The Beads of Privilege activity

Materials needed:

- String or bands to make bracelets
- As many different colored beads as each identity so in my adaption eight different colored beads. For the number of beads factor in that for every person you expect to come they could get up to eight beads in every category (though it is highly unlikely)
- Facilitation guide
- Tape (to hang up questions)
- Dishes for people to put their beads in while they walk around
- Dishes to hold the beads.

Description: For this activity students will be making a bracelet to represent the different identities that they have privilege in. To begin the beads are all sorted into different dishes and placed around the room where they are matched to a question sheet. So for example the blue beads would symbolize religious privilege and students would take a bead for every religious statement that they felt they had experienced privilege. This activity should remain silent while the participants are walking around gathering beads. They should then make their bracelets or keychains and follow-up questions could be asked after to close out the activity.

Moderations: Keep in mind that these questions (both the privilege statements and the facilitation questions) could change depending on different groups or different facilitation styles. Also note that physical and mental ability can be separated into two different categories.

Risk level: moderate to high

Processing Questions:

1. Initial feelings and thoughts about this activity?
2. Were there any questions that you didn’t understand or that came as a surprise to you?
3. What are some of the identities that you think about the most? The least?
4. How often do you think about your privilege? Is it hard to be able to physically see it?
5. Any identities that you saw missing?
6. Closing thoughts?
Religion

1. My place of work or school is closed on my major religious holidays.

2. I can talk openly about my religious practices without concern for how it will be received by others.

3. When swearing an oath, I am probably making this oath by placing my hand on the scripture of my religion.

4. I probably do not need to learn the religious or spiritual customs of others, and I am likely not penalized for not knowing them.

5. I can travel without others assuming that I put them at risk because of my religion; nor will my religion put me at risk from others when I travel.

6. My citizenship and immigration status will likely not be questioned, and my background will likely not be investigated, because of my religion.

7. I can openly display religious symbols on your body (dress, accessories) without people staring or asking questions.

8. I can easily find a place of worship in my town that subscribes to my belief.
Gender

1. I do not worry about walking alone at night

2. If I choose not to have children, my gender will not be called into question.

3. I do not have to consider your physical safety when you accept a date

4. I can complain about something without being told you are too emotional or asked if it is that time of the month

5. If I can have multiple sexual experiences and be patted on the back and not called derogatory names.

6. If I have children and a career, no one will think I’m selfish for not staying at home.

7. My elected representatives are mostly people of my own sex.

8. When I ask to see “the person in charge,” odds are I will face a person of my own sex.
Sexuality

1. I can be pretty sure that my roommate, hallmates and classmates will be comfortable with my sexual orientation.

2. When I talk about my heterosexuality (such as in a joke or talking about my relationships), I will not be accused of pushing my sexual orientation onto others.

3. I can go home from most meetings, classes, and conversations without feeling excluded, fearful, attacked, isolated, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, stereotyped or feared because of my sexual orientation.

4. People don't ask why I made my choice of sexual orientation.

5. No one will ever question whether or not it is appropriate for me to have children or get married because of my sexuality.

6. I can easily find a religious community that will not exclude me for being heterosexual.

7. I can walk in public with my significant other and not have people double-take or stare.

8. I will be able to sit at my partners death bed.
1. not having to bother, unless one chooses, to learn about other countries

2. If your dietary needs are met at most public locations

3. If your first language is spoken in most places you go

4. If you do not have to worry if there will be enough room for you in a car, airplane or a theater seat

5. If you can sit at almost any desk in a classroom and still be able to write comfortably.

6. If both your parents are still alive

7. If you can find clothes that fit your body type in most department stores.

8. Members of my immediate family never have been treated for depression, alcoholism or drug use
Race

1. If you can chose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match your skin.

2. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

3. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

4. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization" I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

5. I can enroll in a class at college and be sure that the majority of my professors will be of my race.

6. I can go into a supermarket and find the food I grew up with.

7. I can take a job or enroll in a college with an affirmative action policy without having my co-workers or peers assume I got it because of my race.

8. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s magazines featuring people of my race.
Class

1. Where I go to college is not dependent on your financial aid package.

2. Each student in my high school classroom had their own textbook.

3. My family owned a home that I grew up in.

4. I have travelled internationally.

5. I have the freedom to waste.

6. I had my own bedroom when I was growing up.

7. I never have to worry about being able to afford medication for myself or my family.

8. If either of your parents has a college degree.
Ability

1. If I need to move, I can easily be assured of purchasing housing I can get access to easily.

2. I don’t have to worry about where my mailbox is placed in my residence hall.

3. I do not have to worry where the curb cuts are located or if I do not know what a curb cut is.

4. I don’t have to worry about whether the snow has been cleared off or along pathways.

5. I can perform daily tasks and not have people ask you how you complete those tasks with your ability status.

6. I can sit anywhere you want in the classroom and still be able to see.

7. If you never have to worry about having an interpreter present for your classes or events that you attend.

8. I can easily complete a test without asking for special accommodations from a teacher.