

# Title: Wheel of Privilege and Power

## Inclusive Teaching

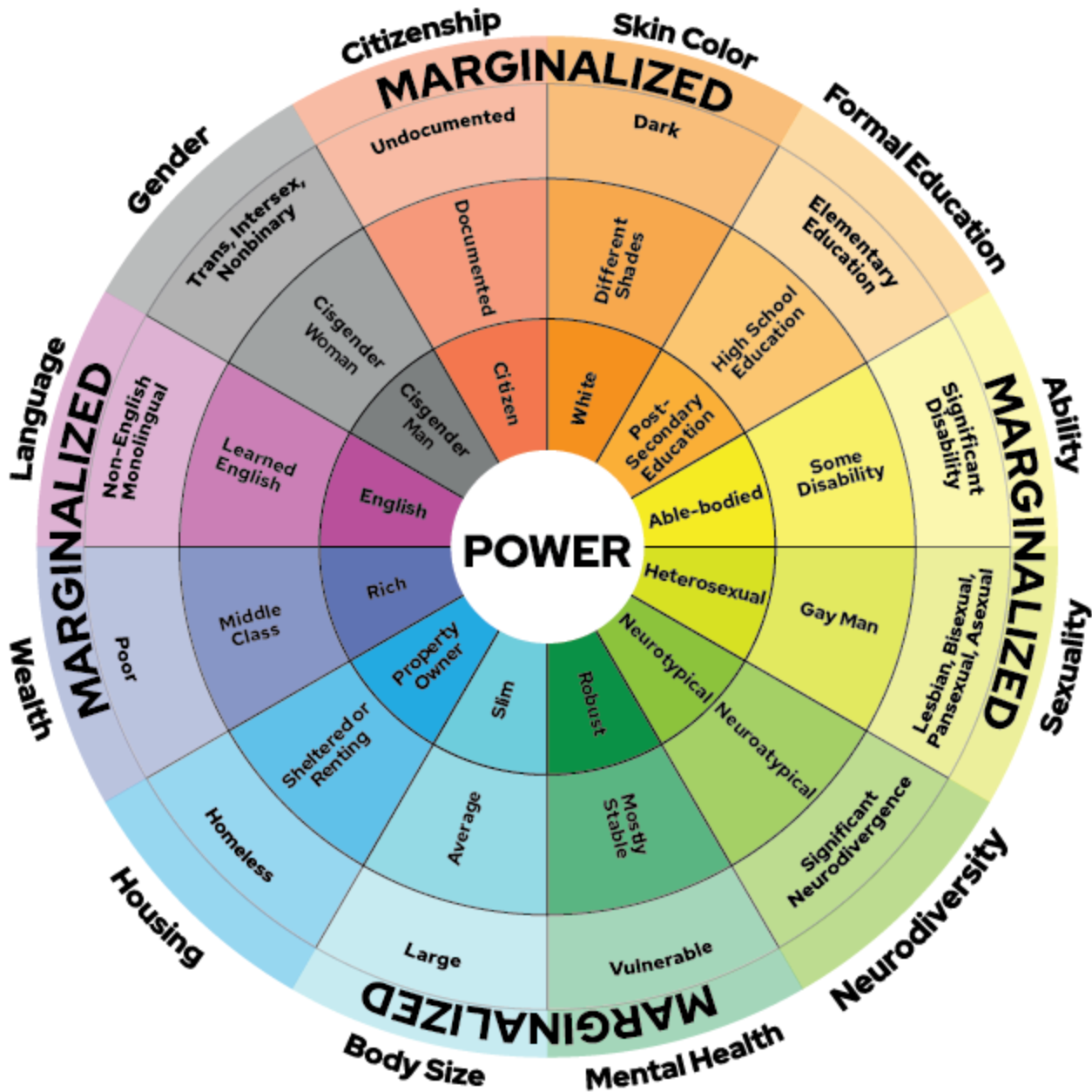
Universal Design

Belonging & Wellness

Equity & Inclusion

Inclusive Language

Graphic that represents the wheel of privilege and power



Adapted from James R Vanderwoerd ("Web of Oppression"), and Sylvia Duckworth ("Wheel of Power/Privilege")

Graphic from James R Vanderwoerd ("Web of Oppression"), and Sylvia Duckworth ("Wheel of Power/Privilege")

Wheel of Oppression defined in Mullaly's *Challenging oppression and confronting privilege: A critical social work approach*.

