

The Privilege Packet

This packet includes various markers of privilege, including male privilege, white privilege, straight privilege, middle class privilege, cis privilege, and citizenship privilege.

FOR 305, you only have to read this page and the section on white privilege. You are welcome to read more.

Privilege is a series of unearned benefits or advantages that we either have or don't have based on our membership into particular groups. The statuses of white, male, middle-to-upper class, straight, cisgender citizen and able carry certain privileges. These privileges can be invisible to those who hold privilege until they learn about these unfair advantages.

Having privilege benefits us. Not have privilege disadvantages us. ***We all have places in our lives where we do and don't hold privilege.*** When we have a certain kind of privilege, it's easy to assume that everyone has similar experiences, and to think that our success comes only through hard work. One of the myths of the US American dream is that successful people earn their success solely through their hard work. While hard work is a part of the picture, it's not all of it: *As an example, I (Dr. Boutwell) worked really hard in school, but my white privilege and citizenship privilege gave me benefits that helped me get a Ph.D. Other people work just as hard or harder than I do and are just as smart or smarter than I am. Hard work does not 100% account for my educational attainment.*

As you read, pay attention to **intersectionality**: we are more than just one identity. Having male privilege is dramatically reduced if you don't have cisgender privilege.

Also pay attention to **systems of oppression**: anti-immigrant bias is fueled by racism. Sexism keeps homophobia alive and makes transphobia deadly.

You are brilliant students: read with open hearts and analytical minds.

As you read, focus on an overall system of inequality.

Look for patterns, not exceptions to those patterns. Very often, when we're first learning about privilege, it's easy to say – "*That doesn't happen.*" Just because we haven't seen or experienced certain things doesn't mean that those aren't other people's experiences.

Sometimes, we may find ourselves saying: "*Well, that's not that big of a deal.*" In isolation, some of these maybe don't seem like a big deal (though the majority absolutely are!). Taken together, these experiences of not having privilege create ***an overall system of inequality.*** And that is always a big deal.

Race Privilege, or Because I am White

1. As a white person, I can go shopping alone most of the time, assured that I will not be followed or harassed or assumed to be a shoplifter.
2. As a white person, I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented and in predominantly flattering ways.
3. As a white person, when I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my race made it what it is. As a white person, I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence and contributions their race. History books primarily and positively reflect the experiences of my ancestors.
4. As a white person, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area I can afford and in an area where I would want to live. There is no nationwide history of real estate agents discouraging me from living where I want to live.
5. As a white person, whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, my financial reliability will not be determined based on my race and/or appearance. I am never asked to show multiple forms of identification to prove my financial reliability.
6. As a white person, I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race. I can swear, be loud, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, or be late without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
7. As a white person, if I have a nice vehicle, people do not suspect or simply assume that I might be a drug dealer.
8. As a white person, I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group. When teachers and other classmates talk about whiteness or race in class, they don't glance at me to see how I am responding.
9. As a white person, I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority.
10. As a white person, I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
11. As a white person, I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job assume that I got it because of race.
- 12. As a white person, I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will support them; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.**

White Privilege, Continued

13. As a white person, I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
14. As a white person, I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh color and have them more or less match my skin.
15. As a white person, I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about and support me in my next steps, personally, academically, and professionally. These relationships will open many doors for me.
16. As a white person, I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
17. As a white person, if a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
18. As a white person, I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
19. As a white person, I can talk about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
20. As a white person, I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
21. As a white person, I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as unpatriotic or an outsider.
22. As a white person, when I am pulled over, I am not afraid for my life. I am not afraid for my family or friends in their encounters with the police. I typically assume that the police will either help me or not do me harm.
23. As a white person, if I state there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
24. As a white person (and regardless of whether I actually committed a crime) I am less likely to be convicted and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. People do not associate my race with criminality or violence.

