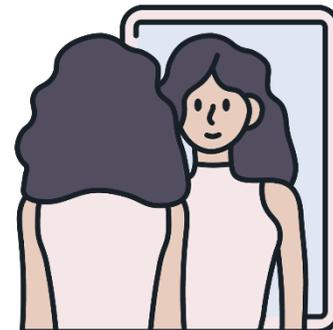


The Responsibility of Privilege

Privilege is a series of connected positions and power dynamics that touch all aspects of life, including, but not limited to race, gender & gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship, first language, religion, ability, mental health, age, education, and body size.

What is privilege?

Privilege is not something you do, it's something you have. Privilege looks different in different areas of the world. Having privilege is not negative – it doesn't make you a bad person or mean that you are doing something wrong. Having privilege simply means that you are afforded advantages, special rights, or immunity that is only available to a particular person or group.



Here are some characteristics subject to privilege:



Sexuality: Heterosexual privilege is expressed in the assumption that all people are heterosexual unless otherwise stated, which requires a constant 'coming out' process for members of the LGBTQIA+ community.



Ability: Being able-bodied and free from mental disabilities means better access to education, jobs, higher paying salaries, etc.



Class: Access to wealth and opportunities based on social class opens doors to better educational and job opportunities, participation in politics, etc.



Education: Access to adequate educational resources and higher ranked educational facilities.



Religious: Belonging to a religion that is considered dominant in the culture. In North America and Europe, Christianity is considered dominant.



Racial: Racial privilege is institutionalized racism: a system that is structured to privilege one group over others. In the West, racial privilege is usually equated with white privilege since most of the wealth, power, and influence lies in the Caucasian population.



Gender: Male-identified individuals still hold a level of privilege over other genders in most parts of the world.



Gender Identity: Identifying as the gender you were assigned at birth provides advantages in areas like voting, jobs, housing, etc.

What does privilege have to do with equity?

Equity refers to equivalent representation (by race, class, gender, etc.) in opportunities. Groups who don't have privilege have a different starting point, meaning that they have a greater distance to go to get to the same outcomes as people who have privilege.

To accomplish equity, groups who have had less than usual need to get more access to opportunities in order to level the playing field.



How can I use my privilege to advocate for equity?

As employees at M Health Fairview, understanding privilege, how it applies to each of us, and how to use it to advocate for equity is crucial as we build a system where **all** members of our community are treated with dignity and respect, and **all** patients receive the highest levels and quality of care.

If you're interested in taking action, identify an area in which you have privilege and begin exploring how you can use your privilege to advocate for equity.



Familiarize yourself with barriers people without privilege in your areas of privilege face.

- Research your area of privilege to see what challenges others are dealing with.



Make space for disenfranchised voices.

- Listen and understand what these individuals and communities need and want.
- Encourage others to speak up and let them know you hear them.



Find opportunities to advocate for people with less or no privilege in your privilege areas.

- Show up at events to show your support.
- Volunteer for and/or contribute to causes that support those with less privilege.

Discussion Questions

1. What role does privilege play in my life? Where do I have privilege?
2. How does having the privileges I identified make me feel?
3. In what ways can I use my privilege to advocate for equity?
4. How does privilege and equity show up at work?
5. What is one thing you will commit to doing differently?

