

Glossary of Diversity & Inclusion Terms

Adapted from the the University of Washington's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary <<https://epi.washington.edu/sites/default/files/DEI%20>>, the Racial Equity Tools Glossary <<https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>>, and the Trans Student Educational Resources' LGBTQIA+ Definitions < <http://www.transstudent.org/definitions/> >.

Ableism

Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in physical, mental and/or emotional ability that contribute to a system of oppression; usually of able-bodied/minded persons against people with illness, disabilities or less developed skills.

Accessibility

The extent to which a facility is readily approachable and usable by individuals with physical disabilities, such as self-opening doors, elevators for upper levels, or raised lettering on signs.

Agender

Of, relating to, or being a person who has an internal sense of being neither male nor female nor some combination of male and female; of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is genderless or neutral.

Ageism

The stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age. Ageism is widespread and an insidious practice which has harmful effects, especially on the health of older adults. For older people, ageism is an everyday challenge. Overlooked for employment, restricted from social services and stereotyped in the media, ageism marginalizes and excludes older people in their communities. Ageism can also be directed at young people and have a similar, though not the same, marginalizing impact.

Asexual

Someone who does not experience sexual attraction. Asexual people have emotional needs and can experience emotional or romantic attraction. Asexuality is considered an identity, and is not the same as celibacy, which is a choice.

Acculturation

The process of learning and incorporating the language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that make up a distinct culture. This concept is not to be confused with assimilation, where an individual, family, or group may give up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to that of their new host country.

Anglo or Anglo-Saxon

Of or related to the descendants of Germanic peoples (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) who reigned in Britain until the Norman conquest in 1066. Often refers to white English-speaking persons of European descent in England or North America, not of Hispanic or French origin.

Anti-Racist

A person who identifies and challenges the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.

Anti-Semitism

Hatred, discrimination, hostility, or oppression of or against Jewish people as a group or individuals.

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.

Arab/ Arabic

Of or relating to the cultures or people that have ethnic roots in the following Arabic-speaking lands: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. "Arab" is not synonymous with "Muslim." Arabs practice many religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and others. Individuals from this region are also referred to being of Middle Eastern descent.

Asian-American / Pan Asian

Of or related to Asian Americans and /or individuals of Asian descent. The U.S. Census Bureau defines "Asian" as "people having origins in any of the original peoples of Asia or the Indian subcontinent. It includes people who indicated their race or races as 'Asian,' 'Indian,' 'Chinese,' 'Filipino,' 'Korean,' 'Japanese,' 'Vietnamese,' or 'Other Asian.' Asian-Americans are approximately 3.6% of the total U.S. population, and 4.2% including persons of mixed race.

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 judgement.

Bicultural

Of or related to an individual who possesses the languages, values, beliefs, and behaviors of two distinct racial or ethnic groups.

Biracial

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

Birth/Assigned Sex

The designation that refers to a person's biological, morphological, hormonal, and genetic composition. One's sex is typically assigned at birth and classified as either male or female.

Bisexual

An identity term for people who are attracted to people of two genders, usually to both men and women. Bi* is used as an inclusive abbreviation for the bi, pan, and fluid community.

Black

Of or related to persons having ethnic origins in the African continent; persons belonging to the African Diaspora. Some individuals have adopted the term to represent all people around the world who are not of white European descent, although this usage is not common. "Black" is often used interchangeably with "African-American" in the United States.

Cisgender

An abbreviation for individuals in whom there is a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their personal identity. Often referred to as a cis-male or cis-female, these terms describe the antonym to transgender.

Cissexism

The belief that transgender people are inherently inferior to cisgender people. It is frequently observed in both conservative anti-LGBT circles and in TERF communities. Cissexism may or may not be conscious or deliberate on part of the person expressing or feeling it. Examples of cissexist behaviors include dismissing transgenderism as a phase, mental illness, or cry for attention, or considering transgender people to be "freaks," delusional, or sexual deviants. Cissexism is closely related to, but distinct from, transphobia and transmisogyny. It differs

from transphobia in that it is part of a system of oppression (comparable to racism, ageism, and sexism) whereas transphobia more specifically refers to a feeling of disgust or hatred (comparable to xenophobia and homophobia). The terms are, however, sometimes used interchangeably and tend to overlap significantly.

