



GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Updated May 2024

ABLEISM

A set of beliefs or practices that devalues and discriminates against people with perceived or medically categorized physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and that rests on the assumption that such people need to be fixed or are less valuable than others.¹ Example: The Americans with Disabilities Act protects the federal civil rights of people with medical conditions to ensure equitable access and fair treatment.

AGEISM

The stereotyping or discrimination against a person or a group of people because of their age. It is most commonly used to talk about the discrimination of elders, those people who are age 65 and over. Although, it can also be used to refer to the discrimination of young people.²

ALLY

Describes someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of racial identity, gender, faith identity, sexual orientation, etc.). In practice, allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups than their own, take risks and supportive action that benefits others, commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in the oppression of those groups, and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.³

BIGOTRY

Having and/or expressing obstinate or intolerant beliefs or dislike for people who are different. In practice, an enactment of prejudice against other's personhood, culture, or beliefs. Examples: religious bigotry, racial bigotry.

¹ Center for Disability Rights. "#Ableism." Accessed February 6, 2024.
<https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/ableism/>.

² Everyday Democracy. "Intergenerational Equity Framework." Accessed February 6, 2024.
<https://www.everyday-democracy.org>.

³ Center for Assessment and Policy Development. "CAPD's Mission." Accessed February 6, 2024.
<https://www.capd.org>.



BIPOC

A term referring to “Black, Indigenous and People of Color.” While “POC” or “People of Color” is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and invisibilization of Native communities.⁴

BRAVE SPACE

Brave spaces are those where participants can take emotional risks, experience discomfort, and express differing views in a way that is conducive to learning, personal growth, and social change. To achieve this, facilitators and participants maintain respectful communication, ensure physical and emotional safety, and encourage honest dialogue, self-reflection, and accountable interactions with regard to power and privilege.⁵

CAUCUS/AFFINITY GROUP

A caucus is an intentionally created space for those who share an identity to convene for learning, support, and connections. Caucuses based on racial identity are often comprised, respectively, of people of color, white people, people who hold multiracial identities, or people who share specific racial or ethnic identities.⁶

COLLUSION

A secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose. In practice, when people act in concert to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression.⁷ Example: People who collude to block strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense or inconvenience.

COLONIZATION/COLONIALISM

Colonization/colonialism is the process whereby imperial nations establish and dominate foreign territories through force and/or economic, cultural, and psychology control. Decolonization is the undoing of colonization through independence movements in the colonies and the collapse of global colonial

⁴ Sen, Nayantara and Terry Keleher. “Creating Cultures and Practices for Racial Equity.” Race Forward. Submitted April 27, 2021. <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/creating-cultures-and-practices-racial-equity>.

⁵ Arao, Brian and Kristi Clemens. “From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice.” In *Facilitation Design and Techniques* (Stylus, 2013), 135–150.

⁶ Racial Equity Tools. “Welcome to Racial Equity Tools.” Accessed February 6, 2024. <https://www.racialequitytools.org>.

⁷ Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, eds. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge, 2007.



empires as well as economic, cultural, and psychological aspects of the colonial experience.⁸ Example: Francophone and Anglophone countries around the world; Chinese annexation and colonization of Tibet; European colonization of Native American land.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT See also Public Engagement.

Involves public processes that bring the voices of community members into public decision-making from design to implementation on strategies that address public issues. These processes might include town hall meetings, citizen juries, charrettes, or large-scale dialogic processes.

COUNTERNARRATIVE

A counternarrative is a story from historically marginalized people that supports them and challenges dominant narratives about them.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical race theory considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional law.⁹

CULTURAL JUSTICE

Cultural justice ensures that marginalized cultures in a diverse society can protect and express their own languages, arts, history, religions, traditions, and values.

