



MODULE 5: PRIVILEGE WALK ACTIVITY*

PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY:

The purpose of the Privilege Walk Activity is to learn to recognize how power and privilege can affect our lives even when we are not aware it is happening. The purpose is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to have an opportunity to identify both obstacles and benefits experienced in our life.

**NOTE: This is a very “high risk” activity that requires trust building and safety for participants; introducing this activity too early in the training or before building trust risks creating resentment and hurt that can inhibit further sharing and openness.*

SUPPLIES AND SPACE NEEDED:

- List of statements related to privilege or obstacles
 - Slide with instructions for the privilege walk
 - Space large enough for participants to form a straight line with an arm’s length between them and the person on their left; there should be space in front of the line to move forward 10 steps or behind to be able to move back 10 steps.
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DIRECTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY:

- 1) **Have participants form a straight line across the room about an arm’s length apart, leaving space in front and behind.**
- 2) **State:** Listen to the following statements, and follow the instructions given. For example, when I read “If you are a white male, take one step forward,” only white males will move and everyone else will stand still. Each step should be an average length step. No one is going to check up on you, so if you feel you qualify to take a step then do so, if not then you may stay where you are. You are the judge of what you should do.
- 3) **Read the statements one at a time allowing time for participants to take a step.**
- 4) **When all the statements have been read process the activity using the following questions:**
 - What is your “gut reaction” to where you find yourself at the end of this list of privileges?
 - Are you surprised at where you are? How does it feel to be in front? In the middle? In back? Did you come to any new realizations? If so, which one had the most impact?

PRIVILEGE WALK STATEMENTS

- If you are a white male take one step forward.
- If there have been times in your life when you skipped a meal because there was no food in the house take one step backward.
- If you have visible or invisible disabilities take one step backward.
- If you attended (grade) school with people you felt were like yourself take one step forward.
- If you grew up in an urban setting take one step backward.
- If your family had health insurance take one step forward.
- If your work holidays coincide with religious holidays that you celebrate take one step forward.
- If you feel good about how your identified culture is portrayed by the media take one step forward.
- If you have been the victim of physical violence based on your gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation take one step backward.
- If you have ever felt passed over for an employment position based on your gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation take one step backward.
- If you were born in the United States take one step forward.
- If English is your first language take one step forward.
- If you have been divorced or impacted by divorce take one step backward.
- If you came from a supportive family environment take one step forward.
- If you have completed high school take one step forward.
- If you were able to complete college take one step forward.
- If you are a citizen of the United States take one step forward.
- If you took out loans for your education take one step backward.
- If you attended private school take one step forward.
- If you have ever felt unsafe walking alone at night take one step backward.