

Glossary

Ableism: Discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals.

Affirmative Action: Proactive policies and procedures for remedying the effect of past discrimination and ensuring the implementation of equal employment and educational opportunities, for recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting women, minorities, people with disabilities and veterans in compliance with the federal requirements enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).

Ageism: Discrimination against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes.

Ally: A person who takes action against oppression out of a belief that eliminating oppression will benefit members of targeted groups and advantage groups. Allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups than their own, take supportive action on their behalf, commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of these groups, and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

Anti-Oppression: Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional, and personal forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression.

Anti-Racism: is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.¹

Anti-Black (Structural) Racism: Term used to specifically describe the unique discrimination, violence and harms imposed on and impacting Black people specifically.²

Belonging: It is an unwavering commitment to not simply tolerating and respecting difference but to ensuring that all people are welcome and feel that they belong in the society. Belonging means more than just being seen. Belonging entails having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of social and cultural structures. Belonging means having the right to contribute to, and make demands on, society and political institutions. ([Source](#))

Bias: A positive or negative inclination towards a person, group, or community; can lead to stereotyping.

Bigotry: Intolerant prejudice which glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups.

Bisexuality: Romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of more than one sex and/or gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.

Chicano/a: A term adopted by some Mexican Americans to demonstrate pride in their heritage, born out of the national Chicano Movement that was politically aligned with the Civil Rights Movement to end racial oppression and social inequalities of Mexican Americans. Chicano pertains to the experience of Mexican-descended individuals living in the United States. Not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano.

Cisgender: A gender identity where an individual's self-perception of their gender aligns with their perceived sex.

Classism: Biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socioeconomic grouping. Classism can also be expressed as public policies and

¹ Race Forward, "[Race Reporting Guide](#)" (2015).

² <http://www.blacksocialchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BSCFN-Case-Statement.pdf>

institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity.

Colorblind: Term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices that do not consider race or ethnicity as a determining factor. The term 'colorblind' de-emphasizes or ignores race and ethnicity as a large part of one's identity.

Colonization: Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. Ongoing and legacy colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. See also: [Decolonization](#).

Conscious Bias: In its extreme is characterized by overt negative behavior that can be expressed through physical and verbal harassment or through more subtle means such as exclusion.

Cultural appropriation: Theft of cultural elements—including symbols, art, language, customs, etc.—for one's own use, commodification, or profit, often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant (i.e., white) culture's right to take other cultural elements.³

Cultural assimilation: When an individual, family, or group gives up certain aspects of its culture to adapt to the dominant culture.

Culture: A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.

Discrimination: Unfavorable or unfair treatment towards an individual or group based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, socioeconomic status, education, sex, marital status, parental status, veteran's status, political affiliation, language, age, gender, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Diversity: The range of differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental ability, faith practices, and socioeconomic class. It also encompasses different political preferences, geographic perspectives, and elements of lived experience such as immigration or veteran status, among others. Diversity is not simply a list of identities and experiences, it involves elevating the perspectives, voices, needs, and influence of those who have historically had less power and privilege.

Emotional tax: The combination of being on guard to protect against bias and feeling different from peers at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work. It particularly affects BIPOC employees.

Empowerment: When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.

Equality: Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and health life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness.

Equity: The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that

³ Colours of Resistance Archive, "[Cultural Appropriation](#)" (accessed 28 June 2013).

fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. There are subtypes of equity, such as health equity.

Ethnicity: A social construct which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Ethnocentrism: The practice of using a particular ethnic group as a frame of reference, basis of judgment, or standard criteria from which to view the world. Ethnocentrism favors one ethnic group's cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other ethnic groups.

Eurocentrism: The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.

Feminism: Theory and practice that advocates for educational and occupational equity between men and women; undermines traditional cultural practices that support the subjugation of women by men and the devaluation of women's contributions to society.

Gaslighting: A form of psychological manipulation in which a person or a group covertly sows seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or group, making them question their own memory, perception, or judgment, often evoking in them cognitive dissonance and other changes, including low self-esteem.

Gay: People of the same sex who are attracted sexually and emotionally to each other. More commonly utilized to describe male attraction to other males.