Classism

Classism refers to differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups. It's the systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class. Classism is evident in individual attitudes and behaviors; systems of policies and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality; the rationale that supports these systems and this unequal valuing; and the culture that perpetuates them.

Color Blindness

Color blindness is a concept describing the idea of a society where racial classifications do not limit a person's opportunities based on their race, or color, as well as race-neutral governmental policies that reject discrimination in any form, and said to promote the goal of racial equality. Color blindness is counterintuitive and harmful as: a) we all see color and we all have biases, b) when we identify as colorblind, we are suppressing our authentic views and in the process, perpetuating systemic racism, and c) race matters. Race impacts opportunities, education, and income in many ways. Colorblindness oppresses People of Color. When one fails to see color, one fails to acknowledge the current narrative- a system of injustice for many non-white people.

Communities of Color

A term used primarily in the United States to describe communities of people who are not identified as White, emphasizing common experiences of racism.

Covert Racism

Expressed racist ideas, attitudes or beliefs in subtle, hidden, or secret forms. Often unchallenged, this type of racism does not appear to be racist because it is indirect nature.

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation refers to the theft by a dominant culture of the cultural elements of a non-dominant culture 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. Cultural appropriation stems from the assumption of a dominant (i.e. White) culture's right to take from the cultural elements of non-dominant groups.

Disability

Disabilities are having a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Discrimination

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, national origin, age, physical/mental abilities and other categories that may result in differences in provision of goods, services or opportunities.

Diversity

Diversity describes the myriad ways in which people differ, including the psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among all individuals, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, mental and physical ability, and learning styles. Diversity is all-inclusive and supportive of the proposition that everyone and every group should be valued. It is about understanding these differences and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of our differences.

Equality

Equality is the condition under which every individual is treated in the same way, and is granted same rights and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences.

Equity

Equity ensures that individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities, as the general population. While equity represents impartiality, i.e. the distribution is made in such a way to even opportunities for all the people. Conversely equality indicates uniformity, where everything is evenly distributed among people.

Ethnicity / Ethnic Group

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

First Nations / Indigenous People

Individuals who identify as those who were the first people to live on the Western Hemisphere continent; people who also identify as Native Americans.

Gay

An identity term for a male-identified person who is attracted to male-identified people; sometimes, less frequently now than in the past, used as an umbrella term to refer to both lesbians and gay men.

Gender

Gender is the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society considers "appropriate" for men and women. It is separate from 'sex', which is the biological classification of male or female based on physiological and biological features. A person's gender may not necessarily correspond to their birth assigned sex or be limited to the gender binary (woman/man).

Gender Binary

A system of viewing gender as consisting solely of two, opposite categories, termed "male and female", in which no other possibilities for gender or anatomy are believed to exist. This system is oppressive to anyone who defies their sex assigned at birth, but particularly those who are gender-variant or do not fit neatly into one of the two standard categories.

Gender Identity

Refers to all people's internal, deeply felt sense of being a man, woman, both, in between, or outside of the gender binary, which may or may not correspond with sex assigned at birth. Because gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others, which differentiates it from gender expression.

Gender Non-Binary

Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (and increasingly), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/presentation/expression of a cisgender or transgender person.

Gender Non-Conforming

Exhibiting behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits that do not correspond with the traits typically associated with one's sex; having a gender expression that does not conform to gender norms. Gender identity refers to an individual's internalized psychological experience

of being male or female, whereas *gender nonconformity* refers to the degree to which an individual's appearance, behavior, interests, and subjective self-concept deviate from conventional norms for masculinity/femininity.

Health Equity

Efforts to ensure that all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.

Heterosexism

The individual, societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices that favor heterosexuality and assume that heterosexuality is the only natural, normal, or acceptable sexual orientation. This creates an imbalance in power, which leads to systemic, institutional, pervasive, and routine mistreatment of individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Heterosexual

An identity term for a female-identified person who is attracted to male-identified people or a male-identified person who is attracted to female-identified people.

