Power and Privilege Activity Instructions

Age: High School (grades 9-12)
Objectives:
  • Understanding of privilege, oppression, and isms achieved
  • Exploration of students’ own privilege and identity
  • Exploration of meaningful allyship

Table of Contents
Power Flower Activity ................................................................. 2
Privileges for Sale Activity .......................................................... 4
How to be an Ally Without Causing Harm Handout .......................... 7
Power Flower Activity

Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Pencil crayons

Power flower for each student (provided in student package)

Instructions:

Some parts of your identity that are on the flower you might not want to talk about with others and that is okay; don’t feel you need to share things that you feel uncomfortable sharing.

Ask the students to take a look at their Power Flower. Explain that each petal represents a different aspect of their social identity. Go over each category to clarify and make sure everyone has an understanding of what all of the terms mean.

Tell the students on their own to colour/shade in each petal that matches their social identity. If they don’t match the identity then they can shade in the outer petals. (about 5 minutes)

Ask them to get into groups of 2 or 3. Put questions up on slide and ask them to discuss those questions in their small group (about 5 minutes)

Debrief:

Reconvene in larger group: Go through each petal and ask the students if they identified outside of the petal, what did they identify as? Go through the different categories and break down the areas of privilege and what this privilege looks like.

Explain that a lot of us experience privilege in certain areas of our lives, and not in others, and that it is important to remember that our experiences are unique to each individual. This is also where the idea of intersectionality (that you just discussed) comes into play – because some of us have some petals shaded in and others left blank, we each experience them differently depending on how our gender, race, religion, language or age are valued in our society.
POWER FLOWER

AGE: 30-50
GENDER IDENTITY: MALE
CITIZEN STATUS: CANADIAN CITIZEN
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: HETEROSEXUAL
EDUCATION: UNIVERSITY DEGREE
COLOUR OF SKIN: WHITE
LITERACY LEVEL: CAN READ/WRIT
FAMILY UNIT: 2 PARENTS
NO DISABILITY
Privileges for Sale Activity

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:**

Dollar amount card for each group
Privileges for Sale list (provided in student package)

**Instructions:**

Break the group up into smaller groups of 3-4 people

Explain to the groups how the activity will work: On this sheet you will find 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!

Provide each group with a dollar amount card (ranging from $100-$900)

Allow each group 5-8 minutes to discuss which privileges they would like to buy, they can mark on their sheet which ones they choose for the $ amount they have.

Discuss each group's choices together as a large group

**Debrief:**

What was this activity like/what did it make you feel?

Was it difficult to pick out which privileges to buy?

Which privileges surprised you or caught you off guard on this list? Why?

Are there any items that you would like to discuss more or that you 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.)
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Privileges for Sale Question list:

1. When I learn about our national heritage, I am shown that people of my colour made it what it is.
2. I am easily able to find role models of the same sexual orientation.
3. If I find myself in a legally dangerous situation, I can hire a lawyer to make sure my case is heard fairly.
4. I have expressions and everyday language reflect my sex (ex. A mailman; “all men are created equal”; mankind).
5. I am able to kiss/hug/be affectionate in public with my partner without threat or punishment.
6. I am able to choose bandages or pantyhose in “nude” or “flesh” colour and have them more or less match my skin.
7. I am freely able to discuss my relationship with others without fear of judgment.
8. I can walk around my neighbourhood at night without legitimate concern for my safety.
9. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
10. If I have a bad day or am in a bad mood, people aren’t going to blame it on my sex.
11. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
12. I can dress how I want and not worry that it will be used as a defense if I am raped.
13. As a young person, I am able to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities with friends of mine.
14. I am easily accepted by my neighbors, colleagues, and new friends.
15. Regardless of the season, I can count on being able to fall asleep in a room with a comfortable temperature.
16. I am able to go to a doctor visit and have them understand my sexual orientation.
17. If I wish to send my children to private schools, I have a variety of options.
18. People correctly assume my sexual orientation.
19. I can walk down a public street without the fear of sexual harassment.
20. I am able to be open and have my partner accepted by my family.
How to Be an Ally Without Causing Harm

1. **Listen.** Listen to the experiences of a diversity of marginalized people to better understand oppression.

2. **Stop thinking of ‘ally’ as a noun.** Ally is not a status or a title. Being an ally is an action.

3. **Ally is not a self-proclaimed identity.** Being an ally is not something we decide ourselves it is the choice of those we are allying ourselves with. Not everyone may accept you as an ally. Your actions will be what gains a group’s trust when they demonstrate support no matter what the circumstance not just when it’s easy.

4. **Allies don’t take breaks.** Those who are being oppressed do not get to take a break. Being privileged means that you have a choice to educate other people when they say racist, sexist, ableist things and as an ally it is your responsibility to engage in those discussions.

5. **Allies educate themselves constantly.** You need to be educated on the issues and history of whatever cause you ally yourself to. It is not the responsibility of those who are oppressed to teach you about their oppression.

6. **You can’t be an ally in isolation.** When you act alone, there is no one to be accountable for your actions. It is surface-level activism.

7. **Allies don’t need to be in the spotlight.** Allies turn the spotlight onto those whose voices are being ignored or who are marginalized. Being an ally is not about creating a platform for your own voice.

8. **Allies focus on those who share their identity.** Allies are responsible for engaging people who share their identity to participate in social justice issues. For example, regarding racism, white people should not engage people of colour in discussion about what is racist but rather engage other white people in the discussion. Men are responsible for engaging other men in conversations about masculinity and misogyny.

9. **When criticized or called out, allies listen, apologize, act accountably, and act differently going forward.** You will make mistakes along the way while pursuing social justice. You will say something offensive, you will ignore your privilege, you will be ignorant. Listening, apologizing and being accountable are not enough if you don’t learn from your mistakes moving forward.

10. **Allies never monopolize the emotional energy.** People who have been marginalized, discriminated and oppressed are emotionally exhausted enough without having to emotional support you for how bad you feel. Look to other allies for emotional support.
Jamie Utt, a writer for everydayfeminism.com, was inspired by Mia McKenzie’s “No More Allies” and put together this list of 10 ways to be a good ally.