

## Heterosexual / Cisgender Privilege

**Skit** – Let's turn it around.

**John** (sitting at the comp)

**Jane**- Hi honey, what are you doing?

**John**- I am researching our vacation next month to make sure it's a safe place for straight people

**Jane**- Oh Ok... I am going to watch my fav. TV show. One of the few shows that acknowledges straight people as regular everyday people + shows us in a positive light.

**John**- So you are not still mad about last night?

**Jane**- Well you know I worry about our safety when you try to hold my hand in public

**John**- I know. I should not have done that. Thank goodness those people just called us disgusting perverts + walked away.

**Jane**- Yes, now all we have to deal with is our cis-gender daughter's teacher who won't allow her to use the girl's restroom.

### **Discussion:**

**What is the point of this skit?** *A fun way to point out heterosexual or cisgender privilege.*

**What are some of the privileges that were pointed out in this skit?** *Issues of safety, negative representation in the media, transgender restroom issues, myths about being a sexual deviant.*

Some people get hung up on the word privilege. Another way to look at it is things straight cisgender people don't have to put up with or consider in their daily lives.

#### **Can you think of other heterosexual/cisgender privileges?**

- Marriage is recognized everywhere
- Represented in history thoroughly and accurately
- Can adopt children without additional problems
- Not denied housing, insurance, healthcare, credit, employment
- Don't experience closet anxiety
- Don't have to hide identity in certain situations for safety and other reasons
- Can bring my significant other to family functions without issues or problems
- Don't fear that family will disown me
- Don't have to explain my relationship to my child's school
- Can go to most meetings or organizations without feeling out of place, isolated, alone, not connected, not understood or heard
- Don't receive negative messages about sexual orientation from my religion

#### **How do these privileges manifest at UH?**

Appropriate name on class roster

Homecoming king and queen

Homo / Transphobic remarks made by faculty, staff and students

Little representation in the classroom

### **What other types of privilege exist in our society?**

Abled bodied

Sighted

Hearing

White

Male

Young

### **Using Privilege to Create Change**

Knowing that we have privilege often can lead heterosexuals to have feelings of guilt and defensiveness. These feelings of are understandable because we did not ask to be privileged because of our sexual orientation.

However, we can still make a difference

### **Awareness:**

Become aware of the daily exclusions that affect those who are not heterosexual, male, upper/middle class, able bodied, and/or white.

Become aware of the advantages and conveniences you experience in your daily activities due to your social status.

Become more aware of how you may transition between being effected by a form of oppression and how you may be the perpetrator of oppression.

Analyze and critique the messages you have been taught.

### **Knowledge:**

Understand how oppression permeates the systems and institutions in society.

Understand how you may be contributing (consciously or unconsciously) to an environment that fosters oppression.

Educate yourself to understand the experiences of those who have not been afforded the privileges that you have through reading and talking to others.

As a member of a privileged group, you generally have access to individuals with similar experiences; use your credibility to create opportunities to educate others about oppression and privilege

**Why is it important to be aware of heterosexual / cisgender privilege?** *Awareness of heterosexual / cisgender privilege helps to reduce heterosexist assumption which is the assumption that heterosexuality is the normal and preferred sexual orientation and all others are deviant, and the assumption that everyone you meet is straight or should be. An example of a heterosexist assumption is asking a young woman you just met if she has a boyfriend. **Cisgender privilege?** Cisgender is the preferred identity and all others are deviant, and everyone you meet is cisgender.*