

What Is Heterosexual Privilege?

If you are heterosexual (or, in some cases, simply perceived as heterosexual):

- you can go wherever you want and know that you will not be harassed, beaten, or killed because of your sexuality
- you do not have to worry about being mistreated by the police or victimized by the criminal justice system because of your sexuality
- you can express affection (kissing, hugging, and holding hands) in most social situations and not expect hostile or violent reactions from others
- you are more likely to see sexually-explicit images of people of your sexuality without these images provoking public consternation or censorship
- you can discuss your relationships and publicly acknowledge your partner (such as by having a picture of your lover on your desk) without fearing that people will automatically disapprove or think that you are being “blatant”
- you can legally marry the person whom you love
- you can receive tax breaks, health and insurance coverage, and spousal legal rights through being in a long-term relationship
- you can be assured that your basic civil rights will not be denied or outlawed because some people disapprove of your sexuality (for example, in 1998, Maine voters repealed a state law protecting the rights of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals)
- you can join the military and be open about your sexuality
- you can expect that your children will be given texts in school that implicitly support your kind of family unit and that they will not be taught that your sexuality is a “perversion”
- you can approach the legal system, social service organizations, and government agencies without fearing discrimination because of your sexuality
- you can raise, adopt, and teach children without people believing that you will molest them or force them into your sexuality. Moreover, people generally will not try to take away your children because of your sexuality
- you can belong to the religious denomination of your choice and know that your sexuality will not be denounced by its religious leaders
- you can easily find a neighborhood in which residents will accept how you have constituted your household
- you know that you will not be fired from a job or denied a promotion because of your sexuality
- you can work in traditionally male- or female-dominated occupations without it being considered “natural” for someone of your sexuality
- you can expect to see people of your sexuality positively presented on nearly every television show and in nearly every movie
- you can expect to be around others of your sexuality most of the time. You do not have to worry about being the only one of your sexuality in a class, on a job, or in a social situation
- you can act, dress, and talk as you choose without it being considered a reflection on people of your sexuality

- if you were to commit a sexual crime (such as rape or incest), it would not be viewed as a direct result of your sexuality
- you can teach about lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals without being seen as having a bias because of your sexuality or forcing a “homosexual agenda” on students