--Adapted from Peggy McIntosh: *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* Boutwell-SCWK 270-Fall 2012-p 6

Male Privilege, or because I'm not a Woman

CAREER: As a man, my odds of being hired for a job, when competing against female applicants, are typically skewed in my favor. The more prestigious the job, the larger the odds are I will be hired over a female. I can be confident that my co-workers won't think I got my job because I am a man, even though that might be true. If I am never promoted, it's not because I am a man. If I fail in my job or career, I can feel sure this won't be seen as a mark against all men's capabilities. The odds of my encountering sexual harassment or assault on the job are low. The decision to hire me will never be based on assumptions about whether or not I might choose to have a family sometime soon. If I do the exact same task as a woman, chances are people will think I did a better job.

SAFETY: As a man, my odds of being sexually assaulted are much, much lower. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in average public spaces. I can ask for legal protection from violence that happens mostly to men without being seen as a special interest, since the kind of violence I would experience is always called "crime" and is a general social concern. (*Explanation:* Violence that happens mostly to women is typically seen as a special interest issue.)

CHILD-REARING: As a man, if I choose not to have children, my masculinity will not be called into question. If I have children but do not provide primary care for them, my masculinity will not be questioned. If I have children and provide primary care for them, I'll be praised for extraordinary parenting if I'm even marginally competent. If I have children and pursue a career, no one will think I'm selfish for not staying at home. If I have a female partner, chances are we'll divide up household chores so that she does most of the work, and in particular, the most repetitive and unrewarding tasks. If I have children with a female partner, chances are she'll do most of the childrearing—in particular the most dirty, repetitive and unrewarding parts of childrearing. If I have children with a female partner, and it turns out that one of us needs to make career sacrifices to raise the kids, chances are we'll both assume the career sacrificed should be hers.

POLITICS: As a man, if I seek political office, my relationship with my children, or who I hire to take care of them, will not be scrutinized by the press. Chances are my elected representatives are mostly people of my own sex. The more prestigious and powerful the elected position, the more likely this is to be true.

CHILDHOOD: As a boy, chances are I was encouraged to be more active and outgoing than my sisters and female friends. I could choose from an almost infinite variety of children's media featuring positive, active, non-stereotyped heroes of boys and men. I never had to look for it; male heroes were the default.

Male Privilege, Continued

1. As a man, if I'm careless with my financial affairs it won't be attributed to my sex. If I'm careless with my driving it won't be attributed to my sex.
2. As a man, if I have sex with a lot of people, it won't make me an object of contempt or derision.
3. As a man, it is possible for me to choose clothing that doesn't send any particular message to the world. If I so choose, my wardrobe and grooming are relatively cheap and consume little time.
4. As a man, if I buy a new car, chances are I'll be offered a better price than a woman buying the same car. The salesperson will assume that I am knowledgeable about automobiles whether that is true or not.
5. As a man, I am not expected to spend my entire life 20-40 pounds underweight. If I'm not conventionally attractive, the disadvantages to me smaller. My value as a person has not been linked to my physical attractiveness since I was born.
6. As a man, I can be assertive with no fear of being called a bitch or other derogatory names. In fact, when I am assertive, it is seen as a sign of strength.
7. As a man, my ability to serve in the military, make important decisions, or be a leader will never be questioned in relation to my hormones or reproductive cycle.
8. As a man (particularly in a straight relationship), I will never be expected to change my name upon marriage. I will not be questioned if I don't change my name. I will likely be seen as less of a man should I hyphenate my name, or worse yet, adopt my female partner's name.
9. Most major religions assert that I should be the head of my household, while my (assumed) wife and children should be subservient to me.
10. As a man (and if I am straight), magazines, billboards, television, movies, pornography are filled with images of scantily-clad women intended to appeal to me sexually. While such images of men do exist, they are much, much rarer.
11. As a man, I can turn on the television or glance at the front page of the newspaper and see people of my own sex widely represented, every day, in a variety of contexts, without exception.
12. As a man, I have the privilege of being unaware of my male privilege.

