

## Basic EDI Terms, Definitions, and Additional Glossaries/Dictionaryes

**AAPI** – An acronym used to refer to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.

**Ableism** - A system of superiority and discrimination that provides or denies resources, agency, and dignity based on one's abilities (mental/intellectual, emotional, and/or physical.) Ableism depends on a binary and benefits able-bodied people at the expense of disabled people. Like other forms of oppression, ableism operates on individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Examples include: lack of compliance with the ADA and segregating students with disabilities.

**Accessibility** - The state of being open to meaningful participation by all people, in particular people whose participation (in this activity or in society at general) is usually limited by oppression of some kind. Accessibility in general means being free of barriers into [which can be placed by the group inadvertently or advertently (e.g. lack of childcare or a members-only policy) and/or can be placed by society (e.g. housing must be paid for rather than being a right, etc.)] and free of limits to participation once present (e.g. a university with a Eurocentric curriculum is not accessible to Native students even if there is funding for them to get there.) Sometimes the term "accessibility" is used with specific reference to the needs of people with disabilities. A space cannot be deemed "accessible" in this sense if the atmosphere is ableist, even if measures are in place (e.g. wheelchair-accessible entrance/facilities that are safe and dignified, Braille/large-print/audio-tape resources, TTY and sign language interpretation).

**Accommodation** - The process of adapting or adjusting to someone or something. Accommodations can be religious, physical, or mental. A reasonable accommodation specifically is an alteration in process or environment that allows a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy equitable access within employment, public entities, or education.

**Ally** - Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways. Allies commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression. Whether or not you are an ally is determined by the community you are working towards allying with.

### SOURCE:

1. OpenSource Leadership Strategies, "[The Dynamic System of Power, Privilege, and Oppression](#)" (2008).

2. [Center for Assessment and Policy Development.](#)

**Alternative Format** - A method of communication that takes into account a person's disabilities. Examples include providing a text version of a website or a large print version of a document for someone with a visual disability.

**Anti-Racism** – A form of action against racial hatred, bias, systemic racism, and the oppression of others. It is usually structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions to provide equal opportunities for all people on an individual and systemic level. It can be engaged with by acknowledging personal privileges, confronting acts and systems of racial discrimination, and working to change personal racial biases.

**Bias** - An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment. Biases can be negative or positive (affinity bias) and can be innate or learned. People may develop biases for or against an individual, a group, or a belief.

**Biological Sex** - The biological classification of people as male and/or female. A doctor usually assigns sex at birth, by visually assessing external anatomy. Sex terms are "male," "female" and "intersex."

**BIPoC** - An acronym used to refer to black, Indigenous and people of color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.

**Brave Space** – A learning environment that allows learners to engage with one another and have conversations about social issues with honesty, sensitivity, respect, and generosity

**Cisgender** - A term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.

**Disability** - Physical or mental impairment that affects a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Diversity** - Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

It is important to note that many activists and thinkers critique diversity alone as a strategy. For instance, Baltimore Racial Justice Action states: “Diversity is silent on the subject of equity. In an anti-oppression context, therefore, the issue is not diversity, but rather equity. Often when people talk about diversity, they are thinking only of the “non-dominant” groups.”

**SOURCE:** UC Berkeley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, “[Glossary of Terms](#)” (page 34 in [2009 Strategic Plan](#)). Baltimore Racial Justice Action, “[Our Definitions](#)” (2018).

**Discrimination** - The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories. In the United States the law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants’ and employees’ sincerely held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer’s business.

**SOURCE:**

1. Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, *A Community Builder's Tool Kit*, Appendix I (2000).
2. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, “[Laws Enforced by EEOC](#)” (accessed 28 June 2013)

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

Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White).

**SOURCE:** *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*, edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, Routledge, 1997.

**Equity** - The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all groups.

**Gender Expression** - The ways in which one presents (or expresses) their gender. As we live in a society that holds and enforces messages about what particular genders are supposed to look like (e.g., men are supposed to look

masculine) gender expression is often used (inappropriately and often ineffectively) to determine someone's gender identity. Though these two concepts can be related, one does not necessarily determine or indicate the other.

**Gender Identity** - Distinct from the term "sexual orientation," refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Gender Non-Conforming** - Gender that does not adhere to gender expectations within the binary model.

**Harassment** - The use of comments or actions that can be perceived as offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, and unwelcome.

