Not all superpowers are created equal.
What is Privilege?

A way to frame issues around groups & social inequality

**Privileged group** = dominant, group in power
- Unearned advantages, simply because they are members
  - Real or perceived (“Passing”)
- Advance through life with fewer challenges
- Often invisible
- So accustomed to it, “just the way it is”
- Not necessarily in the majority
- Systemic. None of you created this.
Why this is a difficult topic...

- We don’t usually think about our privileges in daily life

- Tendency to pay attention to our marginalized identities
  - We feel the effects of these more

- May not realize we have some privileges
  - They’re often invisible

- Thinking about it too much might feel icky
  - We have things others don’t, things we didn’t ask for
  - Guilt, anger, discomfort
Ground Rules

- This is an uncomfortable topic for everyone.
- Talking about privilege & examining your identities doesn’t make you more or less privileged, so you might as well think about things!
- Be vulnerable with yourself
- Blame and shame won’t help
- Be sensitive when sharing stories
- It’s okay to not be perfect. This is a space to learn.
  - We all know different amounts about this topic
  - If you know a lot, please help with conversation
- Remember that none of us made this mess. This is not your fault.
- Jen is not an expert
# Power & Advantage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Identity</th>
<th>Empowered Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
<td>Middle-class &amp; upper-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Heterosexual/straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Physically able, fit, healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>College degree or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Status</td>
<td>Born in the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Middle-aged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Cisgender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF

BEING TOTALLY UNAWARE
OF MY OWN PRIVILEGE
Intersecting Identities

Occupation  Education  Race  Ethnicity
Sexuality   Religion
Age
Geographic Location  Ability  Income
Aboriginality
Gender
Heritage/History
Immigration Status
Family Status
Spot the “Privilege”
Privileges Help You Earn Capital

- **Economic Capital** - Money, investments, assets
- **Social Capital** - Increasing your networks of influence and support
- **Cultural Capital** - Knowledge of cultural norms, places, and skills
Share a time your privilege was visible
Check your Privilege
“You Can be Anything You Want to Be!”

The bootstraps myth:  
With a little hard work, anyone can just pick themselves up by their bootstraps and achieve the same success as anyone else.

You can be anything you want to be! plays out very differently:

- Little white boy in the wealthy suburbs
- Little boy of color in the low income housing section in the inner city.
- Little white boy in the same wealthy suburb who was born with a disability
“We cannot change whether or not we are involved in systems of oppression. We can only change how we are involved. ”

I cannot be blind to the invisible system of privilege I am a part of.
Equality vs. Equity

**EQUALITY = SAMENESS**
- GIVING EVERYONE THE SAME THING → It only works if everyone starts from the same place

**EQUITY = FAIRNESS**
- ACCESS to SAME OPPORTUNITIES → We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality
Now What?!?

- Remember, this isn’t all about you as a person
  - Having or not having privilege isn't *your* fault
- You can’t just get rid of it, but you can acknowledge it
  - Feeling guilty, embarrassed, or angry doesn’t help
  - Privilege won't be erased until structural inequalities are erased
  - Be aware of your privilege and how it may have shaped your experiences and perceptions
- Recognize that others can have very different experiences and perceptions
  - Listen to others share their experiences
- Don’t try to come with reasons why you are the exception to privilege or say that your privilege hasn’t helped you in life
- Advocate for social justice
- Work to make inequality visible in your daily life
How I Do Something:

- Acknowledge it
- Discuss it
  - Think about it randomly
  - Talk to other people about it
- Help make changes
Why is this important?

- Develop self-knowledge
- Increase your comfort in dealing with people who are different from you
- Avoid unintentionally hurtful actions
- Be able to address inequalities
- Create programs that are inclusive and fair
- Understand that residents and colleagues may have a very different high school or college experience than you
Lack awareness of their privilege

Generally unaware they have privileges and think/act in ways to uphold superiority

Realize their dominant group is a source of the oppression; often creates anger

Develop pride in group. Realize no group is better than another

Integrate new views into whole world; More “just doing it”

Generally unaware they have privileges and think/act in ways to uphold superiority

Lack awareness of their privilege
More Examples from Jen's Life

- Jury duty
- Thanksgiving & Christmas & every family gathering
- Airplanes, classrooms, and shopping
6-word summary
Learning Outcomes

1. RAs will be able to explain the concepts of “privilege” and “capital”
2. RAs will be able to recognize their privilege in daily life
3. RAs will be able to describe the bootstraps myth
4. RAS will be able to contrast the difference between equity and equality
5. RAs will be able to paraphrase the social identity development model
References