CULTURAL RACISM

Cultural racism is a concept that has been applied to prejudices and discrimination based on cultural differences (real, imagined, or constructed) between ethnic or racial groups. This includes the idea that some cultures are superior to others and that various cultures are fundamentally incompatible and should not co-exist in the same society or state.¹⁰

⁸ Betts, Raymond. "Decolonization: A Brief History of the Word." In *Beyond Empire and Nation*, eds. Els Bogaerts and Remco Raben (Brill, 2012), 23–37. Also see Frantz Fanon, *The Colonial Mentality*.

⁹ Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press, 2001 (2nd ed. 2012, 3rd ed. 2017).

¹⁰ Mukhopadhyay, Carol C. and Peter Chua. "Cultural Racism." In *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, ed. John Hartwell Moore (Gale, 2013), 377–383.



CULTURAL STRATEGY

Cultural strategy uses all forms of culture—such as stories, knowledge, arts, traditions, and everyday practices—to influence how people feel, think, believe, and act.

CULTURE

A social system of meaning and custom that a group of people develop to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of implicit and explicit rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.¹¹

DEMOCRACY

The United States is a representative democracy where governmental power is held by citizens' elected representatives and the state leader. A parliamentary democracy is a representative democracy where citizens vote for legislatures that vote for the leader. A market or capitalist democracy is an economic ideology based on a tripartite arrangement of a market economy based predominantly on economic incentives through free markets, a democratic polity, and a cultural system that encourages pluralism.

Deliberative democracy (i.e., discursive democracy) is a form of democracy in which deliberation is central to decision-making. It adopts elements of both consensus decision-making and majority rule. Deliberative democracy differs from traditional democratic theory in that authentic deliberation, not mere voting, is the primary source of legitimacy for civic society. Deliberative democracy is closely related to consultative democracy, in which public consultation with citizens is central to democratic processes.¹²

Democratic pluralism is a governing structure whereby there is more than one center of power. Modern democracies are pluralist in nature because there exists freedom of association. A pure pluralistic democracy permits citizens to vote on all laws including court decisions. However, pluralism may exist without democracy.

¹¹ Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. "A Community Builder's Tool Kit."

¹² Landemore, Hélène. "Deliberative Democracy as Open, Not (Just) Representative Democracy." *Dædalus*, 146, no. 3 (2017): 51-63. https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00446.



DIALOGUE & DELIBERATION

Dialogue and deliberation are dynamic processes that can be empathy enhancing, relationship changing, problem-solving, action planning, organization developing, community building, conflict-resolving, skill developing, prejudice reducing, consciousness raising, and more! The various models and methods that are used in the dialogue and deliberation field often emphasize, strive for, and obtain different outcomes.¹³

DISCRIMINATION

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories. In practice, discrimination can be interpersonal or systematic (i.e., institutional or sociocultural) and may or may not be illegal depending on federal, state, and local legal protections for specific classes of people. Example: The federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 protects individuals against housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. Other laws have different protected classes.

DIVERSITY

Diversity includes multiple perspectives, identities, and cultural groups in a given context. In practice, diversity is the degree to which there is variation and representation of opinions as well as identities such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, and other sociocultural groups. In practice, having diversity in a group, context, or area does not guarantee inclusion or equity. Diversity is a necessary, but not sufficient, factor in achieving both inclusion and equity. Example: Workplace diversity is measured in both numbers and the degree to which groups are representative of broader populations in the community at large.

DOMINANT NARRATIVE

A dominant narrative is a story told to support the goals and beliefs of people with power and to silence others.

EQUITY

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for people who are disadvantaged such that barriers are eliminated and assistance and inclusion are enhanced to achieve an even playing field where everyone can thrive. Diversity and inclusion do not guarantee equity; they are only steps toward equitable

¹³ Mukhopadhyay, "Cultural Racism," 377–383.



processes. Example: Racial equity is addressed by the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race, plus the active effort to correct disadvantages to create fairness.

