

ACTIVITY 8.7

Heterosexual and Monosexual Privilege

Directions: This teaching tool works best in groups of 15 to 30, so if you have a larger group, you may choose to have some volunteers demonstrate in front of the group or have people just stand up rather than step forward. If you are using the stepping forward method, make sure that you have enough room for everyone to spread out. It may be important for you to alert participants that they might disclose information in this activity and that it is up to individual participants whether they want to disclose or not.

Read the following statement: "Privileges are unearned benefits someone gains on the basis of their perceived identity. Heterosexual and monosexual privilege include all the unearned privileges that are gained simply for being heterosexual or monosexual, respectively. The following activity helps people see the ways they might have privilege as a heterosexual that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people might not have. Many people do not realize that they have privilege. Heterosexual, gay, and lesbian people have monosexual privileges that bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, queer, fluid, or other identities don't have. I am going to read some statements and if the statement is true, please step forward (or for large groups, stand up and sit down when asked)."

After the activity, a pattern should develop in which some people (who identify more as straight) will have moved farther ahead than other participants. Gay and lesbian people have monosexual privilege, so they may have stepped forward in some places that bisexual people did not. Discuss with the group what their experiences were of learning about where they might have privilege that they did not know they had (or lack of it).

1. I can kiss, hug, or hold hands with my partner(s) in public without fear of being objectified or fetishized.
 2. I don't fear hostile or potentially violent reactions from others when I am affectionate with my partner.
 3. I can easily find role models that represent my sexuality.
 4. I have been accepted by my family.
 5. I have been accepted by my friends.
 6. I have never been asked about how I have sex with my partner by strangers.
 7. I have never been asked to join a threesome because of my sexual identity.
 8. I have never been fired from my job because of my sexuality.
 9. I have never been evicted from my housing because of my sexuality.
 10. I have never had to be concerned that if my partner was in the hospital, I might not be able to be at his or her bedside.
 11. I have never had to worry that if my spouse were to pass away, I wouldn't inherit our mutual assets.
 12. I have never had my basic civil rights denied because of my sexuality.
 13. I have never had anyone call me a "dyke," "faggot," or other slur based on sexuality.
 14. I have never been called a "slut," "whore," or other slur based on the fact that I am attracted to more than one gender.
 15. I have been able to find community resources for people who have the same sexual identity as me.
 16. I have been able to move to another part of the country without worrying about my safety or that my legal rights have changed because of my sexuality.
 17. I have never worried that my partner couldn't be the legal guardian of the child we are raising together.
 18. No one has ever asked me when I knew what my sexual orientation or identity is.
 19. I have never needed to defend my sexuality to anyone.
 20. I have never thought that I will leave my partner for someone of another gender.
 21. I have never worried about telling my doctor or therapist about my sexuality for fear of being shamed.
 22. I have never felt tokenized because of my sexuality.
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