In the center is the word "power", and on the outside of the wheel is the word "marginalised". The categories are:

- Body size, with large on the margins, and slim in the center;
- Mental health, with vulnerable on the margins and robust in the center;
- Neurodiversity, with significant neurodivergence on the margins, and neurotypical in the center;
- Sexuality with lesbian, bi, pan, and asexual on the margins, and heterosexual in the center;
- Ability with a significant disability on the margins, and able-bodied in the center;
- Formal education with elementary education on the margins and post-secondary in the center;
- Skin color with dark on the margins, and white in the center;

- Citizenship with undocumented on the margins, and citizens in the center;
- Gender with trans, intersex, and non-binary on the margins and cisgender in the center;
- Language with non-English monolingual on the margins and English in the center;
- Wealth with poor on the margins and rich in the center;
- Housing with homeless on the margins and owning property in the center.

**Note:** This graphic is not intended to capture all areas of marginalization. The intent is to provide a framework to view power and privilege. As you identify additional areas of marginalization, take time to reflect on how you might represent that within the model..

## Social Identities

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Our socialization has been ongoing since childhood. In her essay, "The Complexity of Identity: 'Who Am I?'" Beverly Daniel Tatum (2018, p. 7) poses a series of questions that begin to explore how we experience our identity and form a "core" sense of self:

"Who am I? The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? What message is reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers, my neighbors, store clerks? What do I learn from the media about myself? How am I represented in the cultural images around me? Or am I missing from the picture altogether?...Integrating one's past, present, and future into a cohesive, unified sense of self is a complex task that begins in adolescence and continues for a lifetime."

**Reference:** Tatum, B. D. (2018). The complexity of identity: "Who am I?." In Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W. J., Hackman, H. W., Zuniga, X., Peters, M. L. (Eds.),

According to Harro (2000) Our earliest interactions with our parents, teachers, and other personal connections helped shape our norms, values, roles, and rules. These messages are then reinforced by institutional and cultural socialization from churches, schools, television, media, etc. Many marginalized social identities and memberships have some form of oppression associated with them: racism, sexism, religious oppression/anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and ableism (discrimination in favor of able-bodied people). This includes disabilities that are emergent or chronic, visible or invisible, physical or psychological, single or multiple, temporary or permanent (Tatum, 2018). The salience of any one of our group-related social identities may shift over time and context. And, while some of our social identities may stay the same over our lifespan (e.g., ethnicity, racial identity), others may change (e.g., age, able-bodiedness, class status).

**Reference:** Harro, B. (2000). The Cycle of Socialization. In M. Adams, W. Blumenfeld, R. Castaneda, H. Hackman, M. Peters. & X. Zuniga (Eds.), Readings for diversity and social justice, pp. 16-21. New York: Routledge

## The complexity of social identities

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Kimberlé Crenshaw, a pioneer in critical race theory, in "[The Urgency of Intersectionality](#)" TED Talk (18:40), explains how paying attention to a single social identity category, especially at the individual level, inhibits us from seeing the effects on individuals of systemic patterns that institutions and culture reinforce to advantage some and disadvantage others. Crenshaw's work explains that membership in more than one oppressed social identity group (e.g., African American and woman) can result in compounded challenges. Whenever a person is a member of two or more social identity groups that experience marginalization and discrimination, intersectionality theory reminds us to look at the complexity of a person's lived experience in its totality, not at a single identity category in isolation from others.

Therefore, we must examine ourselves as individuals and as part of larger groups. We are constantly socialized through interactions and as part of larger social groups, including in higher education.

## Importance of intersectionality

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Watch the following video: View up to 1:36 out of the 10-minute interview:

Direct link on YouTube: [https://youtu.be/ROwquxC\\_Gxc](https://youtu.be/ROwquxC_Gxc)

### Kimberlé Crenshaw Discusses 'Intersectional Feminism'



## Advantaged and disadvantaged groups

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"Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do. Access to privilege doesn't determine one's outcomes, but it is an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something positive for them."

-Peggy McIntosh, [Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)

