

Pedagogical Concept for the Campaign

“Check Your Privileges”

Reflecting on Privilege, Responsibility, and Institutional Change

Background and Objectives

The **“Check Your Privileges”** campaign invites participants to understand privilege not as individual failure, but as an expression of social and institutional structures. The posters make visible that some people experience fewer barriers, less devaluation, less pressure to explain themselves, or fewer forms of exclusion because existing norms, routines, and expectations are more aligned with their lived realities.

The campaign addresses different dimensions of privilege, including heterosexuality, class, Christianity, physical independence, masculinity, whiteness, age, language, neurotypicality, care responsibilities, citizenship, names, and status.

From a pedagogical perspective, the campaign aims to foster a reflective engagement with power, belonging, and responsibility. It is not designed to shame or moralize, but to sharpen perception: Which aspects of everyday life do I not have to explain, justify, or protect? Which institutional routines feel “normal” to me because they work for me? And whose experiences may remain invisible as a result?

The central message of the campaign is:

Recognizing privilege is not about guilt. It is about taking responsibility and helping shape change.

This shift — from guilt to responsibility — is the pedagogical core of the campaign.

Pedagogical Approach

The campaign should be used through a critical, anti-discriminatory, anti-racist, and intersectional lens. This means that privileges should not be viewed in isolation, but as part of interconnected systems of power. A person may be privileged in one dimension and marginalized in another. The aim is therefore not to divide people into “privileged” and “non-privileged,” but to make complex social positioning visible and discussable.

For the pedagogical implementation, it is essential to create a **non-defensive space for reflection**. Participants should be invited to question their own taken-for-granted assumptions

without placing the burden of explanation on marginalized colleagues. People who experience discrimination should not be expected to educate others by sharing personal experiences. The responsibility for learning lies with the entire organization.

A useful guiding question is:

What do I not have to think about in everyday life — and what does this reveal about institutional normality?

This question reflects one of the campaign's central insights: what we do not have to think about may itself be a form of privilege.

Practical Use

The posters can be used in different ways: as a visual campaign in buildings, as prompts in workshops, as discussion starters in teams, as accompanying material for DEI events, or as a reflection tool in leadership development, onboarding, and organizational culture processes.

Low-threshold use

The posters can first be used as silent reflection prompts. They can be displayed in corridors, meeting rooms, shared spaces, or digital communication channels. A short accompanying prompt may be helpful:

Take a moment: Which statement resonates with you? Which one irritates you? Which perspective had you perhaps not considered before?

This format is suitable when organizations want to create awareness without immediately moving into a moderated discussion.

Short moderated team reflection

For team meetings or working groups, the campaign can be used in a 5–10-minute format. One poster is selected and discussed through the following questions:

1. What does this poster make visible?
2. Which institutional routines are connected to this form of privilege?
3. Who benefits from this form of normality?
4. Who has to make additional efforts in order to belong?
5. What could change concretely in our working context?

The discussion should not remain at the level of personal opinion. The focus should remain on structures, routines, and possibilities for action.

In-depth workshop format

For a 30–60-minute workshop, several posters can be combined. Participants work in small groups, each selecting one poster and reflecting on three levels:

Individual level:

Which taken-for-granted assumptions do I recognize in my own everyday life?

Interactional level:

How do privileges appear in communication, recognition, humor, language, meetings, or informal networks?

Institutional level:

Which rules, spaces, time structures, expectations, or evaluation criteria benefit certain groups more than others?

The groups then collect concrete ideas for change. The aim is not to produce complete solutions, but to initiate institutional learning processes.

Reflection Questions

The following questions are particularly useful when working with the posters:

- Which statement triggered agreement, irritation, or resistance in me?
- Which forms of privilege are particularly visible in our working context?
- Which forms remain less visible?
- Which assumptions about “normality” shape our communication, spaces, working hours, and career paths?
- Who has to explain, adapt, or justify themselves more often in our organization?
- Where do we confuse equal treatment with justice?
- What responsibility follows from recognizing one’s own privileges?
- What is one small, concrete step we could take to reduce barriers?

These questions should not be understood as an invitation to disclose personal experiences of discrimination. They are intended to support a shared analysis of institutional conditions.

Moderation Guidelines and Avoiding Misinterpretation

Since the term “privilege” can trigger defensiveness, careful framing is essential. At the beginning, it should be made clear that:

Privilege does not mean that someone’s life is easy.

It means that certain barriers do not occur, or occur less often, because of one’s social positioning.

Critically reflecting on privilege is not about assigning guilt.

It is about taking responsibility.

The focus is not on individual moral judgment.

The focus is on structural inequality and institutional change.

Marginalized people must not be turned into educational resources.

No one should be asked or expected to share personal experiences of discrimination.

Resistance can be pedagogically relevant.

Irritation, defensiveness, or discomfort may indicate that taken-for-granted assumptions are being challenged. These reactions should be acknowledged, but they should not become the center of the discussion.

Intended Impact

The campaign can have its strongest effect when it is not treated as a one-time awareness measure, but as an entry point into continuous organizational development. It supports a culture in which belonging, recognition, and participation are not understood as individual adaptation, but as institutional responsibility.

Its pedagogical value lies in making complex power relations visible in an accessible way while communicating a clear message: reflecting on privilege means looking more carefully, taking responsibility, and helping to create concrete change in one's own working environment.

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