

Stop, Look Back, Pass the Mic

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6,

Learner/Participant Objectives: To understand the impact of privilege and power of equality.

Content Warnings: Stereotypes, discrimination, racism

Facilitator Tips: Some Participants, particularly those that are being targeted for the purpose of this activity, may begin to express frustration, anger, or even sadness. As the Facilitator, it is your responsibility to stop the exercise if a child becomes emotionally distressed. You may continue the activity by simply explaining the concepts in the following steps. It is critical that there be time allotted for group reflection and that the Facilitator reaffirms the purpose of the exercise which is to help them understand the complexities of identify privilege.

Key Terms: Privilege, equality

Time: 45–60 Minutes

Materials needed: Trash can, scratch paper (3 per Participant), large poster board, marker, candy (optional incentive)

Background: To make our communities more equitable, it's important to understand where and how inequalities exist. By understanding privilege, participants will be more aware of situations and opportunities to help facilitate and advocate for equity.

Resources:

- [Being 12: Kids on Race by Jennifer Hsu \(04:17\)](#)
- [BuzzFeed Video. Students Learn a Powerful Lesson on Privilege \(1:45\)](#)
- [How to Talk About Privilege to Someone Who Doesn't Know What That Is](#)

Discussion Questions

- What is identity privilege?
- If you are in a position of privilege, how can you advocate for someone in a constructive manner?

Procedure

- Hand each Participant a sheet of paper and ask them to sit in rows. Once seated explain that they are not allowed to move to a different seat or spot on the floor.
- Have Participants crumple the piece of paper. Then place a trash bin at the front and center of the room.

- Tell the group, “You all represent the country’s population and everyone in the country has a chance to win a piece of candy. To win a piece of candy, all you must do is throw your wadded-up paper into the bin while sitting in your seat.” *Note:* Some of the Participants in the back of the room may immediately begin to voice how they are positioned unfairly relative to the Participants in the front row. Remind Participants that they are not allowed to move their seat during this activity.
- Have all the Participants take their shot one row at a time. Take note of how many Participants make it in each row. It is expected for most of the Participants in the front to make it while only a few Participants in the back of the room will be successful.
- Now explain to the participants that those sitting in the front row may move a little closer to the bin and participants in the back row must now throw their balls into the bins with their eyes closed.
- Once the entire group has had an opportunity, explain that this is a simple way to explain privilege. The closer you are to the bin, the better your odds.
 - Point out to the group whether the front row complained, or if it was just those in the back of the room.
 - By contrast, note how those in the front of the room were less likely to take notice of their privilege. All they can see is what is directly in front of them to meet their goal.
- Explain to Participants that many things can grant “identity privilege.” Define what identity privilege means: any unearned benefit or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identity. Ask Participants to brainstorm aspects of identity that may grant privilege. These may include:
 - Skin Complexion
 - Religion
 - Education Level
 - Race
 - Gender Identity
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Class/Wealth
 - Ability
 - Citizenship Status
- So, it is all about the row you start in? Well not quite. Reflection is key in this exercise. Have all Participants sit in a circle and share with the group how they felt. The following are a few guiding questions:
 - How did the backrow feel?
 - How did the other rows feel?

- Did anyone in the front row want to speak up and advocate for their peers? If so, why didn't you speak up?
- Inform the group that as the Facilitator, you were continuously presenting the back row with obstacles. Brainstorm with Participants what these obstacles may look like in society.
- Remind Participants that although we must all try our best to achieve our goals, it is equally as important to "stop, look back, and pass the mic" to the unheard. People are not voiceless, we have just been talking over them for far too long.
- Ask Participants to think through different ways they may "pass the mic." Record their responses on a poster board and title the exercise, "stop, look back, and pass the mic." Examples include:
 - Acknowledge your own privilege
 - Point out situations where others may be treated unfairly and voice it
 - Write a letter, post a blog, or discuss it with your friends to bring awareness to the issue
 - Recommend a peer to a position or role that they may have been overlooked for in the past
 - Listen to what others that are different from you have to say
 - Make friends outside of your circle
 - Educate yourself and be aware of the injustices around you
 - Help/support others in need
 - Stop untrue or harmful messages
 - Respect others' differences and help others respect them too
 - Tell an adult if someone is in danger
 - Practice being a role model
 - Ask questions: "Are there certain groups who never get to be the hero in comic books and movies?" and "Who gets to be considered 'pretty'?"
 - Celebrate diversity
- It is recommended that the poster be displayed in the ROOTS space as an ongoing reminder of ways in which Participants may advocate for their peers and others by "passing the mic."