



AT THE CROSSROAD
OF INEQUALITIES /
DISCRIMINATION

PRACTICAL
EXERCISE

Step forward

Group size:

any, according to available space

Duration:

45–60 min (15 minutes for the practical part, 30–45 minutes for the discussion)

Requisites for the practical exercise:

- a space where participants can line up and move around
- tape, string, stick or similar object to mark a straight starting line
- statements for youth workers (can be printed or on an electronic device)
- chairs or cushions, on which the participants can sit during the discussion (optional)

Type of practical exercise:

team game

Methods used:

independent reflection, group reflection, group discussion

What is the purpose of this practical exercise? What does the youth worker want to achieve? What results can they expect?

The aim of the practical exercise *Step Forward* is to help participants become aware of the advantages (privileges) they have or do not have due to their personal characteristics/circumstances, such as gender, nationality, race or ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, social status, economic status, education. Participants reflect on their identities and life circumstances and how these affect their lives and the lives of others. They help participants understand that identities are interwoven, and thus part of complex intersections of privilege and marginalisation. Participants will discover that there are inequalities in society, as well as related prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination. They will be able to better understand power dynamics. The practical exercise is an opportunity to think critically about our differences and similarities. It serves as a good starting point for further discussions and exercises on intersectional discrimination. For many participants, this may be the first time they have to deal with such questions, which usually do not receive (enough) attention.



Do you know?

Advantages and privileges play an important role in shaping and perpetuating intersectional discrimination. Some groups enjoy certain advantages and privileges in society. This allows these groups to benefit more and receive better treatment than other groups. Intersectional discrimination occurs when someone suffers from several types of discrimination at the same time. This is based on racial, gender, social and other known differences. The advantages and privileges enjoyed by some groups at the expense of others can deepen and complicate these forms of discrimination.

- **Consolidation of existing power hierarchies:** People who have social, economic or cultural privileges are often in a better position to perpetuate and consolidate their positions of power. This consolidation of power can lead to the continuation and deepening of discrimination against those without such privileges. For example, privileges associated with white race, heterosexuality, or masculinity can help perpetuate systemic inequalities.
- **Failure to recognise intersectional burdens:** People with certain privileges can be blind to the experiences and challenges faced by those without those privileges. This lack of awareness can lead to a disregard for the needs and struggles of individuals who face intersectional discrimination. This makes their struggles for equality and justice even more difficult.
- **Unequal distribution of resources and opportunities:** Privileges give certain groups better access to education, employment, healthcare, and other important resources. This creates and deepens economic and social differences between groups, which in turn affects individuals who face intersectional discrimination, as they have fewer opportunities to improve their circumstances in life.
- **Maintaining status quo:** Privileged groups are less motivated to change the existing system, as this system benefits them. This can lead to active or passive resistance to changes that could reduce inequalities. Such resistance makes the fight against intersectional discrimination more difficult and perpetuates systemic injustices.
- **Influence on political and social decisions:** People with privilege often have more influence on political and social decisions. This means that the policies and practices being implemented may be designed to protect or even increase their privileges, further marginalising those without such privileges.

Addressing intersectional discrimination requires acknowledging and understanding the impact of privilege and working against a system that places some groups at an advantage at the expense of others. This requires a conscious effort to change at the individual, institutional and structural levels, including recognising one's own privileges and taking action against inequalities.



Practical exercise plan

- Before the practical exercise, prepare the room so that participants can move around the room from a common starting point.
- Tell the participants to take a few minutes to reflect on themselves and their circumstances. Ask them to think about the questions below:
 1. *How old are you?*
 2. *What gender are you?*
 3. *What is your economic status or the economic status of your family?*
 4. *What is your religious belief?*
 5. *What level of education have you attained? Were you or will you be able to study if you wanted to?*
 6. *Are you employed?*
 7. *What political beliefs do you have?*
 8. *What is your sexual orientation?*
 9. *What is the colour of your skin? What is your hair like? Do you wear a head covering?*
 10. *Do you have a visible or invisible disability?*
 11. *Do you have someone else to take care of besides yourself?*
 12. *Where do you live? In the city, in the countryside? In a rich or poor neighbourhood? What is the infrastructure like?*
 13. *Do you belong to a marginalised group?*
 14. *Do you have a migrant background?*
- Invite the participants to line up in the middle of the room. On the floor, use tape, string, stick or other object to mark the initial starting line.
- Explain to the participants that for each statement that applies to them, they should move one step forward or back, depending on the statement you are about to read. If for any reason they do not want to share or reveal their position on the statement, they can stay put.
- Explain to the participants that they should not communicate with each other while you are reading the statements.
- Begin reading the statements. Pause after each statement you read. Participants should move according to the statement read. Do not give any additional explanations or allow interaction between the participants while reading the statements.
- After reading the last statement, invite the participants to look around and assess their progress, or lack thereof, around the room.
- Invite the participants to a circle for a discussion. Participants can sit on chairs or cushions so that they are comfortable.

