

## **Power Shuffle**

### **Benefits and Facilitation Options**

#### **Benefits:**

The Power Shuffle exercise illustrates:

- How people can move from being in positions of power (oppressors) to positions of non-power (oppressed).
- The complexity of oppression – it's not all “black and white”
- Ways that we gain privilege in the power position
- Helps participants access feelings about being in each position

**Time Required:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Ideal Group Size:** 15 – 25 participants

**Support Materials:** List of ways that people of various groups have or don't have privilege.

#### **Key Instructions:**

1. Divide the room or space into two areas on either side of the facilitator.
2. Name one side the “Power Side” and the other the “Non-Power Side”.
3. Instruct participants to move slowly to the side of the room that is most appropriate based on the examples you read to them.
4. Ask participants to notice what side of the room they go to and how it feels.
5. Ask participants to notice what side of the room others go to and how that feels.
6. Read examples and allow people to get to and then stand on their sides for a minute or two while they observe and reflect.
7. After reading through the chosen examples, ask participants to return to their seats.
8. Debrief the exercise by asking participants to share what they noticed and how it felt.

#### **Key Points:**

- It often happens that people never change sides. This is because of the privileges afforded or not afforded based on membership in a group.
- For people who are often or always on the power side, it can be difficult to see this played out so concretely. Let yourself feel uncomfortable. The people on the non-power side feel discomfort on some level all of the time.
- This exercise is about building awareness, not determining where to place blame.
- Generally, people don't feel good on either side of the room. Oppression hurts everyone at some level.

#### **Issues:**

- This can be an intense exercise. It is important to have built community within the group before facilitating this exercise.