Hispanic/LatinX

The U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanics as “those people who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the Census 2000 questionnaire (Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, (this can include individuals who are of Central American or South American descent). The term “LatinX” denotes a non-colonized reflection of identity, as well as inclusion beyond the gender (male/female) binary.

Homosexual

A person who is primarily attracted to members of what they identify as their own sex or gender. Many people reject the term homosexual because of its history as a term denoting mental illness and abnormality — the terms Gay or Lesbian are preferred.

Implicit Bias

Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold; also known as unconscious or hidden bias. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions

Inclusion/Inclusiveness

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes

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

Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is a phenomenon that occurs when a group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of a racist system by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that reinforce that system. In the U.S. this generally involves reinforcement of white supremacy. Internalized racism involves four essential and interconnected elements:

- **Decision-making** — Due to racism, people of color may not have total control over the decisions that affect daily life and resources. As a result, on a personal level, some people of color may (consciously or unconsciously) think white people know more about what needs to be done for their community than they do. On an interpersonal level, communities of color 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.
- **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 their communities and to control the resources of their community.
- **Standards** — People of color may accept standards for what is appropriate or "normal" that are Eurocentric. They may have difficulty naming, communicating, and living up to their deepest standards and values, and holding themselves and each other accountable to them.
- **Naming the problem** — There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism and its effects as problems of or caused by people of color. As a result of internalized racism, people of color might, for example, believe they are more violent than white people instead of recognizing the role of state-sanctioned political violence and the institutional racism.

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.

Intersectionality

The idea that various biological, social, and cultural categories-- including gender, race, class, ethnicity and social categories-- interact and contribute towards systematic social inequality. This concept recognizes that individuals: 1.) may belong to more than one social category simultaneously, and 2.) may experience either privileges or disadvantages on that basis depending on circumstances and relationships. 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 is her racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.

Intersex

The term "intersex" refers to atypical internal and/or external anatomical sexual characteristics, where features usually regarded as male or female may be mixed to some degree. This is a naturally occurring variation in humans and not a medical condition, and is distinct from transsexuality.

Inuit

Eskimo people who are distinct from American Indians and are more closely related to peoples of East Asia.

Lesbian

The term is used to describe female-identified people attracted emotionally, physically, and/or sexually to other female-identified people.

LGBTQ/ LGBTQIA+

LGBTQ: This acronym is an umbrella term used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer or questioning people. Another common acronym used is LGBTQIA+, which encompasses intersex and asexual identities, although there doesn't seem to be consensus within the intersex or asexual communities about wanting to be included in or directly linked to the LGBTQ community.

Marginalized / Marginalization

The process by which minority groups/cultures are excluded, ignored or relegated to the outer edge of a group, society, and/or community. A tactic used to devalue those that vary from the norm of the mainstream, sometimes to the point of denigrating them as deviant and regressive.

Microaggression

The process by which minority groups/cultures are excluded, ignored or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community. A tactic used to devalue those that vary from the norm of the mainstream, sometimes to the point of denigrating them as deviant and regressive.

Multicultural

Of or pertaining to more than one culture.

Multiethnic

An individual that comes from more than one ethnicity. An individual that comes from more than one race.

Multiracial

An individual that comes from more than one race.

Oppression

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination.

Pacific Islander

This racial group refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands. According to the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau estimate, there are roughly 1.3 million Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders alone or in combination with one of more races who reside within the United States.

Person /People of Color

Used primarily in the United States to describe any person who is not White; the term is meant to be inclusive among non-White groups

Power

Power is unequally distributed globally and in U.S. society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others. Oftentimes, political scientists define power as the ability to influence the behavior of others, with or without resistance. Within social justice work, power can be defined as access to resources and/or privileges.

Prejudice

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable bias against another individual or group.

Privilege

Unearned social power (set of advantages, entitlements, and benefits) accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to the members of a dominant group (e.g., White/Caucasian people with respect to people of color, men with respect to women, heterosexuals with respect to homosexuals, adults with respect to children, and rich people with respect to poor people). Privilege tends to be invisible to those who possess it, because its absence (lack of privilege) is what calls attention to it. In other words, men are less likely to notice/acknowledge a difference in advantage because they do not live the life of a woman; white people are less likely to notice/acknowledge racism because they do not live the life of a person of color; straight or heterosexual people are less likely to notice/acknowledge heterosexism because they do not live the life of an LGBTQIA+ person.

