost any desk in a classroom or office and still be able to write comfortably.
6. Both of my parents are still alive.
7. I can find clothes that fit my body type in most stores.
8. Members of my immediate family never have been treated for depression, alcoholism or drug use.

Race Privilege

1. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
2. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
3. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
4. Schools in my community teach about my race and heritage and present it in positive ways throughout the year.
5. I can consider options - social, political, or professional - without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
6. I can go into a supermarket and find the food I grew up with.
7. I can take a job or enroll in a college with an affirmative action policy without having my co-workers or peers assume I got it because of my race.
8. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

Class Privilege

1. Where I go to college is not dependent on my financial aid package.
2. Each student in my high school classroom had their own textbook or other supplies.
3. I am reasonably sure that I or my family will not have to skip meals because we cannot afford to eat.
4. I have a savings account with at least a month's rent and bills set aside in case of emergency, or have family to help.

5. I have freedom to waste money or resources.
6. I have never been homeless or evicted from my place of living.
7. I never have to worry about being able to afford health insurance for myself or my family.
8. The neighborhood I live in is relatively free of obvious drug use, prostitution, and violent crime.

Ability Privilege

1. If I need to move, I can be assured of purchasing housing I can easily access.
2. I don't have to worry about where my mailbox is placed in my office, place of living or school.
3. I do not have to worry where the curb cuts are located or if I do not know what a curb cut is.
4. I don't have to worry about whether the snow has been cleared off or along pathways.
5. I can perform daily tasks and not have people ask me how I complete those tasks with my ability status.
6. I can sit anywhere I want in an office, classroom, or conference room and still be able to see.
7. I never have to worry about having an interpreter present for classes, meetings or events that I attend.
8. I can easily complete a test without asking for special accommodations from a teacher.

United States Nationality Privilege

1. When I apply for jobs, my legal right to work in this country probably will not be questioned.
2. People generally assume that I can communicate proficiently in English.
3. I have never been told not to speak in my native language during everyday interactions.
4. People do not assume I am poor because of my nationality.
5. The history of my country is an integrated part of the basic U.S. education curriculum.
6. People from my country are visible and positively represented in politics, business, and the media.
7. If I wanted to, I could travel freely to almost any country.
8. People where I live rarely ask me what country I'm from.

Processing Questions:

1. Initial feelings and thoughts about this activity?
2. Were there any questions that you didn't understand or that came as a surprise to you?
3. What are some of the identities that you think about the most? The least?
4. How often do you think about your privilege? Is it hard to be able to physically see it?
5. Any identities that you saw missing?
6. What does your privilege look like in the Nebraska Synod?
7. What will you do differently after participating in this activity?
8. Closing thoughts?

Other Privilege Exercises to Explore

NOTE: Do your homework. Be sure you are equipped to facilitate the exercises. Be ready for the conversation they bring up and remember what level of privilege you are leading from.

Most of these activities are for adults or high school youth.

***We did not include the “power walk/privilege walk” activity in this list. Read why here: <https://medium.com/@MegB/why-i-dont-won-t-facilitate-privilege-walks-anymore-and-what-i-do-instead-380c95490e10>

Privilege for Sale Activity:

<https://racismnoway.com.au/about-racism/understanding-racism/privilege-for-sale-activity/>

The Power House Activity:

<https://theavarnagroup.com/resources/the-power-house-activity/>

A Toolkit for Exploring Power and Privilege:

<https://ccdi.ca/media/1588/toolkit-2-exploring-my-power-and-privilege.pdf>

Diversity Toolkit:

<https://www.iml.org/file.cfm?key=20641>

Privilege and Compassion:

https://nse.web.baylor.edu/sites/g/files/ecbvkj811/files/2023-01/unpacking_the_knapsack.pdf

VIDEOS FOR LEARNING AND CONVERSATION:

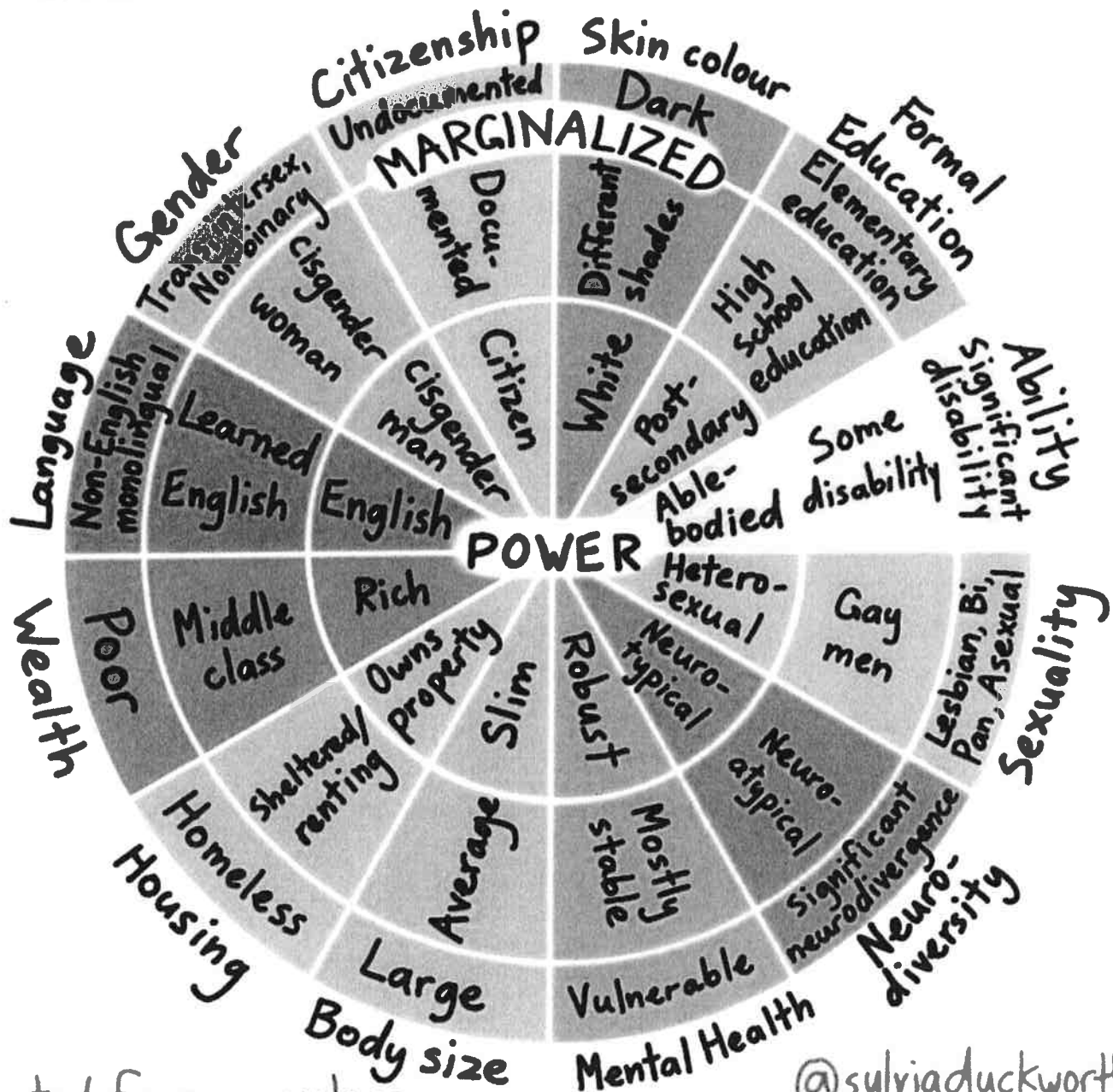
What is Privilege: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5gZ3PHYU3U>

The Privilege Walk (this is a good way to incorporate this activity without doing it if you really want to use the privilege walk): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGO>

Privilege Explained: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gUO3yN8eFg>

For more ideas, resources, or facilitators, reach out to Gretchen at gretchen@nebraskasynod.org or 404-583-4591

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

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PRIVILEGE WHEEL

In the United States, demographic characteristics, while not the *only* indicators/drivers of privilege, are inextricably linked with privilege. Privilege allows you to exert power—and, in the immortal words of Spider-Man’s Uncle Ben, “With great power comes great responsibility.” So where are your demographic privilege points? And what are you doing with them?

