

LINE UP WARM UP

This exercise will use statements to examine areas in society that the dominant heterosexual culture can take advantage of without necessarily realizing their privilege. The facilitator will read each item, one at a time, in order. Participants should take a step/move forward if any statement is true for them. If at any time the statements become uncomfortable or too personal, they can simply abstain from taking a step forward for that statement. They may also remove themselves from the activity entirely.

LINE UP WARM UP STATEMENTS

Arrange each person in a line (shoulder to shoulder). Read each sentence below one at a time, and instruct participants to take one step/motion forward if the statement is true for them. There are no right or wrong answers; these are merely statements that may or may not apply to the people in the room. Inform participants that if they do not want to respond to a statement, they can remove themselves from the activity momentarily or altogether; it is a challenge by choice. Tell participants that the way a person answers does not indicate that they identify one way or another.

- You see characters that identify similarly to you in TV and movies.
- If you speak about your identity in class or with friends, no one will make you feel like you are seeking attention or creating controversy.
- You have never had to or wanted to correct people about your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- You have never worried about losing your job due to your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Popular social networking sites accurately describe your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- You can read any cultural or other relevant reading material in public places or at work.
- Your sexual orientation or gender identity is never the butt of a joke.
- You have never been told you will “grow out of” your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- You can use public facilities such as residence halls and restrooms without fear of exclusion or assault.
- All or most of your classes will cover material on people who identify similarly to you.
- If you are religious, it is easy for you to find groups that will accept you regardless of your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- You will never have to qualify your sexual orientation or gender identity or you never have been asked to prove your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- You have never been overly sexualized on the basis of your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- You have never been asked to speak for other people of a similar sexual orientation or gender identity.
- No one has told you that you would be taken more seriously if you “stopped acting so queer.”

FACILITATION QUESTIONS

- What did you notice about these statements?
- In addition to what was read out loud, what kind of unearned privileges, or *“rights and opportunities people have access to because they are born into a certain group, not because they have earned or achieved them,”* do heterosexual people have in society that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) people might not have? (read twice)
- How can the denial of certain rights or privileges affect people at WOU or in society?
- While Oregon prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, you can still be fired for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer in 29 states and in 38 you can be fired based on your gender identity or expression as of 2013 (source: Human Rights Campaign, Feb 2013). How do laws in Oregon influence this concept of privilege?
- What can be done to make sure that all faculty, staff, and students experience equality and access to support at WOU and in the community?

FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS

- Privilege can be a difficult concept to learn about, and the point is not to experience guilt, but to provide awareness. It is easy to be part of a dominant group and not realize that we all have different levels of access to the same freedoms.
- Privilege is not limited to sexual orientation. People can experience privilege based on their race, gender, age, ability, socioeconomic status, appearance, size, and many other factors over which they may have little or no control.
- Perhaps because of these societal inequalities and difficulties, LGBTQ youth struggle with higher rates of attempted suicide, illicit drug use, homelessness, and bullying (sources: americanprogress.org, bullstatistics.org, GLSEN.org, February 2013). According to a 2005 Harris Interactive online poll titled "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers," the most common reason for harassment at school was a student's appearance or body size. The next most common was perceived sexual orientation (source: GLSEN.org, Feb 2013).