**Health Literacy** – The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate health decisions

**Heteronormativity** - A worldview which frames heterosexuality as the standard sexuality. This is created through repetitive representations of heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships in our society. An example of heteronormativity is the assumption that people are heterosexual unless they "come out." Another example is how non-heterosexual relationships are expected to be similar to traditional "heterosexual" relationships (i.e., labeling one partner as the "man" of the relationship, expecting couples to want marriage/children, etc).

**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 with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

**SOURCE:** Cheryl Staats, *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2013*, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.

**Related Resources:** [Implicit Bias](#)

**Inclusion** - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**SOURCE:** [OpenSource Leadership Strategies](#)

**Institutional Racism** - Institutional racism refers specifically to 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.

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.

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

**Internalized Racism** - Internalized racism is the 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 attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group’s power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements:

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.

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

**Interpersonal Racism** - Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

Examples: public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias, and bigotry between individuals

**SOURCE:** *Chronic Disparity: Strong and Pervasive Evidence of Racial Inequalities* by Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher (2004).

**LGBTQIA** - An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.

**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.

**SOURCE:** Derald Wing Sue, PhD, "[Microaggressions: More than Just Race](#)" (*Psychology Today*, 17 November 2010).

**People of Color** - Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term "people of color" (not to be confused with the pejorative "colored people") since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While "people of color" can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., "non-White"), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

**SOURCE:** Race Forward, "[Race Reporting Guide](#)" (2015).

**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.

**SOURCE:** Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, *A Community Builder's Tool Kit*, Appendix I (2000).

**Privilege** - Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

**SOURCE:** Colours of Resistance Archive, "[Privilege](#)" (accessed 28 June 2013).

**Race** - For many people, it comes as a surprise that racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. There are three important concepts linked to this fact:

1. Race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact.
2. Race designations have changed over time. Some groups that are considered "white" in the United States today were considered "non-white" in previous eras, in U.S. Census data and in mass media and popular culture (for example, Irish, Italian, and Jewish people).
3. The way in which racial categorizations are enforced (the shape of racism) has also changed over time. For example, the racial designation of Asian American and Pacific Islander changed four times in the 19th century. That is, they were defined at times as white and at other times as not white. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as designated groups, have been used by whites at different times in history to compete with African American labor.

**SOURCE:**

- 1–2. PBS, "[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)" (2018–2019 relaunch of [2003 series](#)).
3. Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002), page 141.

**Racial Profiling** - any action that relies on stereotypes about race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin, or a combination of these, rather than on a reasonable suspicion to single out a person for greater scrutiny or different treatment.

**Racism** – prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group that is a minority or marginalized.

Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power

Racism = a system of advantage based on race

Racism = a system of oppression based on race

Racism = a white supremacy system

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

SOURCE: “[What Is Racism?](#)” – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) [web workbook](#).

**Racist** - One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or interaction or expressing a racist idea.

SOURCE: Ibram X. Kendi, *How To Be An Antiracist*, Random House, 2019.

**Safe Space** - Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule or denial of experience.

**Sexual Orientation** - An individual’s enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

**Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)** – Conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life-risks and outcomes. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels. The SDoH are mostly responsible for health inequities. According to the CDC, there are five major areas of SDoH: healthcare access and quality, education access and quality, social and community context, economic stability, and neighborhood and built environment.

**Social Justice** - Social justice constitutes a form of activism based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses 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.

**Stereotype** - A form of generalization rooted in blanket beliefs and false assumptions; a product of processes of categorization that can result in a prejudiced attitude, critical judgment and intentional or unintentional discrimination. Stereotypes are typically negative, based on little information, and does not recognize individualism and personal agency.

**Structural Racism** - 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. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from



structural racism. 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.

**SOURCE:**

1. *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).
2. *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building* by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

**Tokenism** - Performative presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group without giving this person a real opportunity to speak for her/himself.

**Transgender** - This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. Some transgender people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders.

**Resources:**

1. <https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/>
2. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>
3. <https://students.wustl.edu/glossary-bias-terms/>
4. <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/teaching-human-rights-ontario-guide-ontario-schools/appendix-1-glossary-human-rights-terms>
5. <https://www.antiviolenceproject.org/glossary/>
6. <http://www.coloursofresistance.org/definitions-for-the-revolution/>
7. [https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/sites/diversitybestpractices.com/files/attachments/2020/10/dei\\_glossary\\_of\\_inclusive\\_terms\\_updated\\_for\\_2020\\_1.pdf](https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/sites/diversitybestpractices.com/files/attachments/2020/10/dei_glossary_of_inclusive_terms_updated_for_2020_1.pdf)
8. <http://www.ric.edu/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/Pages/glossary-of-dei-terms.aspx>
9. <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/DEIGlossary>