

Privilege for Sale⁽⁺⁾

Large Group 201 Medium Trust 20 mins

Necessary supplies

- Participant handout sheet
- One piece of scrap paper
- (optional) Pens/pencils

Goals & objectives

- To provide an opportunity for participants to empathetically connect and reflect on the experience of having (or not having) privilege
- 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 explore how privilege is not only a legal construct but also social, religious, economical, etc.

Framing

- In this activity you will take on the identity of person from a marginalized identity group. In other words, you will not have many of the privileges that you have, and possibly don't even know about, in your everyday life.

Step-by-step walk through

1. Break the group up into small groups, no more than 4 people, ideally.
2. Explain the directions to participants and pass out participant sheets.
“As you may notice on your participant sheets you have a list of privileges. As I mentioned a moment ago for the purposes of this activity none of you have any of these privileges. I have all of the privileges, and you as a group must buy them back from me. Each privilege costs \$100 and I am going to come around in a moment and give an amount of money to each group. That number is the amount of money that you *as a group* have to spend, so you must talk together and decide what privileges you'd like to buy. I'm going to give you just over 5 minutes to do this and then we will come back together as a big group and share and discuss!”
3. Check to see if the group has any questions on the directions.
4. Write down dollar amounts for the different groups on scrap paper. Vary the amounts given to each group from \$100 - \$1000 dollars. Pass out a piece of paper to each group indicating the amount of money they have.
5. Allow each group 5-8 minutes to discuss and decide which privileges they would like to buy

6. Discuss each group's choices together as a large group.
7. Debrief the activity as a whole with the group.

Debrief questions (& sample prompts)

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.
- It can sometimes be a deeply triggering or frustrating activity because perhaps you don't experience a lot of these privileges and having to face that with others witnessing it can be very hard.
- For others it can be deeply moving/emotional because they've never thought of all the privilege that they do have before.

Was it difficult to pick out the privileges?

- 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. This can be based on past lived experience which can trigger emotions.
- There are a lot of privileges and only a few that your group got to choose.

What on this list surprised you?

- 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.

Why do you think this activity is called "Privilege for Sale" instead of "Cisgender Privilege for Sale?"

- While some of these privileges may apply to sexuality or gender they may also relate to race, class, ability, or even religion. We are all likely approaching it from a lens of gender and sexuality because that's what we've been focused on today but a lot of different marginalized experiences/identities apply to this list.

Why do you think we choose money? We could have easily said that each privilege was worth a token and you have 5 tokens, what does money represent?

- When you have more money you can actually buy privileges, you can move to new locations where some of the social privileges may be more easily accessed or you can hire a lawyer to manage adoption paperwork for instance.
- Money is a form of privilege. When you have money you may not be as concerned that you could lose your job or may be rejected from housing.
- We take money very seriously.

What was it like when you realized different groups had different amounts of money?

- Sometimes you can think that you're really hard up, that you only have \$500 until you realize that someone was less privileged than you and then all of a sudden the \$500 feels differently.
- It can create animosity between groups even though the groups were simply assigned the money and it was really the facilitators who should be receiving the animosity.

What have you learned from this activity?

Wrap-up

- Use this wrap up to hit any points above that you didn't hit home with your participants that you feel are particularly relevant and important for the group.

Notes

This activity will really hit home for some people. Give people time to debrief and be ready to validate any emotions that come up for the group. 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 whatever types of privileges you'd like to highlight, like [cisgender privilege](#), [male privilege](#), [christian privilege](#), or [White privilege](#).

Privilege for Sale

Each privilege costs \$100

1. Using public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest.
2. Being able to walk through the world and generally blend-in, not being constantly stared at because of your gender expression.
3. If you are offered a job, you don't have to educate others on how to process your paperwork.
4. Using public facilities such as gym locker rooms and store changing rooms without stares, fear, or anxiety.
5. Being able to receive medical care, including emergency medical care, without worrying that your gender will keep you from receiving appropriate treatment, or that all of your medical issues will be seen as a result of your gender.
6. Being able to feel like an affirmed and included member of the LGBTQ+ community.
7. Having multiple positive celebrity and/or TV role models who you personally identify with.
8. Being able to go shopping for clothes without hesitation or fear of being mocked, questions, or made uncomfortable.
9. Raising children without worrying about state intervention.
10. Being able to complete forms and paperwork with the information you feel most clearly communicates your identities.
11. Being able to feel unthreatened in your interactions with authority figures and police officers.
12. Having your gender identity recognized and validated by your family and extended family.
13. Having your gender identity recognized and validated by neighbors, colleagues, and new friends.
14. Being able to travel without worrying about your safety due to your gender expression, identity, or sexuality.
15. Kissing/hugging/being affectionate in public without discomfort, threat, or punishment.
16. Freely being able to discuss your relationship(s) with others.
17. Being a foster parent.
18. Having medical procedures that you deem essential covered by your insurance.
19. Having others legitimize your relationship(s) and comfort you when a relationship ends.
20. Being employed as a preschool or elementary school teacher without people assuming you will "corrupt" their children.
21. Receiving validation and acceptance from your religious or spiritual community.
22. Being able to go to a doctor visit and have the doctor understand your sexual orientation/gender identity and respond appropriately to questions regarding your sexual health.
23. Having new people assume and use your pronouns correctly.
24. Having legal documents that accurately represent who you are and how you identify.

