

Barriers to People from Privileged Groups Working Collaboratively with People from Subordinated Groups

- **Talking Over**
 - Individuals from dominant groups are often in positions of power and have confidence in their knowledge, skills and ability to get things done. Add to this internalized (often unconscious) sense of superiority. People from privileged groups can share their resources in ways that enhances rather than controls or diverts the group.
- **Wanting Things to be Done According to the Dominant Culture**
 - When people from the oppressed group get to set the norms, whether it be about communication, conflict, food, time or process, it may be different from how the dominant group usually does it. This requires people from privileged groups to value other ways of thinking, being and doing. They need to be willing to be flexible and out of their comfort zone.
- **Trying to be One of Them**
 - Whether out of shame, lack of rootedness in one's own culture or wanting to be accepted, people from privileged groups cannot pretend to be someone they are not. More likely, people will be seen as "wannabes", making it more difficult for trust to develop. People from dominant groups can be sensitive to their enactment of privilege while being clear about who they are and their values.
- **Seeking Emotional Support**
 - People who work together ideally can develop relationships that are mutually caring and respectful. However, people from the privileged group should not expect emotional caretaking from people from the oppressed group.
- **Expecting to be Taught**
 - People from the dominant groups can learn a lot from working with people from marginalized groups. However, this can be done without looking to people from the oppressed group to teach them.
- **Expecting Gratitude or Praise**
 - Everyone like to feel that her/his efforts are recognized and appreciated, but as an ally in social justice work, that is not the purpose. Social justice work is done for one's own and others' liberation, not as charity or to be seen as a good person.

(Adapted from Diane Goodman, Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups, Routledge, 2011)