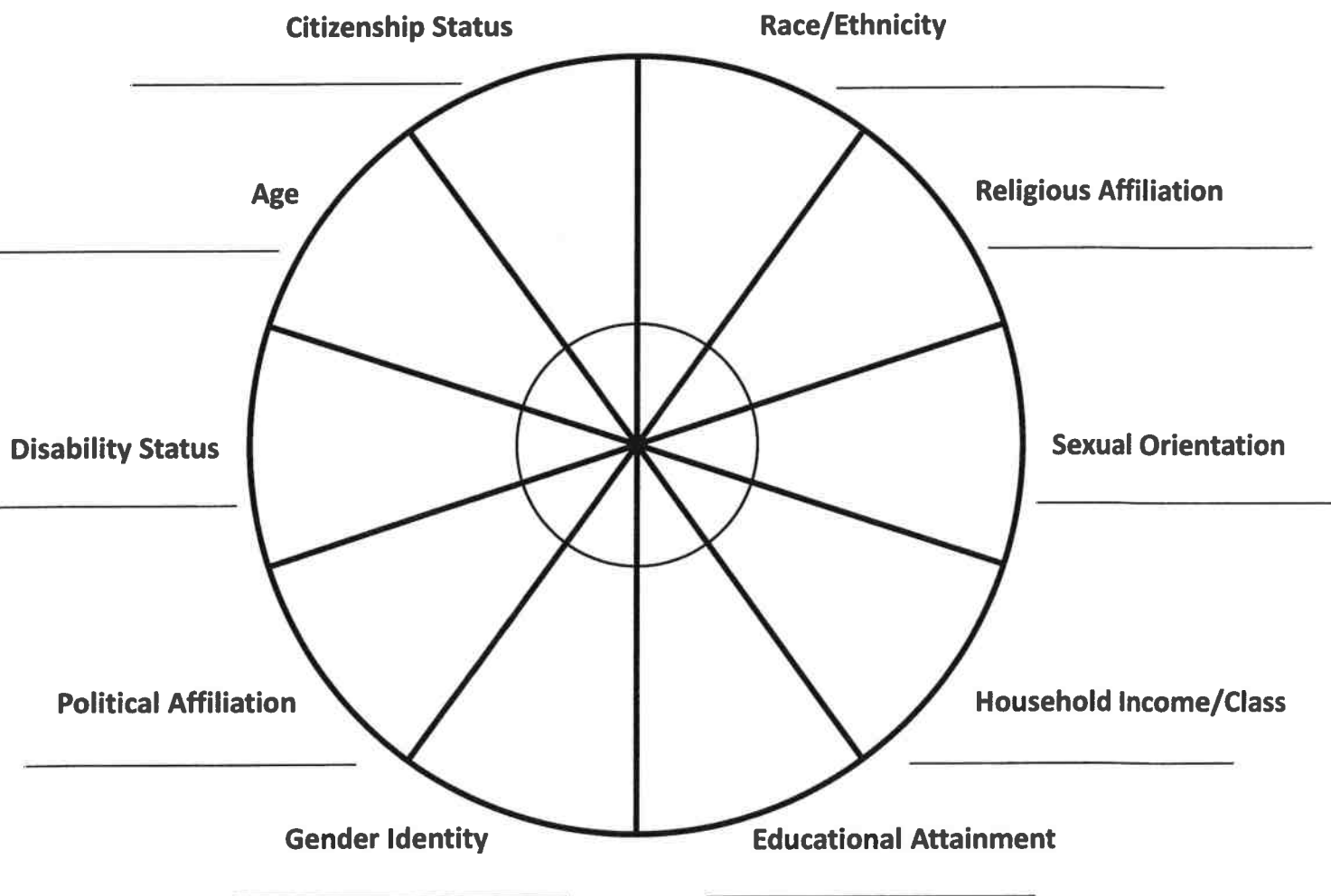
(1) Review the terminology and definitions (other side of paper), and then write on the blank line below each demographic category in the Privilege Wheel what group you think is accorded the most privilege in your community. For example, in most (but not all) communities in the United States, white people have the most privilege when it comes to Race/Ethnicity, so you would write “White.”