Queer

Queer is a multi-faceted word that is used in different ways and means different things to different people. It can refer to any combination of gender identity and sexual orientation. Reclaimed from its earlier negative use, the term is valued by some for its defiance, by some because it can be inclusive of the entire community, and by others who find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities. ** Due to its varying meanings, this word should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as queer (i.e. "My cousin identifies as queer.") Here are some ways that queer is used today:

- Queer (adj.): attracted to people of many genders. Although dominant culture tends to dictate that there are only two genders, gender is actually far more complex. Queer can be a label claimed by a person who is attracted to men, women, genderqueer people, and/or other gender nonconforming people.

- Queer (adj.): not fitting cultural norms around sexuality and/or gender identity/expression. Similarly to the above, queer can be a label claimed by a person who feels that they personally don't fit into dominant norms, due to their own gender identity/expression, their sexual practices, their relationship style, etc.
- Queer (adj.): non-heterosexual. Queer is sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to all people with non-heterosexual sexual orientations or all people who are marginalized on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Queer (adj.): transgressive, revolutionary, anti-assimilation, challenging of the status quo. Many people claim the label queer as a badge of honor that has a radical, political edge.

Race

A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color), cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. There are no distinctive genetic characteristics that truly distinguish between groups of people. Created by Europeans (Whites), race presumes human worth and social status for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. Race is independent of ethnicity.

Racism

The term "racism" specifically refers to individual, cultural, institutional, and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for different racial groups. Racism is often grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race over groups historically or currently defined as non-white (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.). Racism can also be defined as "prejudice plus power." The combination of prejudice and power enables the mechanisms by which racism leads to different consequences for different groups.

Racial and Ethnic Identity

An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe themselves based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

Racial Justice

The proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Religion

A system of beliefs, usually spiritual in nature, and often in terms of a formal, organized institution.

Reverse Racism

Perceived discrimination against a dominant group or political majority. Commonly used by opponents to affirmative action who believe that these policies are causing members of traditionally dominant groups to be discriminated against.

Safe Space

A place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability. "Safe" spaces provide relative safety, in practice, since internalized bias and other factors can cause individuals or groups to feel unsafe or unfairly perceived/treated even within identity groups.

Scientific Racism

The use of scientific techniques, theories, and hypotheses to sanction the belief of racial superiority, inferiority, or racism. Examples include Tuskegee Syphilis Trial, the unauthorized use of the stem cells of Henrietta Lacks (HeLa Cells), Indigenous Races of the Earth, etc.

Sex

The biological classification of male or female based on physiological and biological features. A person's sex may differ from their gender identity.

Sexism

Discrimination based on sex or gender or the belief that men are superior to women and thus discrimination is justified. Such a belief can be conscious or unconscious. In sexism, as in racism, the differences between two (or more) groups are viewed as indications that one group is superior or inferior.

Sexual Orientation

Refers to the sex(es) or gender(s) to whom a person is emotionally, physically, sexually, and/or

romantically attracted. Examples of sexual orientation include gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, pansexual, queer, etc.

Stereotype

Widely held beliefs, unconscious associations and expectations about members of certain groups that are presumed to be true of every member of that group, and that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information and are highly generalized and/or inflammatory.

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.

Trans/Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their assigned sex at birth (i.e. the sex listed on their birth certificates). Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies through the use of hormones and/or gender affirmation surgery. Transgender people may identify with any sexual orientation, and their sexual orientation may or may not change before, during, or after transition (linked definition). Use "transgender," not "transgendered".

Transition

The process that people go through as they change their gender expression and/or physical appearance (e.g. through hormones and/or surgery) to align with their gender identity. A transition may occur over a period of time, and may involve coming out to family, friends, coworkers and others; changing one's name and/or sex designation on legal documents; and/or medical intervention. Some people find the term "transition" offensive, and prefer terms such as "gender affirmation". It is best to ask individuals which terms they prefer.

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 peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

Xenophobia

Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.