

Privilege & Privilege Equity Actions Commitments

Adapted from the work of Kristin Lensen Consulting, 2014.

An option for Privilege Activities on Day 3 from 11:00 - 4:00 (includes 1-hour lunch)

Time needed: 3 to 4 hours

Purpose: Participants' increase their understanding of systemic advantage/privilege by

- Looking to each other to discover and rediscover what they know about privilege
- Looking to each other to learn and relearn ways they can use their privilege(s) to achieve equity

Desired Outcomes: At the end of this section, participants have

- Developed lists of privilege statements in four different areas
- Identified and announced two ways they will use their privilege to achieve equity
- Engaged in conversation about privilege - what it is and how to use it

Process: Privilege Framing, Privilege Rounds, Shared Learning, Privilege Equity Actions & Commitment

Preparation:

Four chart pads & stands. Place in four 'corners' around the participant circle.

1. White Privilege
2. Male Privilege
3. Heterosexual Privilege
4. Fourth Privilege - select area pertinent to particular group
5. Fifth Privilege - select fifth area to use for Privilege Framing (works well if facilitator presenting this privilege is a member of this privileged group and the examples are true for them).

For Privilege Rounds:

- Title each chart with one of the four areas of privilege. Leave rest of chart blank
- Minimum of 3 additional blank pages on each chart pad needed for the Privilege Rounds.
- For White, Male, and Heterosexual Privilege, select 5-6 cards from WMFDP card decks and place cards with corresponding chart (e.g., White Privilege cards go with White Privilege chart stand).

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| White Privilege | Male Privilege | Heterosexual Privilege | [Fourth] Privilege |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|

For Privilege Framing:

- Write one example of the Fifth Privilege on top-half of each of the four charts resulting in four different examples of the Fifth Privilege being illustrated.
- On bottom-half of charts, write one way a person with the Fifth Privilege could use the specific privilege that is noted right above to achieve equity for people who do not share that privilege (Privileged Equity Actions).
- Tape bottom-half of charts up so that the Privileged Equity Actions (PEA) are covered and only the Privilege Statements are displayed. PEAs will be revealed after the Privilege Rounds and Shared Learning activities have been completed.

Privilege Framing Example:

| Ability Privilege | Ability Privilege | Ability Privilege | Ability Privilege |
|---|--|---|--|
| When I buy tickets to a movie, play or concert, I rarely think about whether I will be able to sit with my family/ friends. | When I leave my house, I rarely think about whether I will be able to walk on the sidewalk without obstructions. | When I go to an event, I rarely think about whether I will experience communication difficulties. | As a currently healthy person, I don't have to think about my daily pain level when planning or attending events and activities. |
| As a person with ability privilege, I will call ahead and ask how many theatre seats are provided next to spaces for wheelchairs. If only one or two, I will ask for more seating options to be provided so that people who use wheelchairs know they are welcomed and desired patrons. | As a person with ability privilege, when I come across cars blocking the sidewalk, I will leave a note on car not to block sidewalk as it makes accessibility difficult and dangerous for people with visual or mobility disabilities. | As a facilitator with ability privilege, I will ask clients to consider what interpretation services might be needed and for services to be readily provided. If a "public-at-large" meeting, I will request client provides interpretation services based on anticipated demographics. | As a facilitator with ability privilege, I will consider 'health factors' in meeting design and become more adept at adjusting 'in-the moment' to meet different ability factors (e.g., start and end times, processes, room set-up, lighting, breaks, pace) |

[10m] Privilege Framing

Systemic advantage/privilege is not a topic we discuss widely in our workplaces yet in many organizations, privilege of varying degrees, is in evidence.

Ask a volunteer to read from their workbook the definition of Systemic Advantage on p. 10.

“Systemic advantage is the unspoken, unacknowledged and often invisible benefits that are available to a person through no action of their own. These benefits appear to those who have them to be available to any person who wants them. Systemic advantage is often more apparent to those who don't experience it.”

Systemic advantage/privilege are the things we don't have to think about based on our group membership in social dominant groups. Facilitator walks around to each one of the four charts and presents the Fifth Privilege examples.

04.12.16

We are not asking you to give up your privilege, instead we are asking you to explore and recognize your areas of privilege and learn how to use it to achieve equity.

