



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ableism: Prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in physical, mental, and/or emotional ability; usually that of able-bodied/minded persons against people with illnesses, disabilities, or less developed skills/talents.

Ageism: Prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in age; usually evidenced as a societal predilection for younger persons over older persons.

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.

Anti-racism/ist¹: Examines the power imbalances between racialized people and non-racialized/white people. These imbalances play out in the form of unearned privileges that white people benefit from and racialized people do not.

Anti-Semitism: The fear or hatred of Jews as an ethnic, religious, or racial group.

Assimilation: The process by which one group takes on the cultural and other traits of a larger group; usually refers to the forced acculturation of a marginalized group by the dominant or White group.

Bias: Prejudice: an inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

Bi-racial: A person who identifies as being of two races or who's biological parents are of two different racial groups.

Bigotry: Intolerance and prejudice that glorifies one's own group and denigrates other groups and their members.

Categorization: The natural cognitive process of grouping and labeling people and other things based on their perceived similarities. Categorization becomes problematic when the groupings become oversimplified and rigid, thereby stereotyping people.

Classism: Prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in socioeconomic status and income, usually referred to as class. Most particularly refers to the hierarchical striation of people by class.

¹[McIntosh, 1988](#)

Colonialism/colonizing: The invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people that results in long-term institutionalized inequality in which the colonizer benefits at the expense of the colonized.

Color Blind: The belief that everyone should be treated “*equally*” without respect to societal, economic, historical, racial, or other difference. No differences are seen or acknowledged; everyone is the same.

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

Cultural Racism: Cultural racism refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with the dominant societal group, generally identified as White, are automatically “better” or more “*normal*” than those associated with subordinate groups, generally other racially defined groups. It is a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate and valued behavior, status, expression, or lifestyle. All these cultural norms and values in the U.S. have explicitly or implicitly racialized ideals and assumptions.

Diaspora: The dispersion of a group of people who live outside their homeland due to an historical event that caused them to flee or which forcibly removed them from their homelands into new regions: such as, Africans as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Discrimination: Actions stemming from conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favor and empower one group over others based on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion, and other categories.

Diversity: Diversity refers to 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.

Dominant culture: The cultural values, beliefs, practices, language, and traditions that are assumed to be the most common, accepted, and influential within a given society.

Equality: Treating everyone the same way, often while if everyone also starts out on equal footing or with the same opportunities.

Equity: Working toward fair outcomes for people or groups by treating them in ways that address their unique advantages or barriers.

First Nations People: Tribal people who identify as those who were the first people to live on the Western Hemisphere continent; also identified as Native Americans.

¹[McIntosh, 1988](#)

Hate crime: Law or legislation that designates a crime as being motivated by hate for the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person and assigns a greater penalty for conviction of such a crime.

Implicit Bias: Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.

In-group Bias (favoritism): The tendency for groups to “favor” themselves by rewarding group members economically, socially, psychologically, and emotionally to uplift one group over another.

Intergroup Conflict: Tension and conflict which exists between social groups, and which may be enacted by individual members of these groups.

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

Individual Racism: Refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals who support or perpetuate racism.

Institutional Racism: Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups but always benefitting the dominant group.

Internalized Oppression: a process by which people come to accept and internalize the inaccurate myths and stereotypes they have been exposed to.

Internalized Racism: 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.

Intersectionality: The intertwining of social identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, which can result in unique experiences, opportunities, and barriers.

-Ism: A social phenomenon and psychological state where prejudice is accompanied by the power to systemically enact it.

Marginalized: Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

Model Minority: Refers to a minority ethnic, racial, or religious group whose members achieve a higher degree of success than the population average and who are assumed by the dominant group to be a model of assimilation for other marginalized groups.

¹[McIntosh, 1988](#)

Movement Building: Movement building is the effort of social change agents to engage power holders and the broader society in addressing a systemic problem or injustice while promoting an alternative vision or solution.

Multiracial: An individual that comes from more than one race. An individual whose parents are born from more than one race.

Multiethnic: An individual who comes from more than one ethnic group and/or whose parents are born from more than one ethnicity.

Naming: When a thought that traditionally has not been discussed due to its counter-culture nature is articulated.

Oppression: The use of power to disenfranchise and marginalize groups of people, usually people of color, for the benefit of another, usually Whites, to dominate the culture and society. It may also be defined as the use of institutional power and privilege for domination.

People of Color: A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latin, and Native American backgrounds as opposed to the collective "White" for those of European ancestry.

Power: Power is unequally distributed globally and in U.S. society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access to and control over resources.

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: 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 they are taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

Race: An historical and political construction created to concentrate power with White people and legitimize dominance over non-White people.

Social Identity: The ways in which an individual characterizes oneself, the affinities she/he has with other people, the ways she/he has learned to behave in stereotyped social settings, the things she/he values in oneself and in the world, and the norms that she/he recognizes or accepts governing everyday behavior.

Social Justice: A broad term for action intended to create genuine equality, fairness, and respect among peoples.

¹[McIntosh, 1988](#)

Spotlighting: The practice of inequitably calling attention to particular social groups in specific language, while leaving others as the invisible, de facto norm: for example, "black male suspect" (versus "male suspect," presumed White); "WNBA" (as opposed to "NBA," presumed male).

Stereotype: Blanket beliefs and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

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.

System of Oppression: Conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice, and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups.

Tolerance (n): An outdated term that alludes to the idea of acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures, but that does not mean agreement with the differences.

White Privilege: Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are White. Generally White people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

White Supremacy: White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by White people and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

Xenophobia: dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries, cultures, and/or racial backgrounds.

¹[McIntosh, 1988](#)