

# Racism and White Privilege

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## QUADRANT 3

**Name of Activity:** Exploring the Impact of Racism Interpersonally, Option A: Race and Privilege Common Ground Activity/Step In, Step Out

**Purpose:** The common ground activity provides participants the opportunity to name and notice individuals within their learning community. Commonalities and differences should be celebrated as participants provide a visual cue as to how they have been impacted by racism.

**Learning Outcomes:** This activity allows participants to experience the impact of white privileges/advantages and to see how these separate people from one another.

**Time Needed:** 15–30 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Index cards

**Degree of Risk:** Medium-risk

**Procedure:** Invite the participants to form a circle. Utilize the list of identifiers below. Read each statement and ask the participants to whom the statement applies to step inside the circle. After going through the list of statements, encourage the participants to name other examples from their own experiences. Remind the participants of the Community Agreements and encourage them to take risks where appropriate.

Please step in the circle . . .

If you are a first-generation college student

If you are a first-generation citizen

If you lived in multiple homes throughout your formative years

If you self-identify as working-class, poor

If you are bilingual or multilingual

If you have been in an interracial relationship

If you have seen yourself as privileged

If you identify yourself as spiritual

If you identify yourself as agnostic

If you identify yourself as atheist

If you come from a single-parent home

If you come from a blended family

If you have been adopted formally or informally by another family or family member

If you have ever been profiled

If you have been affected by depression

If you have had a negative encounter with the police

If you have been affected by family members with addiction

If you ever felt unsafe or harassed  
If you ever witnessed violence  
If you have a family member that has been incarcerated  
If you have been to a different country  
If you receive some form of financial aid  
If you have been affected by body-image issues  
If you have been made to feel guilty for not speaking your ancestral language  
If you are close to your family  
If you had to speak on the behalf of your race or ethnicity  
If you have been discriminated against because of your race  
If you witnessed racism  
If you ever went to a rally or protest  
If you haven't felt represented in history lessons  
If you have voted  
If you have a hard time making friends  
If you have ever been bullied  
If you ever have been a bully  
If you were the only person of your race in a group of over 50 people  
If you have ever caved into peer pressure  
If you have ever done an illegal substance  
If you were born outside of the U.S.  
If you have been affected by a family member's chronic illness  
If you have been affected by HIV/AIDS  
If you went to private school  
If you went to public school  
If you ever felt not black, Latino, Native American, man, or woman. . . enough  
If you ever felt like an outsider  
If you ever felt ashamed of your own race or ethnicity  
If you identify as multiracial  
If you ever felt you didn't belong in certain neighborhoods

**Facilitation Notes:** Note and draw out the participants' commonalities as well as differences. Probe to ask what patterns they noticed about their community. Take the emotional temperature of the room to see if the participants are experiencing feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, or perhaps anger, frustration, and despair.

It is important to note that, much like an ecosystem, we are interdependent, so oppression experienced by one community affects other communities, indirectly if not directly. Share the quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: "All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Discuss how this applies here.

**Recommended Reading (Participants):**

In Adams, Blumenfeld, Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed., pp. 1–35). New York: Routledge.

**Recommended Reading (Facilitators):** None