(2) In the outer circle, color in the portion of the wedges where your demographics align with the most privileged group and place a star next to categories where you think the reality is complicated.

(3) In the inner circle, for each wedge you colored in, reflect on how your privilege in this area manifests for you. Color that smaller corresponding wedge:

- *Green* if you have mostly used that privilege in ways that have positively impacted the community.
- *Yellow* if your privilege in that area has largely had a neutral impact on the community.
- *Red* if you have mostly used that privilege in ways that have negatively impacted the community.
- Leave it *white* if you don’t know and/or haven’t thought about it.

This worksheet is yours alone, and you won’t be asked to share or show it, so **please be honest in your responses**.



DEFINITIONS

Bias – a conscious or unconscious preference that inhibits a person's capacity for impartial judgment.

Privilege – Privilege operates on a personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional level and gives advantages, access, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of marginalized groups. Privilege is almost never an earned state; it is commonly invisible to/taken for granted by those who have it, and is conferred based on those whose characteristics match the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent.

Race/Ethnicity – a social and artificial construct with exceeding social, economic, and political significance. Race is often associated with physical characteristics like skin color, hair type, eye shape, eye color, lip shape, etc. Ethnicity refers to a group or people of the same nationality or land of origin who share a distinct and/or common culture. Some examples: white, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Arab, Native American.

Religious Affiliation – A religion is an institutionalized or personal system of beliefs and practices related to the divine. Religious affiliation specifically refers to which system or institution one most aligns with, and can include certain non/anti-religious answers including "atheist" (does not believe in the divine) and "agnostic" (does not have an opinion as to the nature of the divine). Some examples: Catholic, Protestant, Christian, Jewish, Muslim/Islamic, agnostic, atheist, Buddhist, spiritual.

Sexual Orientation – An individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to another individual. A person's sexual orientation is separate from that person's gender identity. Some examples: straight, gay, bisexual, asexual, queer, same-sex attracted.

Household Income (HHI)/Class – Household income is the total annual revenue of everyone in one household unit. Class is a relative social ranking or category based on income, standing financial resources, education, status, and/or power. While household income is strictly about annual revenue, class categories are usually associated with levels of access to resources including money, contacts, and education. Some examples: \$100,000+ HHI, middle class, upper class, \$0-\$18,000 HHI.

Educational Attainment – Education attainment is the highest level of formal education a person has achieved. Some examples: high school, some college, college (Bachelor's), Master's, and Doctorate or terminal degree.

Gender Identity – Gender identity refers to socially-constructed roles, behavior, activities, and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender identity is also an individual's self-conception, as distinguished from biological sex, which is based solely on physical characteristics. In addition to man/male, woman/female, and non-binary (among other options), there is also the potential qualifier of "transgender," meaning one's gender identity does not match one's assigned biological sex, and "cisgender," which means one's gender identity does match one's assigned biological sex. "Gender nonconforming" or "gender fluid" is another identifier, used to indicate that one doesn't adhere to stereotypical understandings of gender expression or roles.

Political Affiliation – Political affiliation is one's association with a political party or faction, and that party or faction's ideals. It can be qualified within the party/faction, as in "moderate Democrat," or "left-leaning Republican." Some examples: Democrat, Republican, Green, Libertarian, with modifiers such as "conservative," "liberal," "moderate."

