How do I Identify the Privilege I Hold

What is Power & Privilege?

Power is defined as the ability to influence and make decisions that impact others (The Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-racism). It is ingrained in our systems that work to keep those who have power in power.

This power offers **privileges**, which are cultural, social, legal, and institutional unearned advantages based on membership in certain social groups. Those with privilege are given the title of the "dominant group", ostracizing those without access to these privileges as marginalized, invisible, othered, or abnormal. Sometimes privilege means that there is a difference in rights, but this is not always the case.

Discrimination and marginalization are imbedded into systems of oppression, which interlock to perpetuate

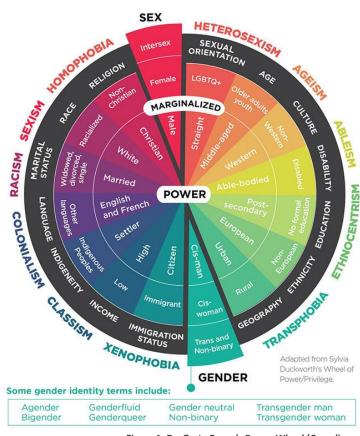


Figure 1: Dr. Greta Bauer's Power Wheel (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2021). Used under Fair Dealing.

inequities. Some examples of these systems include homophobia, racism, classism, and more.

The diagram to the right offers a visual representation of how these systems create inequities of power and privilege. This power wheel was created by Dr. Greta Bauer, a Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Western University. The closer parts of your identity are to the centre, the more power and privilege you might have. Take a moment to locate yourself on this wheel!

Intersectionality

When discussing systems of oppression, it is very important to discuss the concept of intersectionality. Coined by critical race theorist, Dr. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is a framework for understanding how different aspects of a person's social



and political identities, including race, sex, gender identity and expression, etc., can intersect in ways that produce different forms of discrimination and privilege within unjust social arrangements which sort categories of social identities into hierarchical relations. It is not the different parts of your identity themselves, but more so the interplays of those identities within these systems that create or deny access to power and privilege. Click the link to watch Kimberlé Crenshaw's TED talk about the Urgency of Intersectionality.

Take a Privilege Inventory

Use the checklist below to explore different ways you might experience privilege, even if you don't realize it. This is not a comprehensive list but a useful tool to start reflecting. To explore further, please visit the Office of EDI-R's Introduction to Equity workshop.

If my friend invites me somewhere, I don't have to worry if there will be bathrooms there that I can use.
When going shopping, I can easily find clothes that fit my size and shape.
Most of the religious and cultural holidays celebrated by my family are recognized with days off from work or school.
When someone is trying to describe me, they do not mention my race.
People do not make assumptions about my work ethic or intelligence based upon the size of my body.
People assume I was admitted to school or hired based upon my credentials, rather than my race or gender.
As a child, I could use the "flesh-colored" crayons or Band-Aids that matched the colour of my skin.
When I state an opinion I am passionate about, people tend to think I'm assertive, rather than aggressive.
I can be assured that assumptions about my mental capabilities will not be made based on my physical status.
I can choose the style of dress that I feel comfortable in and most reflects my identity, and I know that I will not be stared at in public.
When I am with others of my race, people do not think that we are segregating ourselves.
I can book an airline flight, go to a movie, ride in a car and not worry about whether there will be a seat that can accommodate me.
I can easily buy greeting cards that represent my relationship with my significant other.
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