Adapted from B. Deutsch: *The Male Privilege Checklist*.
Deutsch borrows heavily from Peggy McIntosh: *White Privilege and Male Privilege*

Heterosexual Privilege, or Because I am Straight

1. As a straight person, everyone accepts that being heterosexual is only one part of who I am. I am not identified solely—politically, socially, economically or otherwise—by my sexual orientation.
 2. As a straight person, I don't have to conceal my sexual orientation in any context. I do not have to fear that if my family, friends or coworkers learn about my sexual orientation, it could have damaging emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual or economic consequences.
 3. As a straight person, I won't be fired or denied housing or health care because of my sexual orientation. My sexual orientation is not used to exclude me from any profession or organization.
 4. As a straight person, I am not accused of being deviant, warped, perverted or psychologically confused because of my sexual orientation. People, including elected officials and religious leaders, never equate heterosexuality with incest or pedophilia.
 5. As a straight person, people don't ask me when I became a heterosexual. People don't ask me why I chose my sexual orientation, and they certainly don't ask me why I chose to be open or not open about it.
 6. As a straight person, I can easily find a faith community that will not exclude me for being heterosexual, tell me I'm a sinner because of who I am, or try to convert me to being gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
 7. As a straight person, it's easy to find magazines or books and movies that reflect me and my experiences as a heterosexual. I am guaranteed to find my sexual orientation widely and accurately represented.
 8. As a straight person, my masculinity or femininity is not challenged or questioned because of my sexual orientation.
 9. As a straight person, when I talk about my heterosexuality or my partner in casual conversation, I will not be accused of promoting or pushing my sexual orientation onto others.
 10. As a straight person, I am guaranteed to find people of my sexual orientation represented in my college curriculum, faculty, administration and alumni – and in the history books.
 11. My sexual orientation is so widely represented in advertising that "straightness" sells everything from toothbrushes to detergent to sports equipment.
 12. As a straight person, I can walk in public holding my partner's hand and not have people stare, snicker -- or worse.
- Straight Privilege, Continued**
13. As a straight person, my individual behavior does not reflect all heterosexuals, just me.

14. As a straight person, in everyday conversation, the language used assumes my sexual orientation. That is, "sex" refers to heterosexual sex; "family" refers to one man, one woman and their children.
15. As a straight person, I am not repeatedly placed in a position where I have to "come out" as a heterosexual person. People assume I am heterosexual and always have. (This is particularly true if I conform to traditional gender binary definitions of beauty).
16. As a straight person, people don't use my sexual orientation as an insult. My sexual orientation is not used as a synonym for "bad" or "stupid." Some people use my sexual orientation to indicate that they are okay, as in: "Does anyone need anything here? "Nah, I'm straight."
17. As a straight person, I don't have to defend my sexual orientation. I don't have to educate people about my sexuality. No one asks me how I have sex or who the man is.
18. As a straight person, I am seen as normal.
19. As a straight person (and assuming that I actually want to marry), I have always been able to marry anywhere in the U.S. This has made my relationship feel valid and supported in more ways than I can ever possibly comprehend.
20. As a straight person, if my relationship is short-lived, people don't assume it's because people of my sexual orientation just can't stay monogamous.
21. As a straight person, no one (inaccurately) equates my sexual orientation with HIV/AIDS.
22. As a straight person, I'm never asked why I hate people of my same-sex.
23. As a straight person, I am never asked if I have just tried sex with someone of my same gender, just to see if I might like it. Further, I'm never told that I just haven't found the right same-sex partner.
24. As a straight person, I'm never asked what happened to 'make me this way,' with the assumption being that I have been sexually or physically abused or assaulted.
25. As a straight person, I can adopt children in all fifty states of the U.S. I am never asked to adopt my own child, as many same-sex non-biological parents have had to do.

Adapted from Chris McCall: *A Straight Privilege, Gay Reality*

Citizenship Privilege, or because I am not an Immigrant

Please note: There are a lot of ways to have citizenship privilege, and there are a lot of layers of citizenship privilege. Folks who are native born citizens have privileges over people who are naturalized citizens. Folks who are not citizens but have legal status in this country have privileges over people who are undocumented. These citizenship privileges speak to the experiences of immigrants, both with legal status and undocumented. Racism is deeply implicated in anti-immigrant bias.

