

Privilege for Sale

👤 Small Group 🕒 101 🔒 Low Trust ⌚ 20 mins 📁 Sexuality

⚙️ Necessary supplies

- Participant handout sheet
- One piece of scrap paper

🚩 Goals & objectives

- To acknowledge and investigate privilege. Most commonly people see this as heterosexual privilege but this can be used to explore all types including economic privilege, racial privilege, interracial relationships, cisgender privilege and more.
- To expose that there are many “rights” not extended to the queer community and that many of these privileges are not limited to political or legal ones but include social and interpersonal privilege as well.
- To give participants an opportunity to see what privileges and rights they hold most valuable.
- Highlight the many ways that heterosexism, homophobia, gender normativity and larger systems of oppression are institutionalized throughout our culture and systems.
- To get people interacting with each other and sharing a little more personally about themselves.

☰ Step-by-step walk through

1. Break the group up into smaller groups, no more than 4 people, ideally 3 is perfect.
2. Explain to the groups how the activity will work.
3. Example: “I will be passing out a sheet with a list of privileges on it. For the purposes of this activity we all are going to exist in a world without these privileges. You and your group are going to have to buy specific privileges from me. You will each receive money to buy the privileges and each one costs \$100. As a group you must decide which privileges to buy. Then we will come back together as a big group and share and discuss!”
4. Pass out the sheets.
5. Write down dollar amounts for the different groups on scrap paper. Vary the amounts given to each group from \$100 - \$800 dollars. Pass out the piece of paper to each group indicating the amount of money they have.
6. Allow each group 5-8 minutes to discuss and decide which privileges they would like to buy
7. Discuss each group's choices together as a large group.
8. Debrief the activity as a whole with the group.



Guiding questions

What was this activity like?

How did this activity make you feel?

- For some people this is a really new experience because they've never thought of privilege in this way, or in a list form like this.

Was it difficult to pick out the privileges?

This question will generally be met by a few different people talking all at once. If someone says something definitive you can speak directly to that person and ask them to expand on that.

- There are a lot of different types of privileges to choose from - and our group really didn't know exactly what to prioritize. We had to choose between choosing privileges about family, legal, ones regarding money, and social privileges
- Within the group there can be people who feel very strongly in different directions.
- There are a lot of privileges and only a few that your group got to choose.

What on this list surprised you?

- Surprised by the number of different types of privileges.
- I had never thought of THIS privilege before, I had never thought of it as a privilege.
- I didn't realize how many different privileges they were, a lot of times we only discuss privileges that are legal - like marriage - and we forget about all of the day-to-day privileges that come along with being straight.

Are there any items that you would like to discuss more as a group or found particularly interesting?

If no one responds here - you as a facilitator - can remark on a privilege that you found surprising when reading the list of you would like to talk about more.

Example: "So when I read this list for the first time I had never really thought about why it is a privilege to be able to talk about your relationship openly with others. But I realized that if I wasn't able to discuss my relationship with others, I would experience being in my relationship differently... and I found that really interesting to think about."

What are some other identities or groups that may experience a loss or lack of some of these privileges?



Did anyone else have items they were struck by?/Any items you don't quite understand?

- So in the past I've had others ask me "What would it mean not having your doctor understand your sexuality?" Well I've had the experience where doctor's don't understand why I'm not on birth control, without ever asking who my partner is and who I am sexually active with.

What have you learned from this activity?

- Learned that privilege comes in many different forms - social, political, legal, and cultural.
- That money can in many ways "buy" privilege. And that money could mean capital like actual dollar bills that mean you don't have to worry about particular privileges, or it could mean cultural capital in the sense that you come from a particular location or background that begets a certain amount of cultural or social privileges.

Is there anything you would like to add we haven't talked about?

I usually just use this as a time to allow people to add any thoughts they haven't yet, or you can add your own anecdotes that haven't really fit in anywhere else in the conversation - or you can just use it as a segue into a closing.

Wrap-up

Use this wrap up to hit any points above that you didn't hit home with your participants.

"There are a wide variety of privileges that those who are in straight relationships or those who we presume to be because they are in what appears to be a male/female or man/woman relationships are endowed with in this society. Some are personal, social, political or even legal. Remember that access to privilege - having more money in this case - can at times beget more privilege - and that having money sometimes is a really curtail thing. It is also important to consider all the different groups that gain or loose these privileges in our society.

Notes

This activity can be quite heavy depending on the group and particularly for groups with a large number of queer students. It may not be bad to point out (to any group) how different this activity feels when you are a queer-identified individual.

This activity will really hit home for some people. Give people time to debrief. It is also a really great activity to refer back to later in the training because a lot of people really connect with this activity and can use it to understand other impacts of bias or prejudice or how additional levels and layers of privilege would interact.

Make it your own

You can modify this list to talk about what ever types of privileges you'd like to highlight, like [cisgender privilege](#), [male privilege](#), [christian privilege](#), or [White privilege](#).



Privileges for Sale

Please look at the following list of privileges; each privilege costs \$100 to purchase. As a group, please purchase as many privileges as your money allows.

1. Having a recognized marriage (in name only).*
2. Having other people celebrate your marriage.
3. Paid leave from your job when grieving the death of your partner.
4. Inheriting from your partner/lover/companion automatically after their death.
5. Having multiple positive TV role models.
6. Sharing health insurance with your partner.
7. Being able to find role models of the same sexual orientation.
8. Being able to see your partner immediately if in an accident or emergency.
9. Not being subjected to scrutiny in your job and not being able to be promoted without your sexuality being questioned
10. Adopting your children.
11. Filing joint tax returns.
12. Able to obtain child custody.
13. Kissing/hugging/being affectionate in public without threat or punishment.
14. Freely being able to discuss your relationship with others.
15. Being able to discuss and have access to multiple family planning options.
16. Not questioning normalcy both sexually and culturally.
17. Reading books or seeing movies about a relationship you wish you could have.
18. Receiving discounted home-owner insurance rates with your recognized partner.
19. Raising children without worrying about state intervention.
20. Having others comfort you when a relationship ends.
21. Being a foster parent.
22. Being employed as a pre-school or elementary school teacher without people assuming you will "corrupt" the children.
23. Dating the person you desired in your teens.
24. Raising children without worrying about people rejecting your children because of your sexual preference.
25. Living openly with your partner.
26. Receiving validation from your religious community.
27. Being accepted by your neighbors, colleagues, and new friends..
28. Being able to go to a doctor visit and have him or her understand your sexual orientation.
29. Not having to testify against your partner in a court of law
30. Having people correctly assume your sexuality.
31. Sponsoring your partner for citizenship.
32. Being open and having your partner accepted by your family.

