

Privilege walk exercise

Step 1. Brief the group about the background

Sometimes we don't notice privileges because they're so ingrained in our culture. Understanding and acknowledging privileges is key to understanding why and how we react and perceive other people. In order to objectively reflect on our interactions we need to focus on the intersectionality of privilege – i.e. the fact that all of us represent and experience a range of identities and belong to many different groups.

Step 2.

Ask participants to stand in a line at one end of the space. Explain that you will read a series of statements aloud.

Step 3.

Instruct participants to take one step forward if a statement applies to them. Tell your participants that if they're uncomfortable admitting that a certain statement applies to them, then they can simply wait for the next statement. No one has to move.

Step 4.

- Read each of the following statements aloud, and pause between each one to allow participants to take the steps that might pertain to them.
- If English or Finnish is your first language, take one step forward.
- If one or both of your parents have a university degree, take one step forward.
- If you can find Band-Aids at mainstream stores designed to blend in with or match your skin tone, take one step forward.
- If you have worked with people you felt were like yourself, take one step forward
- If you have ever been able to play a significant role in a project or activity because of a talent you gained previously, take one step forward.
- If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence, take one step forward.
- If you have a physically visible disability, take one step back.
- If you were ever discouraged from an activity because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to fit in more, take one step back.
- If you have ever been profiled by someone else using stereotypes, take one step back.
- If you feel good about how your identities are portrayed by the media, take one step forward.
- If you have public wide-covering health insurance take one step forward.
- If you have ever been spoken over because you could not articulate your thoughts fast enough, take one step back.
- If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step back.
- If you are never asked to speak on behalf of a group of people who share an identity with you, take one step forward.
- If you can make mistakes and not have people attribute your behavior to flaws in your racial or gender group, take one step forward.

- If you have a degree in higher education, take one step forward.
- If you have more than fifty books in your household, take one step forward.
- If your parents told you that you can be anything you want to be, take one step forward.

Step 5.

After you've read the statements aloud, ask the participants to look around at where people are in the room. Then ask everyone to go to their seats & sit down.

Step 6.

Transition to the reflection phase of the exercise by explaining that both privilege and marginalization are part of who we are.

You can ask questions such as:

- What did you feel like being in the front of the group? In the back? In the middle?
- What were some factors influencing your privilege that you have never thought of before?
- If you found yourself getting farther and farther away from someone, how did you feel in that moment?
- What statement made you think most?
- If you could add a statement, what would it be?
- What do you wish people knew about one of the identities, situations, or disadvantages that caused you to take a step back?