

Appendix B: Heterosexual Privilege (Students)

The dynamics listed below are but a few examples of the heterosexual privileges. Gender and/or sexually diverse youth have a range of different experiences, but cannot count on many of these conditions in their lives.

As a heterosexual youth:

1. I do not have to explain what caused my heterosexuality, nor do I have to tolerate the suggestions that it should be cured.
2. If I surf the net, read a magazine, watch a movie or listen to music, I can be certain my sexual orientation will be represented.
3. When I talk (e.g., telling a joke or sharing an anecdote) about my heterosexuality or the heterosexuality of others, I will not be accused of pushing heterosexuality onto others.
4. If my community, family and/or friends find out I am heterosexual, I do not fear that that I might be harassed, kicked out of my house or disowned.
5. I can be sure that my school will have learning materials that testify to the existence of people of my sexual orientation.
6. People do not ask why I choose to be heterosexual or why I choose to let others know I am heterosexual.
7. I do not try to hide my sexual orientation.
8. I can easily find a religious or faith community that will not exclude me for being heterosexual.
9. I am comfortable sharing anecdotes of my personal life with my teachers and peers.
10. I can walk in public with my boyfriend/girlfriend and not have people do a double-take, stare at us or shun us.
11. I can go for months without being called straight.
12. I can go to the locker room/change room and not worry that I might get bullied or assaulted because I am 'straight'.
13. I can attend a student-led group and not expect the community to lobby against it.
14. I can ask my partner to be my grad escort and not worry that there will be consequences because we are heterosexual.
15. I can be confident that my teachers will know how to support my relationships.
16. I do not have to pretend to be gay or transgender to be accepted.

This list is adapted from Working Paper 189. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by **Peggy McIntosh**.