Heterosexism: Social structures and practices which serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality.

Identity: an individual's sense of self defined by (a) a set of physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics that is not wholly shared with any other person and (b) a range of affiliations (e.g., ethnicity) and social roles. Identity involves a sense of continuity, or the feeling that one is the same person today that one was yesterday or last year (despite physical or other changes). Such a sense is derived from one's body sensations; one's body image; and the feeling that one's memories, goals, values, expectations, and beliefs belong to the self.⁴

Identities that have had less power and privilege include:

Disability: any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).⁵

Gender Identity: One's internal, deeply held sense of gender. Some people identify completely with the gender they were assigned at birth (usually male or female), while others may identify with only a part of that gender, or not at all. Some people identify with another gender entirely. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.⁶

Country of Origin: The country from which a person originally comes.⁷

Religion: Human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of especial reverence.⁸

⁴ <https://dictionary.apa.org/identity>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

⁶ https://itgetsbetter.org/blog/lesson/glossary/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA-aGCBhCwARIsAHDI5x-Z24wzapK7YXLkNCb2P7ewwkbysNxILJkEE47-A8GjRymvKTtlaAaAt3NEALw_wcB

⁷ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/country-of-origin>

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/religion>

Sexual Orientation: The desire one has for emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with others based on their gender expression, gender identity, and/or sex. Many people choose to label their sexual orientation, while others do not.⁹

Socioeconomic Status: Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation.¹⁰

Identify-First Language: Many people with disabilities embrace Identity-First Language, which positions disability as an identity category. In identity-first Language, the identifying word comes first in the sentence and highlights the person's embrace of their identity.

Implicit Bias: Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.¹¹

Inclusive Language: Words or phrases that include all potential audiences from any identity group. Inclusive language does not assume or connote the absence of any group. An example of gender inclusive language is using "police officers" instead of "policemen".

Indigenous: Originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides.

Individual Racism: The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism; can occur at both a conscious and unconscious level and can be active or passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of Whites.

Institutional racism: The ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.¹² Examples include:

- Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining").
- City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

Intent vs. Impact: This distinction is an integral part of inclusive environments; intent is what a person meant to do, and impact is the effect it had on someone else. Regardless of intent, it is imperative to recognize how behaviors, language, actions, etc. affect or influence other people. An examination of what was said or done and how it was received is the focus, not necessarily what was intended.

Internalized racism: A situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of

⁹ https://itgetsbetter.org/blog/lesson/glossary/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA-aGCBhCwARIsAHDi5x-Z24wzapK7YXlKNCb2P7ewwkbysNxILJkEE47-A8GjRymvKTtlaAaAt3NEALw_wcB

¹⁰ <https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/>

¹¹ Cheryl Staats, *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2013*, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University. See also RacialEquityTools.org, "[ACT / Communicating / Implicit Bias](#)"

¹² *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building* by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements¹³:

1. *Decision-making* - Due to racism, people of color do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we may not support each other's authority and power – especially if it is in opposition to the dominating racial group. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of color who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.
2. *Resources* - Resources, broadly defined (e.g., money, time, etc), are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. Internalized racism is the system in place that makes it difficult for people of color to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving “everybody.”
3. *Standards* - With internalized racism, the standards for what is appropriate or “normal” that people of color accept are white people's or Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them.
4. *Naming the problem* - There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of color and blames the disease – emotional, economic, political, etc. – on people of color. With internalized racism, people of color might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatized violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support.

Intersectionality: recognizes that people fit into and identify with multiple forms of identity markers, such as race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (for example a person might identify as Latino and transgender). These markers and identifiers are overlapping and do not exist independently of each other and they combine to create different modes of discrimination, privilege and pride.

Invisible Disability: An umbrella term that captures a whole spectrum of hidden disabilities or challenges that are primarily neurological in nature. Invisible disability, or hidden disability, are defined as disabilities that are not immediately apparent.

Latinx: A gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina.

Lesbian: A woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women.

