



## **Workshop: Understanding Power, Privilege & Human Rights**

### **Introduction**

And welcome to the New Dawn Leadership Series. What's going on in the world today? It seems like everyone's fighting to belong! Today we're diving into building a culture where everyone fits in. Our communities mix races, cultures, and economic realities, shaping how we connect. We're different, yet the challenges we face, the dreams we chase, and the struggles we overcome often connect us more than we think.

---

### **What are Human Rights?**

Human rights are the basic needs that everyone should have access to food, shelter, clean water, healthcare, and work. These are things everyone deserves, yet not everyone has the same access to them. This gap is where inequality begins to show.

### **Human Rights Foundation**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a global document with created by the United Nations in 1948 that outlines the basic rights and freedoms 30 fundamental rights and freedoms that belong to every single one of us. However, it is not a legally binding document, it serves as a foundation for international human rights law and has been incorporated into many national constitutions and legal frameworks.

### **Who gets left out?**

People facing discrimination because of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status are often left behind. These individuals may have their basic human rights denied due to systemic barriers.

### **Diverse Perspectives**

Our backgrounds—whether it's race, class, or something else—shape how we experience the world and how others interact with us. As leaders, it's crucial to be self-aware and think critically about how our experiences influence our actions and decisions. Leadership isn't just about knowing what to do; it's about understanding who we are and how others are impacted by the systems around them.

***Hand Animation Idea: A hand holding a magnifying glass over a diverse group of people.***

### **What is Social Identity?**

Our social identity is made up of categories like race, gender, ability, class, and nationality. These categories influence how we move through life and the opportunities available to us.

***Hand Animation Idea: Hands holding name tags that say "Race," "Gender," "Class," etc.***

### **Privilege vs. Oppression**

Some identities hold power and privilege, while others face oppression. For example, some people have unquestioned access to jobs, education, and housing, while others face barriers simply because of their identity. Privilege isn't just about wealth—it's about the benefits certain groups receive while others face disadvantages.

***Hand Animation Idea: A scale with "Privilege" on one side and "Barriers" on the other.***

---

### **What is a Stereotype?**

Stereotypes are fixed, often oversimplified beliefs about groups of people, based on things like race, gender, religion, or nationality. Examples include ideas like "All certain groups are lazy" or "People from certain places are dangerous." These beliefs are harmful and contribute to discrimination.

***Hand Animation Idea: A stamp coming down with "STEREOTYPE" in bold letters.***

### **Stigma & Discrimination:**

- Stigma is a mark of shame that society places on certain characteristics or groups—such as mental illness or poverty.
- Discrimination is the unequal treatment people face because of these characteristics. It can show up in jobs, housing, education, and even policing.

***Hand Animation Idea: A hand being rejected at a "Job Application" window.***

---

### **How do systems reinforce inequality?**

Inequality is built into the systems that run society. Think about institutions like education, government, and law enforcement—these structures often reinforce and maintain power imbalances.

Who controls resources—like land, jobs, and media—determines who gets ahead and who doesn't.

***Hand Animation Idea: A hand holding a remote control labeled "Media Influence."***

### **3 Systems of Domination:**

- **Colonialism:** The historical exploitation of land, resources, and cultural destruction of Indigenous communities.
- **Patriarchy:** Older, white-male-dominated power structures that give men power over women and non-binary people.
- **Capitalism:** Economic systems that benefit the wealthy and create barriers for the rest.

***Hand Animation Idea: A hand flipping three cards labeled "Colonialism," "Patriarchy," and "Capitalism."***

---

### **Wealth & Power**

- The wealthiest 1% control a disproportionate share of global resources, shaping policies, economies, and opportunities in their favor.
- Economic inequality is one of the greatest barriers to opportunity today. Access to education, healthcare, and jobs is often determined by wealth rather than race. While racial inequalities still exist, the gap between the rich and the poor is now the biggest factor shaping life outcomes.

***Hand Animation Idea: A hand stacking coins on one side of a table while another side remains empty.***

### **Current Affairs**

The world is in crisis due to escalating tariffs imposed by the United States on various countries, leading to increased global tensions. The US president's trade policies have sparked economic instability, leading to job losses and mass deportations. Rising costs push food, housing, and basic needs further out of reach for everyday people.

Riot is struggling to afford groceries, watching as basic food items become luxury priced. Steve sees his sister in the US battling rising rent and daily survival and, Kingston knows

that deportations aren't just about individuals being sent home—they cut off financial support that entire families in Jamaica rely on.

They know the system won't change overnight, but they refuse to do nothing. From community food sourcing to starting an indoor garden, they take control where they can—because for those without wealth and power, survival means adapting.

***Hand Animation Idea: A map split into "US" and "Canada" with hands placing money on both sides.***

---

## **Conclusion**

Wealth and power shape the opportunities people have, and right now, the gap is only getting wider. But change doesn't happen by waiting for someone else to fix it. It happens when communities come together, challenge the systems that keep people struggling, and find ways to take control where they can.

The issues we've talked about—rising costs, housing struggles, deportations—aren't just numbers on a chart. They're real, they're personal, and they demand action. No, we can't change the entire system overnight, but we **can** change how we navigate it. Whether it's supporting local suppliers, growing food, or creating community spaces, the solutions start with us.

So, ask yourself—what's one step you can take today? Because waiting for change isn't an option but making it happen is.

## **Interactive Reflection**

Now, let's think about how all this all connects. Think about your own experiences with privilege or oppression. Where have you seen these systems at play in your own life, in your community, or in the world around you?

How are you experiencing what's happening in the world today where you are? How do you see it affecting others in your community or around the world? How might you step into someone else's 'knew' shoes and understand their story?

Write down your thoughts or drop a comment—let me know how this connects with you. Let's keep learning together!

***Hand Animation Idea: Hands writing answers on sticky notes or a flip chart.***