

Privilege Walk

Activity

Timeline

60–90 minutes

Objective

The students will be able to understand the intricacies of privilege.

Materials

- Large open room/area (i.e., gymnasium)

Teacher Reference

- Instructions for Privilege Walk

Instructional Steps

1. Define and briefly discuss privilege, stereotypes, and prejudice.
2. Ask participants to stand shoulder to shoulder in a line across the room. At the site, participants can release their hands, but should be instructed to stand in a straight line without speaking.
3. Instruct participants to listen carefully to each sentence and to take the step required if the sentence applies to them.
4. Tell participants that there is a prize at the front of the site that everyone is competing for.
5. Read Instructions for Privilege Walk (Teacher Reference) to participants, pausing after each sentence to allow them to take steps as directed.
6. When all of the sentences have been read, debrief and reflect as a group.

Group Debrief

Ask participants to remain in their positions and to look at their position at the site and the positions of the other participants.

Ask participants to consider who among them would probably win the prize, and to consider the following reflective questions:

1. What happened?
2. How did this exercise make you feel?
3. What were your thoughts as you did this exercise?
4. What have you learned from this experience?
5. What can you do with this information in the future?

25. If you were paid less or treated unfairly because of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
26. If you were ever accused of cheating or lying because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
27. If you ever inherited money or property, take one step forward.
28. If you had to rely primarily on the school bus, take one step back.
29. If you had to rely primarily on a teacher/coach or friend's family for a ride home after extracurricular activities, take one step back.
30. If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
31. If you were ever afraid of violence because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
32. If you were generally able to avoid places that were dangerous, take one step forward.
33. If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step back.
34. If you were ever the victim of violence related to your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
35. If your parents grew up outside of the USA, take one step back.
36. If your parents grew up in a two-parent household, take one step forward.
37. If your parents told you could be anything you wanted to be, take one step forward.
38. If it was assumed from a young age that you would go to college, take one step forward.
39. If you have been followed in a store due to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
40. If your parents have a foreign accent, take one step back.
41. If no one in your immediate family has ever been addicted to drugs or alcohol, take one step forward.
42. If you went on regular family vacations, take one step forward.
43. If you don't have to cope with frequent catcalls because of your gender, take one step forward.
44. If you were expected to graduate from a four year college/university, take one step forward.
45. If at least one parent in your home has college experience, take one step forward (two parents, two steps forward).
46. If at least one of your parents graduated from a four year university, take one step forward (two parents, two steps forward).
47. If there is someone with a Master's degree in your home, take one step forward.
48. If there is someone with a Doctorate degree in your home, take one step forward.

Instructions for Privilege Walk

1. If your ancestors came to the USA not by choice, take one step back.
2. If your primary ethnic identity is American, take one step forward.
3. If you were ever called names because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
4. If you were ever ashamed or embarrassed of your clothes, house, car, etc., take one step back.
5. If your parents are professionals: doctors, lawyers, etc., take one step forward.
6. If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity, etc., take one step back.
7. If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step back.
8. If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.
9. If you went to school speaking a language primarily other than English, take one step back.
10. If there were more than 50 books in your house when you grew up, take one step forward.
11. If you were encouraged in your home to read during your childhood, take one step forward.
12. If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food when you were growing up, take one step back.
13. If you were taken to social activities including art galleries, operas, or plays by your parents, take one step forward.
14. If one of your parents was unemployed or laid off, not by choice, take one step back.
15. If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step forward.
16. If your family ever had to move because they could not afford the rent, take one step back.
17. If you were told that you were beautiful, smart, and capable by your parents, take one step forward.
18. If you were ever discouraged from academics or jobs because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
19. If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents, take one step forward.
20. If you were raised in a single parent household, take one step back.
21. If your family owned the house where you grew up, take one step forward.
22. If you saw members of your race, ethnic group, gender, or sexual orientation portrayed on television in degrading roles, take one step back.
23. If you were ever offered a job because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step forward.
24. If you were ever denied an academic or work experience because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.