

Multiple Truths

The Connection Between Mental Health and Systems of Oppression

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Community Agreements

- ⑩ Confidentiality: What is shared here stays here, what is learned here leaves here
- ⑩ Use "I" statements
- ⑩ Multiple truths
- ⑩ Challenge the idea, not the persxn
- ⑩ Space²: Take space, make space
- ⑩ Care²: Self-care and collective care
- ⑩ Own your impact; hold your intentions
- ⑩ Lean into discomfort

Defining Oppression & Privilege

Oppression exists when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another social group for its own benefit on all of these levels:

- Individual
- Institutional
- Societal/Cultural

Privilege: a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group



Defining Systems of Oppression

- Ableism
- Ageism
- Cissexism/Genderism
- Classism
- Heterosexism
- Nativism
- Racism
- Sexism



Grounding Definitions

- **Implicit Bias:** attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner
- **Microaggressions:** are the everyday verbal, nonverbal insults, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target a member of a marginalized group
- **Minoritized:** groups that are different in race, religious creed, sexuality, ability, class, and gender and as a result of social constructs, have less power or representation compared to other groups in society

Mental Health Rates for Oppressed Groups

- Over 41 percent of trans people are estimated to have attempted suicide — a rate that's nearly nine times as high as the rate of cisgender Americans (Haas, Rogers, Herman, 2014).
- 30-35% of those with learning disabilities have a mental health disorder (Shaw Mind Foundation).
- Women are twice as likely as men to experience major depression (World Health Organization, 2008).
- Indigenous peoples experience PTSD more than twice as often as the general population (American Psychiatric Association, 2010).

Effects of Oppression on Mental Health

Oppression creates a unique environment of pervasive stress for oppressed peoples in the US. These traumatic interactions can result in reduced self-esteem and internalized hatred as they're forced into conservative and apologetic thinking.

- Oppression is closely associated with chronic stress, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidality.
- Microaggressions accumulate over time, contributing to mental health difficulties, such as depression or anxiety.... Just the anticipation of experiencing discrimination can be enough to cause a significant spike in stress responses.

American Psychiatric Association (2018)

Shifting from an
Identity to an
Oppression
Framework

- **Systems approach that accounts for effects of oppression on individuals, communities, and mental health systems**
- **Deficit-based versus strengths-based approach to individuals and communities**
- **Grounded in social justice**



Sharing Our Stories

8 Corners: Oppression x Mental Health Activity

- If you experience this oppression, write:
 1. What is a way this oppression shows up?
 2. How would that affect someone's mental health?
- If you don't experience this oppression, write:
 1. I have privilege and I will do _____ to fight this oppression.

Example slide

- If you experience this oppression, write:

- What is one way this oppression may show up?

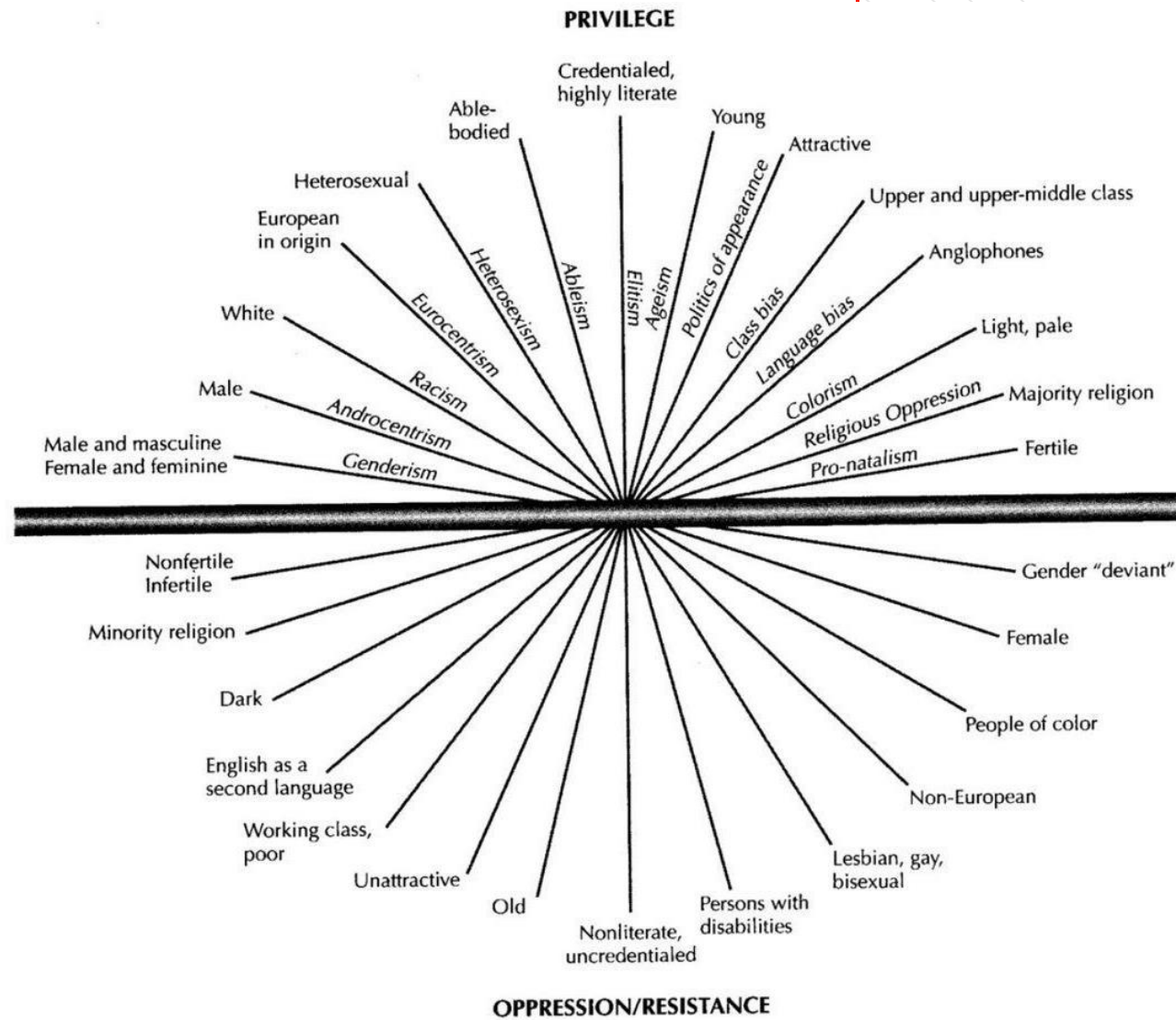
Because my disabilities aren't visible, people don't believe me and I don't get the support I need.

- If you don't experience this oppression, write:

- I have _____ privilege, and I have upheld this oppression by _____.

I have temporarily-abled privilege, and I have upheld this oppression by assuming everyone around me is abled unless I can see their disability.

Intersectionality Wheel



8 Corners: Gallery Walk

- Pay attention to the sheets where you have privilege -- learn from others' experiences
- Remain silent and reflective

Discussion

- General
comments/questions/feelings
- What was new to you?
- Were your beliefs challenged?
When and why?

Resources

- Implicit bias tests
 - Look Different: Bias Cleanse
 - <http://www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse>
 - Understanding Prejudice: Implicit Association Test
 - <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/iat/>
 - Teaching Tolerance: Test Yourself for Hidden Bias
 - <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias>
- California Reducing Disparities Project: <http://remhdco.org/crdp/crdp-special-population-reports/>
- LGBTQIA Allyship Training:

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