ETHNICITY

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as a shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

HATE CRIME

A federal law that defines a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. It can be further described as a form of community violence that targets the most vulnerable populations that is committed when a perpetrator intentionally selects and commits a crime toward someone based on actual or perceived membership in a particular group, usually defined by race, religion, ability, ethnic origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Current federal laws make it a crime to commit biased acts against individuals or property. Hate crimes not only cause direct harm to an individual but have an intimidating and isolating impact on the larger community than targeted originally.

HOMOPHOBIA

Fear, hatred, discomfort, or any other prejudice against people based on lesbian, gay, or bisexual identities or behavior. Similar: transphobia.

IMPLICIT BIAS

Unconscious or unknowing differential treatment of another person based on a number of discriminatory factors, including but not limited to race, color, age, sex, gender, nationality, disability, and religion. Implicit bias often informs adverse decisions and practices that victimize and oppress people of color. Implicit bias can lead to other types of behavior including stereotype threat and stereotypes. In policing, education, and other social structures and institutions, implicit bias can lead to discrimination, psychological trauma, and unconscious reactions based on perceived threats.



INCLUSION

A context where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion. Inclusion can also include individuals' and/or groups' views and needs into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making. Example: Equitable inclusion is ensuring the views and needs of those most impacted and/or marginalized are included—not just by numbers (diversity) but by input, agency, and belonging.

INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

Internalized oppression is a concept in which an oppressed group believes, adopts, accepts, and incorporates the negative beliefs provided by the oppressor as the truth—consciously or unconsciously.¹⁴ Example: internalized racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The understanding that people possess multiple, layered identities, including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and ability, among others. Intersectionality refers to the ways in which these identities intersect to affect individuals' realities and lived experiences, thereby shaping their perspectives, worldview, and relationships with others. Exposing one's multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression. For example, a Black woman in America does not experience gender inequalities in exactly the same way as a White woman, nor racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each race and gender intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.¹⁵

"ISMS"

A way of describing any attitude, action, or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.¹⁶

¹⁴ Pheterson, Gail. "Alliances between Women: Overcoming Internalized Oppression and Internalized Domination." *Signs* 12, no. 1 (1986): 146–160.

¹⁵ Intergroup Resources, "Intersectionality" (2012).

¹⁶ Institute for Democratic Renewal. "A Community Builder's Tool Kit."



MICROAGGRESSION

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults—whether intentional or unintentional—which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities—whether intentional or unintentional—that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Microaggressions seem to appear in three forms: micro-assault, microinsult, and microinvalidation.^{17,18}

MISOGYNY

Feeling, showing, or characterized by a hatred or prejudice against women. Of Black women: misogynoir.

MULTIPARTIALITY

Giving attention to multiple identities and experiences, especially those identities and experiences that might be left out or historically unheard, in order to balance power disparities and challenge dominant group narratives. In facilitation, ensures multiple viewpoints and experiences are shared and discussed during the conversation, particularly from left out and left behind communities.¹⁹

NARRATIVE

A narrative is a collection of stories shared in different ways over time to spread a feeling, idea, or belief. Narratives shape how groups of people think about themselves and others. They explain how the world works and influence beliefs, actions, and policies.

NARRATIVE CHANGE

Narrative change is the process of changing the stories that people tell about an event, issue, group, or culture.

¹⁷ Wing Sue, Derald. "Microaggressions: More than Just Race." *Psychology Today*, November 17, 2010, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>.

¹⁸ Wing Sue, Derald, Christina M Capodilupo, Gina C Torino, Jennifer M Bucceri, Aisha M B Holder, Kevin L Nadal, and Marta Esquilin. "Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice." *American Psychologist*, 62, no. 4 (May–June 2007): 271–286.

¹⁹ Zappella, Natalie. Fall 2007. "Balancing Social Power in Dialogue: What it means to be a multi-partial facilitator in intergroup dialogues." Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan. Accessed April 10, 2024.



NARRATIVE CHANGE AGENT

People who change narratives make new stories, change them based on who they're talking to, and spread them as widely as they can.