We will not look at all the types of privileges that play out in society or within our workplaces everyday. Today we will explore four areas of systemic advantage/privilege - male, white, heterosexual and [fourth area]. We will spend some time to reflect on how any system of privilege can become systemic advantage over time, especially when the accumulation of privilege provides many forms of benefit to some groups and not others. After that, we will take time to identify actions we can take to use our privilege to achieve equity.

[60-80m] Privilege Rounds

Provide overview of Privilege Rounds process. Spread charts out to four corners of the room.

Form four groups with participants starting out in privileged positions:

- Ask participants to go a privilege chart in which they are members of the social dominant group (e.g., males go to Male Privilege, whites go to White Privilege). Want to have groups somewhat balanced in number so if there is a large imbalance, ask for volunteers to move to another chart in which they are also a member of that privileged group.
- Each group will be visiting the four privilege areas. Participants remain in the same groups for all four rounds. For ease, decide to go clockwise or counter clockwise and stick with that for all rounds. Facilitator keeps track of time and announces when it is time for groups to move to the next chart. It is the group's responsibility to make sure everyone in the group is heard and able to make a contribution.
- Round 1, 20-25m
Round 2, 15-20m
Round 3, 10-15m
Round 4, 10-15m
Moving between rounds, 5m total

Task: Develop list of privilege statements.

- Not about consensus - statements do not need to be true for everyone in your group. Can refer to paradox of individual and group. We are focusing on the group level - what tends to be true for people who have membership in a particular social dominant group.
- Chart legibly so the groups following can read your list. If you are having trouble getting started, we've placed a few privilege statement cards by the chart. You are welcome to use these statements to your lists. As you visit each chart, look at what groups have written before you and continue to add to the list.
- Facilitators do not participate. Groups are self-monitored and do their own scribing.

NOTE: If an individual(s) express they are not a member of the social dominant group of the four groups presented (e.g., White, Male, Heterosexual, Class) - work with them to determine if there is a group that they can identify with as a dominant member that has systemic privilege (e.g., Ability - even if this one was used as the example in the opening, Cisgender, Christian) and make a 5th group.) Announce the added on area and ask if there are others who are dominant group members for this area that would be willing to start out in this group. Robin Gerald and Kristin Lensen had this happen. In response, they changed the Round times to 15m for the first round, 10m for the

next four rounds, 5m total to move between groups, 60m total and it worked well. Five areas of privilege were explored with 40-50 statements created for each area!

[60m] Lunch

- Facilitators hang groups' privilege lists on wall for upcoming gallery walk.
- Return Fifth Privilege charts to front of each chart. Will be revealing bottom half (Privileged Equity Actions) after Shared Learning section.

[15m] Energizer (optional)

[45-65m] Shared Learning

- [10m] Gallery walk in silence
- [10m] Journal: What's standing out for me right now? What am I learning and relearning about myself? What am I learning and relearning about privilege?
- [20m] [optional] Go back to Privilege Round Groups: What's standing out for me right now? What am I learning and relearning about myself? What am I learning and relearning about privilege?
- [25m] Whole group: What's standing out for me right now? What am I learning and relearning about myself? What am I learning and relearning about privilege?

[50-60m] Privilege Equity Actions Commitment

[15m] Individual reflection - Journal.

- As we said earlier, we are not wanting or expecting anyone to give up their privilege, instead we are asking you to recognize it and use it to promote and achieve equity in your organization, client services, communities or circles of influence important to you. So now lets take a look at how one can use their privilege to achieve equity for others.
- Present the four different Privilege Equity Actions charted on the bottom half of the Fifth Privilege charts. (See Ability Privilege Equity Actions in Privilege Framing) examples. While we focused on white, male, heterosexual, [fourth] and [fifth] privileges, you are not limited to these areas for identifying action steps. (Can mention a couple of other areas of privilege that seem pertinent to this particular group based on conversations up to this time). What we do ask is that you identify actions you can take from a privileged group identity to promote equity for others who don't share in that privilege.
- Suggest participants write down date, time, and title "Privilege Equity Actions". Also ask participants to start their action statements by naming the privilege from which they are acting, similar to the examples facilitator just presented, "As a person with ability privilege, I will....". Through the act of doing this, we become more practiced at talking about privilege, calling privilege to others attention, and illustrating the role dominant social group members have in achieving equity.