1. Because I am a citizen, if I want to get a driver's license, it's a simple matter of bringing along my birth certificate, Social Security card and insurance information and taking the test. There's no need to worry about whether I have the proper documents to get a driver's license.
2. Because I am a citizen, if I apply for a job, I do not have to worry about what to write under "Social Security Number."
3. Because I am a citizen, when Social Security and Medicare are taken out of my paycheck, I have a reasonable hope that someday either me or my dependents will receive the benefit of those taxes.
4. Because I am a citizen, no one has this (false!) belief that I don't pay taxes. I am not assumed to be a drain on the economy.
5. Because I am a citizen, I am never called an "illegal" or worse, an "alien."
6. Because I am a citizen, I can go in any bank and open up a checking account.
7. Because I am a citizen, if a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my immigration status. I don't in that moment fear being detained in a deportation center.
8. Because I am a citizen, I am not worried on a daily basis about being "discovered" and being deported. If I have children, I do not fear that I will be separated from them—permanently.
9. Because I am a citizen, I do not carry my documentation around with me at all times in case I am pulled over and asked to once again prove that I have legal status in the country. (This is particularly true if I feel like I can pass for dominant story images of what an "American" looks like).
10. Because I am a citizen and I am fluent in English, people assume that I am as intelligent as they are because I know English and speak it in a way that is acceptable to them. No one speaks loudly to me thinking that I am deaf because I am not fluent. No one thinks that I have sub-standard intelligence because of my accent. I never feel silenced out of fear that people will mock me because of my language abilities.
11. Because I am a citizen, I can be reasonably sure that if I need legal or medical advice or help, my citizenship status will not be a consideration. No one will refuse to treat me at the emergency room or doctor's office.

Citizenship Privilege, Continued

12. Because I am a citizen, I can apply for a passport that will allow me to travel back and forth to most countries in the world. Because I am a citizen, I can travel outside the United States to see family and friends who are ill. I can attend their funerals. I do not have to worry about being turned away or deported when I return to the United States.

13. Because I am a citizen, I can vote and consider running for political office.

14. Because I am a citizen and I am fluent in English, no one ever hears me speak another language and tell me that if I am in America, I should learn English. I can always convey my deepest emotions, my medical needs, and my beliefs and opinions with ease because I share a common language. No one ever laughs at me or criticizes me because I cannot fully express myself in English. I am not asked to "say something in your language" as if it were a circus trick.

15. Because I am a citizen and was born in the U.S., I have never been asked if I am happy to be in America where everything is better.

16. Because I am a citizen and have legal status, I or a member of my family can apply for scholarship aid to institutions of higher education and expect to compete on level ground with other U.S. citizens.

17. Because I am a citizen, I can get in-state rates and scholarships to go to college. A nine-digit number (my Social Security number) gives me advantages not enjoyed by many immigrant college students who are undocumented.

18. Because I am a citizen, I am never told to "go back where I came from" (unless of course it is assumed I am not a citizen because I don't look like the dominant story image of an "American.")

19. Because I am a citizen, I am not required to receive vaccinations that the rest of the population is not required to receive in order to gain legal status or citizenship.

20. Because I am a citizen, I do not have to spend thousands of dollars on vaccinations, legal fees and government processing fees to remain legal in the country or become a citizen.

21. Because I am a citizen, I have never risked my life trying to cross the US/Mexico border wall in order to feed my family.

22. Because I am citizen, elected officials do not refer to me as animals or suggest the use of electric fences to contain me or electric prod sticks to harm me.

23. Because I am a citizen, I have never been held in a deportation prison awaiting trial for the "crime" of not having legal papers.

24. Because I am a citizen, people do not equate me as someone who steals jobs from other people.

*--Adapted from North Carolina Council of Churches
(www.nccouncilofchurches.org)*