NARRATIVE JUSTICE

Narrative justice ensures historically marginalized people, their lived experiences, and their points of view are accurately represented and valued in social systems, culture, and community decisions.

PATRIARCHY

A system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women across spheres of household, workplace, state, violence, sexuality, and culture to maintain power, control, and privilege.²⁰ In patriarchal culture, males are inherently dominating, superior to everything, and endowed with the right to rule over women and nature.²¹ Example: Patriarchy historically also includes the cultural order among men especially related to rights of inheritance and control over household, chattel, women, children, and slaves.

PLURALISM

Recognition of the contribution of each group to a common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different lifestyles, languages, and convictions. It is a commitment to deal cooperatively with common concerns. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society.²²

POWER

The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of oneself, others, or the course of events. In practice, there is power over (i.e., dominion), power to (i.e., agency, access), power within (i.e., autonomy, internal control, self-empowerment), and power with (collective, shared power). Power is context dependent, and all can operate to varying degrees simultaneously.

PREJUDICE

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable negative attitude or stereotype about an individual or group that deny the right to be recognized and treated fairly.

²⁰ Walby, Sylvia. "Theorising Patriarchy." *Sociology* 23, no. 2 (May 1989): 213–234.

²¹ Hooks, Bell. *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2004.

²² Institute for Democratic Renewal, "A Community Builder's Tool Kit."



PRIVILEGE

A position or circumstance that puts a person or group in a favorable or superior position to others with regard to access, power, resources, and positive bias. Hierarchies of privilege exist, even within the same group, to differential benefit. Examples: white privilege, male privilege.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT See also Community Engagement

"Public engagement" or "public participation" is a term that has recently been used to describe "the practice of involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations/institutions responsible for policy development."²³ It is focused on the participatory actions of the public to aid in policymaking based in their values.²⁴

RACE

A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color); ancestral heritage; cultural affiliation; cultural history; ethnic classification; and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.²⁵

RACISM

The belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. In practice, racism is the enactment of these beliefs in a way that oppresses some groups and creates unfair advantages for others constructed from perceived physical characteristics. Examples: biological determinism, apartheid, racial hierarchies, white supremacy, racial profiling, genocide.

RACIAL HEALING

Racial healing involves people work that leads to the transformation of systems; the telling of hard truths about past wrongs and present consequences; repairing the harm of racism; replacing the deeply held system that fuels racism with one that sees the inherent value of all people; authentic relationship building across real and perceived differences.²⁶

²³ Rowe, Gene, and Lynn J. Frewer. "A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanisms." *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2005).

²⁴ Evans, J. H. (2020-10-02).

²⁵ Adams, Bell and Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity*.

²⁶ W.K. Kellogg Foundation. "Putting Children First." Accessed February 7, 2024. <https://www.wkkf.org>.



RACIAL JUSTICE

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond anti-racism. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.²⁷

RACIAL RECKONING

The process of acknowledging past harms to people of color, publicly apologizing for those harms, actively working to repair current manifestation of past harms, and establishing accountability practices so that those behaviors, actions, laws, practices, and policies will never occur again.

RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Racial reconciliation involves three ideas. First, it recognizes that racism in America is both systemic and institutionalized, with far-reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for minorities. Second, reconciliation is engendered by empowering local communities through relationship building and truth telling. Last, justice is the essential component of the conciliatory process—justice that is best termed as restorative rather than retributive while still maintaining its vital punitive character.²⁸

RIGHTS

Resources or positions that everyone has equal access or availability to regardless of their social group memberships. Example: Equal rights are one standard of a just society.

SEGREGATION

The act or process of separating or isolating a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is a process and an outcome that includes the equitable distribution of resources, equal rights, individual freedom, and responsibility balanced with

²⁷ Race Forward. "Race Reporting Guide." June 20, 2015. <https://www.raceforward.org/reporting-guide>.