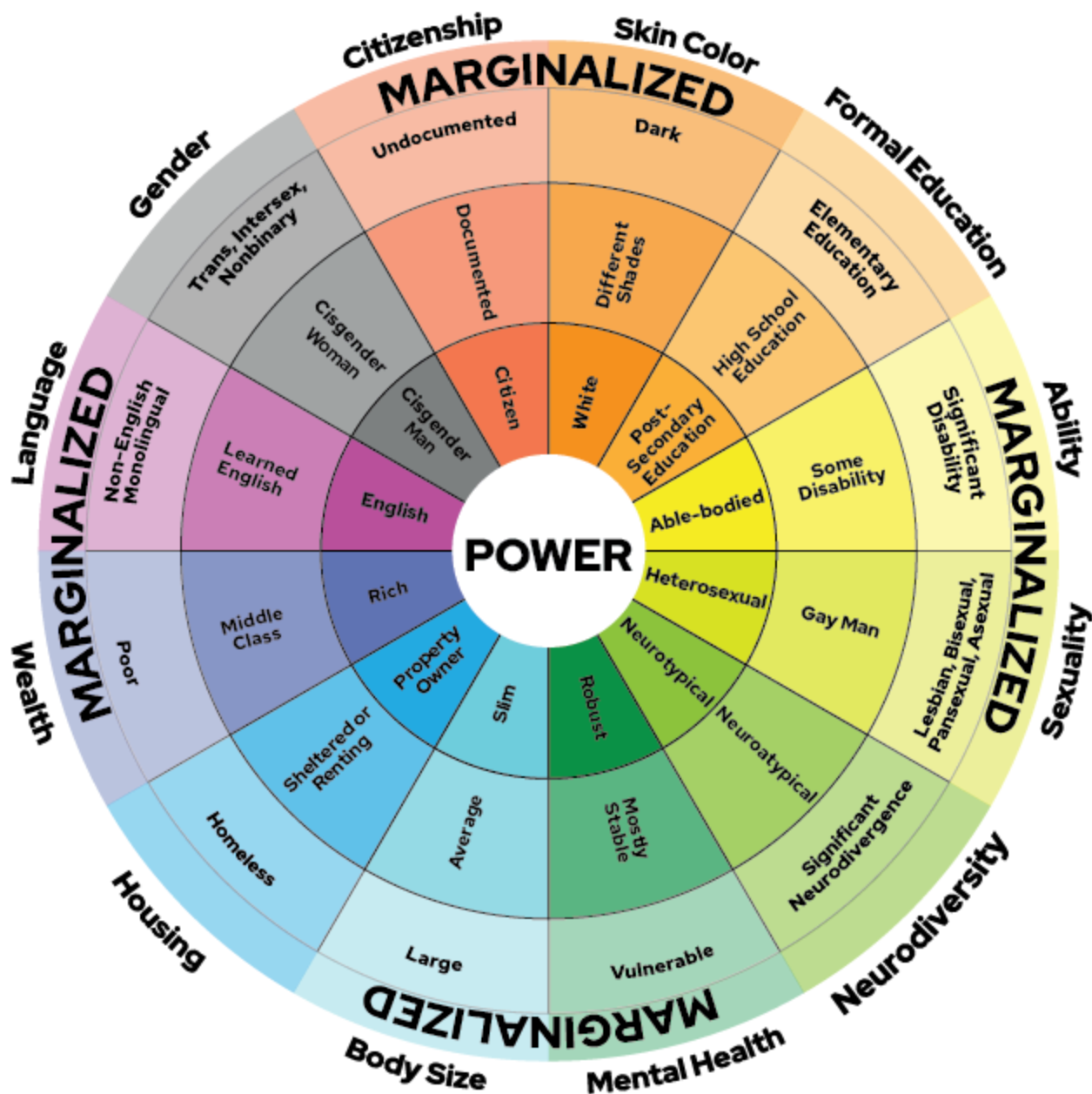
**Reference:** McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. Peace & Freedom Magazine, 10–12.

[An Instructor's Guide to Understanding Privilege](#) (University of Michigan Inclusive Teaching Website): Helps instructors to understand better and attend to how privilege operates in the classroom. Note: The resource guide and short video (under related posts) are handy and worth reviewing.

[Stereotype Threat:](#) (University of Michigan Inclusive Teaching Website). This resource explains stereotype threat (the risk that people who fall into identity groups that are often negatively stereotyped may underperform in evaluative settings such as the classroom as a result of feeling the pressure of the stereotype), provides a few strategies for counteracting stereotype threat, and directs instructors toward further resources.

The Power and Privilege Wheel (from the Teaching at UW Foundations session, Center for Teaching, Learning, and Mentoring) pictured below shows the different degrees to which a person can be marginalized or have power over others in society based on their characteristics. (see the listed categories) Where are you a member of an

advantaged group, and where are you a member of a disadvantaged group? Adapted from James R Vanderwoerd ("Web of Oppression"), and Sylvia Duckworth ("Wheel of Power/Privilege"). The Wheel of Oppression was defined in Mullaly's *Challenging oppression and confronting privilege: A critical social work approach*.



Adapted from James R Vanderwoerd ("Web of Oppression"), and Sylvia Duckworth ("Wheel of Power/Privilege")

**Reference:** Mullaly, Bob. *Challenging oppression and confronting privilege: A critical social work approach*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

## Citations

- Mullaly, Bob. *Challenging oppression and confronting privilege: A critical social work approach*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

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Resources on fostering and designing inclusive learning environments and content.