Class Privilege, or Because I am Wealthy

1. Because I am wealthy, I can manage to know only people of similar class background by exclusively frequenting places where such people gather — neighborhoods, schools, clubs, workplaces, etc.
2. Because I am wealthy, I assume I will be able to meet my basic needs. I take having necessities for granted. I do not fear being hungry or homeless. I have never gone to bed hungry. I have never had to decide between paying the electric bill and feeding my children. Because I am wealthy, I do not have to worry about how emergencies will impact my ability to pay my bills.
3. Because I am wealthy, I have the freedom to waste food or other resources.
4. Because I am wealthy, I can often hide family secrets and family failures behind the doors of my home.
5. Because I am wealthy, I have the time, education, and opportunity to enhance my inner life and my personal growth, to go to therapy.
6. Because I am wealthy, in my community I am trusted and not perceived as a threat. I can live where I choose and can move when and where I choose. I can expect that I will be welcomed where I choose to live. I can typically avoid people of other classes and races if I choose.
7. Because I am wealthy, law enforcement officials will likely assume I am a non-threatening person once they see me and hear me. I can be sure that my social class will be an advantage when seeking medical or legal help. Because I am wealthy, I am believed to be innocent by the criminal justice system at least until proven guilty. I can afford the best legal counsel and can often escape jail time regardless of my actual guilt.
8. Because I am wealthy, I can avoid spending time with people who I am trained or have learned to mistrust.
9. Because I am wealthy, I can buy things for my comfort. I do not have to shop around for the best buy or wait for sales if I don't choose to. When I am shopping, people usually call me "Sir" or "Ma'am.". When making a purchase with a check or credit card, my appearance benefits me.
10. Because I am wealthy, I can employ people to care for my children. Because I am wealthy, I can take vacations. Because I am wealthy, I can afford to have people clean my home or care for my lawn.
11. Because I am wealthy, I can assert that I deserve and am entitled to these privileges because I worked hard to create and/or maintain my wealth. I can assert that those unlike me simply do not work hard or know how to be financially responsible.

Class Privilege, Continued

12. Because I am wealthy, I can believe that I deserve my status because of my accomplishments. Because I can have an attitude of entitlement, I may have an attitude of contempt toward those who have not succeeded according to my definition of success.

13. Because I am wealthy, I've always had health insurance. I can afford medical and hospital care. I can afford good mental health care in a setting which will insure my privacy.

14. Because I am wealthy, I have the advantage of having suitable clothing and manner when seeking employment.

15. Because I am wealthy, I can choose to make my privileged position as visible or invisible as I want, depending on the situation in which I find myself.

16. Because I am wealthy, I have the freedom to be unaware of the living conditions of others. I have the freedom to be unaware of the working conditions of others. I have the freedom to be unaware of the financial hardships of others.

17. Because I am wealthy, I can be ignorant about money in general and my own finances in particular. Because I am wealthy, I can get a loan/mortgage at a bank, even if my personal credit is bad.

18. Because I am wealthy, I don't need to worry about learning the social customs of others. People are expected to learn my social customs.

19. When I, or my children, are taught about history, people from my social class are represented in the books in overwhelming positive ways. Because I am wealthy, if I wish to my children to private schools, I have a variety of options. I can find colleges that have many people from my social class as students and that welcome me or my child.

20. Because I am wealthy, if I apply for a prestigious job competing with people of a lower class, my social class will be to my advantage. The decision to hire me will be related to my background and where I went to school.

21. Because I am wealthy, my elected representatives share a similar background with mine and largely have my class interests at heart. I can influence the outcome of elections with my donations.

22. Because I am wealthy, I am seen as a benefit to my country, and not a drain on it. It doesn't matter if I am receiving (corporate) welfare or not – that government subsidy is only considered a tax break, not a drain on the economy.

23. Because I am wealthy, I can deny Social Class Privilege by asserting that all social classes are essentially the same. In fact, I can blame people for their poverty and for not being more like me.

-Adapted from www.thewtc.org, Women's Theological Center and the MIT School of Architecture and Planning

Cis Privilege, or Because I am not Transgender

Cis means that you were assigned a gender at birth, and that is the gender you identify with. Transgender means that the gender you were assigned at birth does not match the gender you know yourself to be.