²⁸ The William Winters Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi.



collective well-being, and that people are free from intentional harms and liberated from oppression. Related concepts: racial justice, environmental justice, disability justice. There are many different social, cultural, religious, and legal views and practices of justice, and this term should not be considered monolithic.

STORY

A story describes a specific event, person, or group. It has a beginning, middle, and end. Most stories focus on someone who has a problem or learns from experience.

STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION; STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

The cumulative effect of prejudice combined with institutional power that shapes policies, practices, culture, and norms that reinforce and perpetuate inequities or disparities. Institutional racism (as well discriminatory practices against other groups) is a subset of structural oppression within civic, workplace, religion, medial, military, and other institutional settings. Examples: 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.

TOKENISM

Tokenism is, simply, covert racism. Racism requires those in power to maintain their privilege by exercising social, economic, and/or political muscle against people of color (POC). Tokenism achieves the same while giving those in power the appearance of being nonracist and even champions of diversity because they recruit and use POC as racialized props. Use POC as your mouthpiece and shield against other POC.²⁹ Tokenism subverts authentic and impactful diversity and inclusion.

TRANSPHOBIA

Transphobia is a collection of ideas and phenomena that encompass a range of negative attitudes, feelings, or actions toward transgender people. Transphobia can

²⁹ Kim Ho, Helen. “8 Ways People of Color are Tokenized in Nonprofits.” *The Nonprofit Revolution*, 2017. <https://medium.com/the-nonprofit-revolution/8-ways-people-of-color-are-tokenized-in-nonprofits-32138d0860c1>



include fear, aversion, hatred, violence, or anger toward people who do not conform to social gender expectations.³⁰

TWO SPIRIT

The term “Two Spirit” has been present in Native communities for countless generations that predate LGBTQ terminology. For generations, Two Spirit Native culture went underground to avoid detection and persecution. While the term “Two Spirit” was coined in 1990 in Winnipeg, Canada, as a means of unifying various gender identities and expressions of Native American/First Nations/Indigenous individuals, the term is not a specific definition of gender, sexual orientation, or other self-determining catch-all phrase but rather an umbrella term. Two Spirit people have both a male and female spirit within them and are blessed by their Creator to see life through the eyes of both genders.³¹

WHITE FRAGILITY

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable for white people, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.³²

WHITE PRIVILEGE

Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are perceived to be racially White. White people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. Examples: “I can walk around a department store without being followed,” “I can come to a meeting late and not have my lateness attributed to your race,” and “I am able to drive a car in any neighborhood without being perceived as being in the wrong place or looking for trouble.”³³

³⁰ Chakraborti, Neil and Jon Garland. *Hate Crime: Impact, Causes and Responses*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2009.

³¹ Enos, Tony. “8 Things You Should Know About Two Spirit People.” *Indian Country Today*, September 13, 2018. <https://ictnews.org/archive/8-misconceptions-things-know-two-spirit-people>.

³² DiAngelo, Robin. “White Fragility.” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3, no. 3 (2011): 54–70.

³³ McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies.” In *Re-envisioning Family Therapy: Addressing Diversity in Clinical Practice*, edited by Monica McGoldrick and Kenneth V. Hardy, 215–225. Guilford Press, 2019.



WHITE SUPREMACY

Those aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and whiteness and devalue, stereotype, and label people of color as "other," "different," or "less than" or render them invisible. Examples of these norms include defining White skin tones as nude or flesh colored, having future time orientation, emphasizing individualism as opposed to a more collective ideology, defining one form of English as standard, and identifying only Whites as the great writers or composers.³⁴

XENOPHOBIA

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels oppression and is a function of White supremacy.³⁵

³⁴ Adams, Bell and Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity*

³⁵ Cokorinos, Lee. "The Racist Roots of the Anti-Immigration Movement." *The Black Agenda Report*, 2007. <https://www.blackagendareport.com/content/racist-roots-anti-immigration-movement>.