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[15-20m] Pairs (group of three if needed). Pair up with someone and share the actions you have identified. Offer suggestions to each other of other possible actions for those particular areas of privilege. Make note in your journals of the different ways so you can refer back to them after the lab.

[25m] Whole group. Facilitators participate.

- Ask people to stand in a circle (or “move” into a circle if there are participants who use wheelchairs). Share one way you will commit to using your privilege by making a Privilege Equity Action statement that you are willing to share with this group. As you make your statement, step into the circle (or move into the circle) as you speak, then take a step back when you are done. So starting with myself (facilitator starts first and takes a step forward), “As a heterosexual, I will encourage organizations I work with to stop contracting with businesses who will not hire or serve gays, lesbians, and bisexuals and make my requests public” (facilitator takes a step back). Then go to the right or left going around the circle in order.
- After everyone has had a turn, go around the circle again asking participants to share another Privilege Equity Action statement. This time the facilitator can use an example that is true for themselves illustrating the intersectionality of privilege, “As a person with socioeconomic and ability privilege, I will offer my time and money to create more seating options for people who use wheelchairs at my neighborhood theatre.” (It was our experience that participants illustrated intersectionality - “as a white heterosexual male” - in the first round of sharing their Privilege Equity Action statements).
- In closing, highlight number of actions that were just declared and the potential for meaningful change as a result of the collective actions of this group.
- Invite participants between now and the start of tomorrow’s session to write down one or two of their Privilege Equity Action commitments on the wall journal - one, as way to cement their commitment to take action; two, to give other participants ideas of another way they can use their privilege and the info will be captured in the lab notes; and three, some of the Privilege Equity Action commitments will be captured in the lab notes. Name optional.

Notes:

Nancy Brown, Steve Proudman, and Kristin Lensen used this process for an internal lab in October 2015 with positive results. Factors considered:

- Due to ongoing “debate” behavior from several outspoken group members, having the group develop their own privilege lists from the get go in self-monitored small groups proved beneficial. 1) It uncovered that individually and collectively the group knew a lot about privilege - so in spite of all their “negating” and “denial” verbal behavior, they knew something was going on. 2) Because the group developed their own lists, the “negating” behavior was reduced. 3) The process of developing their own privilege lists provided another avenue for engaging in difficult conversations.
- This was a very white group with some particularly dominating white male personalities. We thought having participants start off in a group in which they were a member of the social dominant or privileged group was important because it would 1) reduce the “negating” of non-dominant members experience and input, 2) highlight the concept that dominant groups can do good work on their own without leaning on non-dominant group members to teach them, and 3) surface early on that we all have privilege.
- Due to a high need for “action” continuously expressed by participants (awareness is good but how does that translate to action), we thought the Privilege Equity Actions (PEA) piece would help meet

that need, as well as, put into practice the concept of using one's privilege honorably to achieve equity.

- While we did not think about this beforehand, the flow of conducting Privilege Rounds and keeping the groups the same throughout helped highlight 1) we all have some type of systemic advantage and privilege, and 2) the power and privilege that comes with the accrual and intersectionality of privileges.
- It was inspiring and humbling to see the breadth and depth of the group's privilege lists and to hear the breadth and depth of participants' Privilege Equity Actions & Commitments. We learned much from them.

Robin Gerald, Tim McNichol, and Kristin Lensen used this process for an internal lab in January 2016. The four areas of privilege the groups worked on were White, Male, Heterosexual, and Christian with Ability being used for Privilege Framing. The examples provided on cards for Christian privilege were:

- When swearing an oath in court, you will place your hand on a religious scripture pertaining to your faith.
- You will not be penalized (socially or otherwise) for not knowing other people's religious customs.
- It is easy for you to find your faith depicted in television, movies, books, and other media.
- You can worship freely without fear of violence or threats.
- Holidays celebrating your faith are so widely supported you can often forget they are limited to your faith - e.g., wishing someone a "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Easter" without considering their faith.

Chad Simmons, Tim McNichol, and Kristin Lensen used this process for an internal lab in February 2016. The four areas of privilege the groups worked on were White, Male, Heterosexual, and Christian with Ability being used for Privilege Framing.