1. Because I have cis privilege, strangers don't assume they can ask me what my genitals look like and how I have sex.
2. Because I have cis privilege, I can be confident that people will not call me by a different name or use improper pronouns. People do not disrespect me by using incorrect pronouns even after they've been corrected.
3. Because I have cis privilege, my childhood innocence was not interrupted with desperate prayers to a divinity begging to wake up in another body or as a different gender. I never grieve about my lost childhood and adolescence.
4. Because I have cis privilege, I will not be ostracized by my family and friends, fired from my job, evicted from my home, given substandard medical care, suffer violence or sexual abuse, be ridiculed by the media, or preached against by religious organizations simply because of my gender identity or perceived incongruent gendered behaviors or characteristics.
5. Because I have cis privilege, when initiating sex with someone, I do not have to worry that they won't be able to deal with my body or that having sex with me will cause my partner to question their own sexual orientation. I never worry about potential lovers shifting instantly from amorous to disdain and even violence because of their perception of how my body conforms to my gender identity.
6. Because I have cis privilege, I never suffered the indignation of "holding it," when both functional and unoccupied public restrooms are available because of fears of physical safety or of being arrested for being in the "wrong" bathroom.
7. Because I have cis privilege, I don't need to be concerned about public facilities segregated by sex. If I am institutionalized or homeless or arrested, I don't have to worry about being housed in the wrong section of a facility segregated by sex.
8. Because I have cis privilege, when I go to the gym or a public pool, I can use the showers safely.
9. Because I have cis privilege, I never needed to hide my body parts by binding or tucking.
10. Because I have cis privilege, my validity as a man/woman/human is not based upon how much surgery I've had or how well I "pass" into my gender identify. I don't have to hear "So have you had top or bottom surgery?" or "Oh, so you're really a [incorrect sex or gender]?" each time I come out to someone.
11. Because I have cis privilege, at my funeral, it is unlikely that my family would present me cross-dressed against my living wishes because they don't accept my gender identity.

Cisgender Privilege, Continued

12. Because I have cis privilege, it is easy to find clothes that fit me.
13. Because I have cis privilege, it is unlikely that I would risk my health by avoiding the medical profession for fear of discovery.
14. Because I have cis privilege, strangers do not ask me what my “real name” [birth name] is and then assume that they have a right to call me by that name.
15. Because I have cis privilege, I do not have to worry that someone wants to be my friend or have sex with me in order to prove their “hipness” or good politics.
16. Because I have cis privilege, I do not have to worry about whether I will be able to find a bathroom to use or whether I will be safe changing in a locker room.
17. Because I have cis privilege, if I am physically healthy, I don't think about having a hysterectomy, a mastectomy, massive hair removal, hormone therapy, vocal surgery, facial reassignment surgery, or genital reassignment surgery.
18. Because I have cis privilege, I do not have to choose between either invisibility (“passing”) or being consistently “othered” and/or tokenized based on my gender presentation.
19. Because I have cis privilege, if I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment nor will all of my medical issues be seen as a product of my gender identity or my transition (should I chose to transition). (“Your nose is running and your throat hurts? Must be due to the hormones!”)
20. Because I have cis privilege, I never worry about passing according to my gender identity. I am oblivious to the consequences of someone failing to do so. I do not fear violence or death.
21. Because I have cis privilege, I do not have to constantly educate other people about what it means to be me.
22. Because I have cis privilege, I have the privilege of being completely unaware of my own cisgender privilege.
23. Because I have cis privilege, my average life expectancy is higher than 29 years old.
24. Because I have cis privilege, my gender identity does not mean that I am far more likely to live in poverty or be homeless due to discrimination.

- Adapted from The Transgender Boards

Ability Privilege, Or Because I am Currently Abled (mentally, physically, cognitively, neurologically)

You will read “neurology” in this section and you may wonder what it means. Having neurology privilege means that you are neurotypical, meaning that you are not neurodiverse and do not have autism, Asperger syndrome, dyslexia, ADD or ADHD or similar neurologies. Still not clear? This is a great time to do the work of cultural competency and learn more on your own.)

