

What is white privilege? And why does it matter?

White privilege is the unearned, mostly unacknowledged social advantage white people have over other racial groups simply because of being white.

White privilege doesn't mean your life hasn't been hard, it just means your skin color isn't one of the things making it harder.

Systemic racism exists at **every level of society**: in education, in the workforce, in media, in government, in healthcare and the environment, and in the criminal justice system.

- Black people are 20% more likely to be sentenced to jail time than whites who were convicted of similar crimes.
- Black drivers are about 30% more likely than whites to be pulled over by the police.
- Black students are three times more likely to be suspended than white students.

It is a privilege that white people do not experience these forms of racism. White privilege means you **actively benefit from** the oppression of people of color. For example, you are the dominant representation in media, you don't get harassed for existing in public places, and no one questions your citizenship.

We're complicit in racist structures even if they go against our values or beliefs. Instead of asking **if** you've been shaped by systemical racism, ask yourself **how** you've benefited from them or been complicit in harm because of them.

What should I do with my white privilege?

- Listen to people of color and amplify their voices and stories to your white peers.
- Confront racial injustice, even when it's **uncomfortable**. Teach other white people about the barriers to success for people of color
- Take action so that you can be **anti-racist**, not just non-racist. Visit **www.how-can-i-help.org** to see more than 10 action items to combat racism.

Sources

United States Sentencing Commission: "Demographic Differences in Sentencing", 2017.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, "Data Snapshot: School Discipline", 2014.

Ingraham, Christopher. "You Really Can Get Pulled over for Driving While Black, Federal Statistics Show." The Washington Post, WP Company, 9 Sept. 2014.

Information from Courtney Ahn (courtneyahndesign.com) and pfw.guide

So how can I help?

Feelings of guilt, anger, sadness, or denial are common responses to understanding one's own complicity in something bad. How can you transform these feelings into a positive action that fights the problem at hand? The answer is to do something about it. Use your voice, your financial resources, and your capacity to educate others.

Visit **www.how-can-i-help.org** to learn more