- You can guide the discussion using the questions below. Make sure that all participants who want to give their opinion have the opportunity to do so. Do not allow judgements and ridicule of others' positions during the discussion.



Questions for the discussion

1. *Why are some in the back and others in the front?*
2. *Did the position of any of the participants surprise you?*
3. *How did you feel at the back when others stepped forward?*
4. *How did you feel as you were stepping in front of others?*
5. *Which statement made you think the most?*
6. *If you could add a statement, what would it be?*
7. *Did you discover something new about yourself? Do you have a privilege that you were not aware of until now?*
8. *What do you wish people knew about one of your identities, situations or physical characteristics that made you take a step back?*
9. *How can we hear each other's voices no matter where we are?*
10. *The distance between participants symbolises many actual distances or inequalities in communities. What are these distances (socio-economic, cultural, rural/urban, political, gender, status, etc.)?*



Statements

1. Take a step forward if you have light hair (test question).
2. Take a step forward if you have had or will have the opportunity to complete your secondary school education.
3. Take a step forward if you have had or will have the opportunity to your studies, if you wanted to do so.
4. Take a step forward if your family supports your lifestyle.
5. Take a step forward if your family or people around you support or would support your chosen partner.
6. Take a step forward if you were born in Slovenia.
7. Take a step forward if you can move around without fear of sexual assault.
8. Take a step forward if you can move around the city on your own at night.
9. Take a step forward if your parents only had one job and didn't need additional jobs.
10. Take a step forward if you've never had to change your speech, gestures or facial expressions in public.
11. Take a step forward if you weren't ashamed of your family's apartment, car, or clothes.
12. Take a step forward if you have (or could) go on holiday abroad every year.
13. Take a step forward if you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence.
14. Take a step forward if you can marry your partner.
15. Take a step forward if you're not subjected to insults, nasty looks or ridicule in

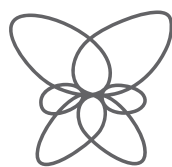
public because of your religious beliefs.

16. Take a step forward if you're not worried about having enough food for the next few months.
17. Take a step forward if you can decide for yourself when and how many children you will have.
18. Take a step forward if your family spoke Slovenian while growing up.
19. Take a step forward if your religious holidays are non-working days.
20. Take a step forward if you've never been bullied or made fun of based on something you can't change.
21. Take a step forward if you are sure that your parents could help you financially or support you if you find yourself in financial trouble.
22. Take a step forward if you have no visible disability.
23. Take a step forward if you can make mistakes and people won't attribute your behaviour to mistakes in your racial group.
24. Take a step forward if you can make mistakes and people won't attribute your behaviour to the mistakes of your gender.
25. Take a step forward if your parents are married.
26. Take a step forward if you've never been diagnosed with a disability, mental disorder or chronic illness.
27. Take a step forward if you've never been discouraged from an activity or excluded because of your social class, nationality, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
28. Take a step forward if you feel good about how your identities are portrayed in the media or the community you live in.
29. Take a step forward if you live in what is perceived as a typical family where you live.
30. Take a step forward if you believe that your language, religion and culture are respected in the society in which you live.
31. Take a step forward if you can visit or use any website without censorship.
32. Take a step forward if you're sure that you would be hired for a job based on your skills and qualifications.
33. Take a step forward if you would never think twice about calling the police when you're in trouble.
34. Take a step forward if you're able to see a physician whenever you feel it's necessary.
35. Take a step forward if you can express your emotions freely.
36. Take a step forward if you can buy new clothes or go out for drinks with friends whenever you want.
37. Take a step forward if neither parent has been laid off or unemployed by their own choice.
38. Take a step forward if you live in a democratic country.
39. Take a step forward if you can buy Band-Aids, powder or tights in your skin colour and products for your hair type at your local store.
40. Take a step forward if you've never felt uncomfortable hearing a joke or statement related to your race, nationality, gender, appearance, or sexual orientation.



Advice for the youth worker

- The practical exercise is most optimal when there is enough space for all participants. For better discussion results, we recommend you hold it in a group of up to 20 participants. This allows all participants an opportunity to express their opinions.
- If you have a larger group, try to split it into smaller groups and do the exercise separately for each group.
- If splitting into smaller groups is not possible, extend the time allotted for discussion. The larger the group, the more time you should spend on the discussion. This will allow all opinions to be heard.
- The practical exercise is designed for one school period. If possible, we recommend that you spend two school periods for this exercise. Allow extra time for in-depth discussion.
- The discussion questions listed are for assistance and guidance only. We encourage you to add your own, and especially to respond to participants' comments.
- Pay attention: maybe one of the participants is not religious and will not be sure at statement no. 19 whether to take a step forward or not. You can also address this in the discussion: for example, by asking how they decided in this case, how they view religious holidays when they themselves are not religious, and in similar ways.



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