LGBTQ (QIA): Acronym for “Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (Questioning Intersex Allies).” The description of the movement expanded from gay and lesbian to LGBTQ and some include questioning, intersex, allies, same-gender-loving, asexual, pansexual, and polyamorous.

Marginalization: The placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the dominant culture is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive.

Microaggressions: Verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group. They generally appear accidentally (or purposefully) as offensive statements and insensitive questions directed at People of Color and other identities holding less power and privilege in their day-to-day interactions with individuals who are often unaware that they have engaged in an offensive or demeaning way.

¹³ Donna Bivens, *Internalized Racism: A Definition* (Women's Theological Center, 1995).

Neurodiversity: Refers to the variation in the human brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood, and other mental functions.

Non-binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.

Oppression: The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found¹⁴:

- the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others,
- the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them),
- genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and
- members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.

Othering: A set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities ([Source](#))

People of Color (POC): Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous/Native American and Multiracial. It is important to specifically name people and communities of racial and ethnic decent.

BIPOC: The term BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. It is used to be inclusive of the experiences of all people of color who experience inequitable systems, while still recognizing the unique experiences of Black and Indigenous people. Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous/Native American and Multiracial. It is important to specifically name people and communities of racial and ethnic decent.

Communities of Color: include Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Indigenous/Native American, Latinx/Hispanic, and Multiracial peoples.

"Of Color": those who are categorized and identify as Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous/Native American and Multiracial.

Pansexuality: A term reflective of those who feel they are sexually, emotionally, and spiritually capable of falling in love with all genders.

Power: At its core, power is defined the ability 1) to do something or act in a particular way and 2) to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.

Prejudice: A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Privilege: Power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups. Examples of privilege include white privilege, male privilege, heterosexual, and socio-economic privilege.

¹⁴ ["What Is Racism?"](#) – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) [web workbook](#)

Race and Ethnicity: terms constructed by humans and there is no universal agreement on how to describe these two concepts. We consider race to be a human-made social construct with no biological foundation. The idea of ethnicity is also human-made, and is based on a common set of beliefs, traditions, and customs

Racial Justice: exists when there is not only the absence or alteration of systems that create and perpetuate racial disparities in areas including health, education, and wealth, but the presence of a transformed and fundamentally different systems that operate on behalf and inclusive of communities of color.

Sex: System of classification based on biological and physical differences, such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Differentiated from gender, which is based on the social construction and expectations of the categories “men” and “women.”

Social Justice: A vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole

Structural Racism^{15, 17}: The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics — historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal — that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of white domination, diffused, and infused in all aspects of society, including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. We see anti-Black structural racism as the foundational architecture for the strategies, tactics, tools and cultural worldviews that propagate and maintain racial oppression, repression and exclusion in the U.S. and the world. For example, we can see structural racism in the many institutional, cultural, and structural factors that contribute to lower life expectancy for African American and Native American men, compared to white men. These include higher exposure to environmental toxins, dangerous jobs and unhealthy housing stock, higher exposure to and more lethal consequences for reacting to violence, stress, and racism, lower rates of health care coverage, access, and quality of care, and systematic refusal by the nation to fix these things.

Two-Spirit: A term used within some American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. The term—which was created in 1990 by a group of AI/AN activists at an annual Native LGBTQ conference—encompasses sexual, cultural, gender, and spiritual identities, and provides unifying, positive, and encouraging language that emphasizes reconnecting to tribal traditions.

Unconscious Bias: The subliminal tendency to favor certain people or groups of people based upon learned stereotypes. It can be interchangeable with the term “implicit bias. (Mercer). It refers to social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one’s tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

White Fragility: The defensive reactions that white people have when their racial worldviews, positions, or advantages are questioned or challenged ([Source](#))

White supremacy: It is the belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races as well as the social, economic, and political systems that collectively enable white people to maintain power over people of other races.¹⁶

¹⁵ [Chronic Disparity: Strong and Pervasive Evidence of Racial Inequalities](#) by Keith Lawrence, Aspen Institute on Community Change, and Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, for the Race and Public Policy Conference (2004). ¹⁷ [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#) by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

¹⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/white%20supremacy> Many definitions came from <https://seramount.com/research-insights/glossary-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/> and <https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/>