

# WALK IN THEIR SHOES

Sometimes employees aren't aware how privileged they are.

This exercise can help them better understand if they have a head start over some of their colleagues.

## STEPS TO CONDUCT A PRIVILEGE WALK

- 1 Ensure all employees participating feel comfortable, and make sure it's opt-in.
- 2 Explain the origin and purpose of the exercise, and show people an example walk (such as this: [bit.ly/3w2sWvP](http://bit.ly/3w2sWvP)).
- 3 Find a large, empty space to conduct the exercise.
- 4 Ask employees to stand in a horizontal line and hold hands (if they are comfortable).
- 5 Explain to employees that if they answer 'yes' to a question, they should take a step forward. If they answer 'no, they should stay standing still.

**“The privilege walk is a powerful experiential and visual demonstration of how gaps in people’s experiences are created, and the impact of it. It’s quick and effective. People often have major breakthroughs and insights.”**

**CARLA ROGERS, DIRECTOR, EVOLVE COMMUNITIES**

## EXAMPLE PERSONAS WITH DIFFERING PRIVILEGE LEVELS



**ALICE**

is the daughter of one of Melbourne's most prestigious heart surgeons. Both her parents attended university, and Alice received both a bachelor and masters degree. Her father is friends with the CEO of her current employer and got her a work experience opportunity which eventually turned into full-time work. Alice is white.



**BILLY**

is an Indigenous male from Wollongong. He dropped out of high school in year 11 to get a job to help support his family financially. When he was 22, he underwent a leadership and management course at TAFE. He moved to Sydney three years ago, after being the top graduate in his Indigenous internship program.



**STEVEN**

was born and grew up in Queensland. He is from a single-parent household and his mother often struggled to make ends meet. Due to impressive school test scores, he received a scholarship to attend university and was the first in his family to graduate. Steven is white.



**DEWI**

moved to Australia from Indonesia just two years ago when her company was acquired by a Sydney-based company. She is highly educated and comes from a wealthy family, but she is still getting a grasp on the English language. Dewi lost the use of both of her legs in an accident, so gets around using a wheelchair.



**AMY**

was born in Australia to Italian migrant parents. While her family has always had food and a roof over their heads, they've never had enough money to splash out on things. Amy was the first person in her family to graduate from university and she identifies as bisexual.



**BINGWEN**

moved to Australia from his home country of China for university five years ago and gained employment right after graduation due to impressive test scores. He comes from a relatively wealthy family and lives close to the CBD with his long-term boyfriend.

## POTENTIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

These are just an example of questions you may ask. Participant's positions may change depending on the questions asked.

**Q1**

One of my parents attended university.

**Q2**

Everyday business is conducted in my native language.

**Q3**

I am comfortable talking to government officials.

**Q4**

My family owned the house I grew up in.

**Q5**

I was born male and still identify as male.

**Q6**

When I go shopping, I don't worry that I'll be followed by suspicious staff.

**Q7**

My family, friends or professional network have assisted me in my career.

**Q8**

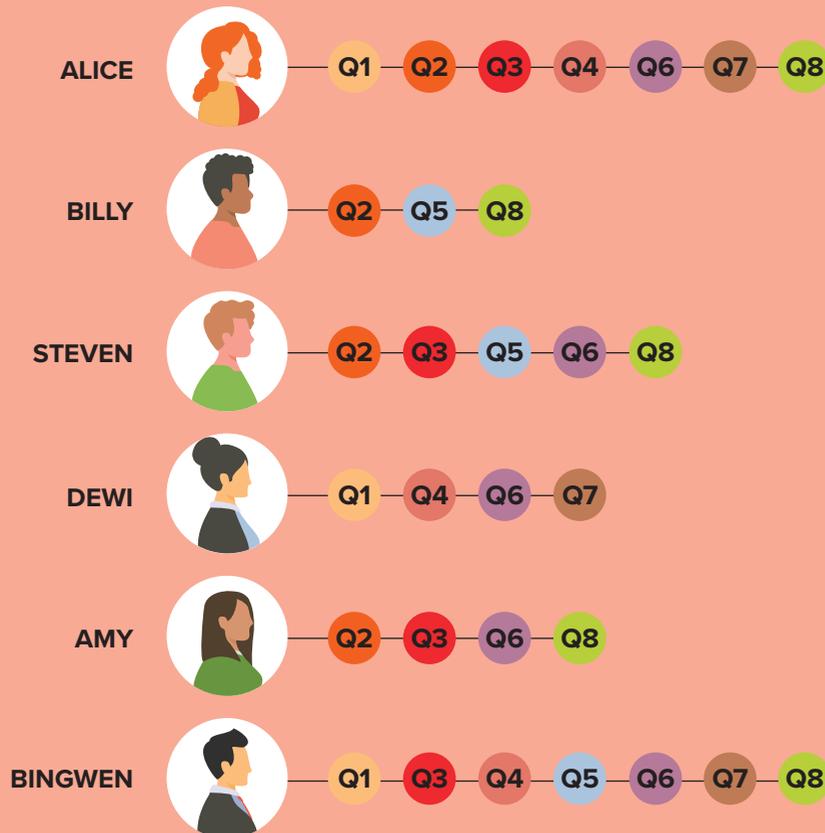
It is physically easy for me to get around each day.

**“Understanding our privilege is one of the most powerful things we can do to be effective allies to those who are less privileged than us. Allyship is critical to creating inclusive and productive workplaces.”**

**AUNTY MUNYA ANDREWS, DIRECTOR, EVOLVE COMMUNITIES, AND INDIGENOUS CULTURE EXPERT**

## EXAMPLE RESPONSES

Coloured dots indicate where participants stepped forward



Sources: Aunty Munya Andrews and Carla Rogers, Directors at Evolve Communities (Evolve's privilege walks are used for identifying gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians).

For a free, online privilege walk resource, visit: [pages.evolve.com.au/online-privilege-walk](https://pages.evolve.com.au/online-privilege-walk); Inspired by White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Dr Peggy McIntosh. Class at Work report, Diversity Council of Australia (2020).

Still stubbornly pale: Study finds ASX 300 boards are lagging on cultural diversity, MinterEllison (2021).

## QUICK STATS & FACTS



**43%**

of lower-class workers report having experienced harassment or discrimination at work



**22%**

of lower-class workers report missing out on privileges and opportunities at work, compared to 9% of middle-class workers



**90%**

of ASX 300 board directors are from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds



**18**

Experts predict it could take 18 years before Australia's boardrooms are reflective of the community



**31%**

Women account for 31% of ASX 300 board seats, a 3% increase from 2020