Disability Status – Disability is a term used to define factors that limit significant life activities or experiences considered to be typical among individuals who do not experience a disability. Such restrictions may be physical or mental, and may be permanent or temporary. Some examples of disability: vision/hearing impairment, mobility impairment, mental disorder, autism, etc.

Age – Age refers to how long a person has been alive. In the United States, certain ages (and age groups) are associated with different roles, levels of power and influence, and rights. Significant ages include 18 (ability to vote, "adulthood"), 21 (ability to legally drink alcohol), and 62 (current age to receive Social Security, "retire").

Citizenship Status – Citizenship status refers to whether one holds citizenship status, temporary or permanent residency, or legal or illegal non-citizenship in the United States. Citizenship and certain immigration statuses bring with them a host of protections and privileges.

THE POWER HOUSE ACTIVITY

This is one way to explore privilege and power structures that show up on your trip in a way that doesn't create feelings of resentment and empowers people to be allies.

Say: "In any group we have systems of power—dominant and non-dominant groups. We sometimes call these power structures "isms." For example, in sexism, the dominant group is men and the non-dominant group is women. Let's explore the power structures present in our environment here by looking at a bunch of different dimensions of diversity and identifying the dominant and non-dominant groups in each dimension."

Now draw the framework of the image below and have the group volunteer the information for each row. Add rows for any additional dimension of diversity that you think is relevant in your group (for example, if there are conflicts related to geographic origin add a row)

THE POWER HOUSE			
Dimension of Diversity	"Ism"	Dominant Group	Non-dominant group
Gender	Sexism	Men, gender conforming	Women, non-gender conforming
Race	Racism	Caucasian/White American	People of color
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexism	Heterosexuals	Homosexual, LGBTQ
Religion	Religious oppression	Christian faiths	Non-Christian faiths (particularly Muslim)
Ability	Ableism	Able-bodied people	People who are differently abled or disabled
Age	Ageism	Younger (on participant courses)	Older (30+)
Education	Elitism	Formally educated	Informally educated
National Origin	Ethnocentrism	U.S./Americans	Non-US/American

Once you have a full list up, ask folks to go through and visually identify for themselves whether they belong to the dominant or non-dominant group in each of these structures.

Now ask: "Raise your hand if you are in a dominant group in at least one category? Ok, those of you who are in a dominant group, what can you do about the power structure that makes you dominant?" **Conclude:** "Those who are in dominant groups are in the best position to be effective allies. What is an ally? It's someone who can stand up for someone else who either cannot or will not stand up for themselves. As the person with power and privilege, you are in the best position to influence change. And as the person who isn't directly affected by the behavior, you are more grounded and able to respond effectively."

Explore how this plays out in the following situation: you have a participant group where the boys are making comments that are sexist. In situation one, the female instructor is the only one to bring the issue up over and over. What do you think happens? She gets pigeonholed as the “whiny” woman who always complains, and loses credibility. Now in situation two, the whole instructor team, including two men and one woman, speaks out against these statements. Now the male participants see male role models telling them that what they are doing is unacceptable. The likelihood of creating change is much better when there are allies.

Being an ally in a dominant group helps you dismantle these power systems by transferring some of your power and privilege to the non-dominant group. If enough folks in the dominant groups are allies, then the entire system can hopefully one day be dismantled.

How to be a better ally:

1. Ask questions, and urge reflection (“Where did you get that information?” “What do you mean by that?” “Have you ever thought of it this way?” “I hear what you’re saying, but let me give you my thoughts on that.” “I’m really shocked by that statement. I need to think about that” “OUCH!” or “Excuse me?”)
2. Avoid humiliation. Don’t ask people to admit wrongdoing.
3. Educate yourself on communities outside your own.
4. Welcome people outside the “norm” of your community.
5. Examine your own biases.
6. Seek out experiences that make you feel like an outsider so you can develop empathy.
7. Raise issues and concerns within your sphere of influence.
8. Seek help! You’re not alone.