1. Because I have ability privilege, I can swear, dress sloppily, be in a bad mood, or fail to do some task of daily living without people attributing it to my ability status or neurology.
2. Because I have ability privilege, I can do well in challenging situations without being told what an inspiration I must be to other people with my ability status or neurology.
3. Because I have ability privilege, people do not treat me like I am child. People never think that they can touch me (pat my back or worse, my head!) more so than they would touch people my age.
4. Because I have ability privilege, people (and often strangers) never feel that they have a right to ask me what is “wrong” with me.
5. Because I have ability privilege, I can always buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, children’s magazines, etc. featuring people of the same ability status and neurology unless it is a specialty book, aimed at sensitivity training.
6. Because I have ability privilege, my ability status and neurology is never seen as my sole identity.
7. Because I have ability privilege, I am typically seen as a sexual being. I am also far less likely to be sexually assaulted.
8. Because I have ability privilege, if I fail at my job, it doesn’t make everyone with my ability status or neurology looks incompetent. I won’t face job discrimination because of my ability status.
9. Because I have ability privilege, I don’t feel losing my job or friends if my disability or neurology is revealed. I am typically included in group activities and leisure activities and hobbies are easy for me to participate in.
10. Because I have ability privilege, if I am careless driving, it won’t be attributed to

having a disability or a different neurology.

11. Because I have ability privilege, no one pities me. I don't have to put up with fake or forced praise from people who are trying too hard.

12. Because I have ability privilege, when I was a child, I was much less likely to be excluded from peer groups based on my ability status.

13. Because I have ability privilege, I'm not considered more likely to commit a crime or be dangerous. In fact, because I have ability privilege, I am less likely to be the victim of a crime.

14. Because I have ability privilege, the odds of me making friends is higher, and the odds of me being bullied or excluded is lower. If I am bullied or excluded, people won't blame it on my ability status or neurology.

15. Because I have ability privilege, my elected officials almost exclusively reflect my ability status and neurology.

16. Because I have ability status, when I learned about history, people of my ability status and neurology were well represented. I was given curricular material which showed people like me as a role model.

17. Because I have ability privilege, I don't have to worry that people will think I am weird because of the way my body moves or because of sounds I may make.

18. Because I have ability privilege, I can speak in groups or to a large audience without putting my ability status or neurology on trial or without being seen as speaking for all people who are like me.

19. Because I have ability privilege, I don't have to try to look, sound, or act "normal" to be accepted or included. I am simply seen as normal.

20. Because I have ability privilege, if I have trouble understanding somebody with a disability or with a different neurology, it isn't seen as my fault or responsibility, but theirs.

21. Because I have ability privilege, my doctor is less likely to dismiss my medical issues as just part of my ability status or neurology.

22. Because I have ability privilege, if I am unable to attend class or work due to illness, I will not be accused of laziness or lack of willpower.

23. Because I have ability privilege, no one will blame me for not being well and

providing me with care won't be seen as a burden. My medical needs will not be viewed as a character defect, a sign of laziness, or a personal failing.

24. Because I have ability privilege, I can reveal my ability status and neurology without worrying that people are going to change their opinion of me, become afraid of me, become worried about being alone with me or letting me be with their children. No one will start thinking of me as just my ability status – and they won't think I am either someone to be pitied or a superhero to be admired.

25. Because I have ability privilege, I do not have to fear that important decisions about my life will be made by others who are considered more qualified based on their neurology or ability status.

26. Because I have ability privilege, I can go about my day without planning every task, like getting dressed or going to the bathroom or eating meals.

27. Because I have ability privilege, public and air transportation is easy for me. Others don't get frustrated with me in public for needing special accommodations or holding up lines.

28. Because I have ability privilege, I have many role models of my ability status and neurology. I am well-represented in movies, books and TV shows in positive and non-stereotypical ways. I am not presented as the tragic victim or the superhero who overcomes great odds. My ability status and neurology isn't the butt of jokes in TV shows and movies.

29. Because I have ability privilege, I don't have to think about my daily pain level when planning events or activities.

30. Because I have ability status, if I need to relocate, I can easily be assured of purchasing housing that is accessible. Accessibility is not one thing I need to make a special point of looking for. Further, I can be assured that my entire neighborhood will be accessible to me.

31. Because I have ability privilege, I assume that I can go shopping alone, and that stores will always have appropriate accommodations to make this experience hassle-free. In fact, I never think about "appropriate accommodations" whenever I go anywhere.

Adapted from:

<http://www.unhollyamerican.com/2013/11/privelege-checklist.html>

<http://clinkyourcookiestogether.blogspot.com/2013/07/mental-health-privilege-checklist.html>

<http://www.girl-mom.com/forums/checklist-neurotypical-privilege>

edequity@phoenix.edc.org

