



DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION TOOLKIT

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GLOSSARY

This glossary was developed to help survey users understand unfamiliar terms that are used in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion training landscape as well as across for-profit and nonprofit organizations. It is not a comprehensive list of terms.



Ableism - Discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Accountability - Accountability is the management of resources, services, and internal processes for the purpose of serving the public trust, which is the ultimate mandate of a nonprofit organization. To be fully effective, accountability principles should go beyond formal rules and be incorporated, explicitly or implicitly, into the strategic planning of nonprofit organizations. (From Kevin Kearns' *Accountability Concepts and Controversies: Historical Precedents and Contemporary Trends*, 1996.)

Acculturation - The process of learning and incorporating the language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that makes up a distinct culture. This concept is not to be confused with assimilation, where an individual or group may give up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to that of the prevailing culture. (The National Multicultural Institute)

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

Ageism - Discrimination against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes. (The National Multicultural Institute)

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. (Open Source Leadership Strategies/Center for Assessment & Policy Development)

Anti-Oppression - Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional and personal forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression. (Center for Anti-Oppressive Education)

Bias - a positive or negative inclination towards a person, group, or community; can lead to stereotyping. (Thiederman)

Bigotry - Intolerant prejudice which glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups. (Dismantling Racism Institute)

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

Bullying - Intimidating, exclusionary, threatening or hostile behavior against an individual. (Sierra Club Employee Handbook)

Chicano/a - A term adopted by some Mexican Americans to demonstrate pride in their heritage, born out of the national Chicano Movement that was politically aligned with the Civil Rights movement to end racial oppression and social inequalities of Mexican Americans. Chicano pertains to the particular experience of Mexican-descended individuals living in the US, but not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Cisgender - A gender identity where an individual's self-perception of their gender aligns with their perceived sex. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Classism - Biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socio-economic grouping. Classism can also be expressed as public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Collusion - When people act to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression. Example: able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

Colonialism - Control by individuals or groups over the territory/behavior of other individuals or groups. (Horvath) Imperialism refers to the political or economic control, either formally or informally, and creating an empire. Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized. (LaRocque)

Colorblind - Term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices that do not consider race or ethnicity as a determining factor. The term “colorblind” de-emphasizes or ignores race and ethnicity as a large part of one’s identity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Community - Group of people forming a dynamic social unit within a larger association, and sharing common values, interests, work, identity, or location; feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals (Oxford dictionaries)

Critical Race Theory - The Critical Race Theory movement 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. (Delgado)

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 (i.e. white) culture’s right to take other cultural elements.

Cultural Assimilation - An individual, family, or group gives up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to the dominant culture. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Cultural Competence -

- 1) Knowledge, awareness and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, and responsiveness to cultural differences and

the interactions resulting from them. The particulars of acquiring cultural competency vary among different groups, and they involve ongoing relational process tending to inclusion and trust-building. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

- 2) A process of learning that leads to the ability to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of social cultural diversity in a defined social system. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Cultural Pluralism - Recognition of the contribution of each group to a common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different life styles, languages and convictions. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Cultural Racism - Cultural racism refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or “whiteness” are automatically “better” or more “normal” than those associated with other racially defined groups. Cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. It does that by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression. All of these cultural norms and values in the U.S. have explicitly or implicitly radicalized ideals and assumptions (for example, what “nude” means as a color, which facial features and body types are considered beautiful, which child-rearing practices are considered appropriate. (Racial Equity Tools)

Culture - A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Denial - The refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges that are granted or denied based on an individual’s identity components. Those who are in a stage of denial tend to believe, “People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin.” In this way, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race are ignored. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Design Thinking - A human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success. (Ideo.com/about)

Disability - Physical or mental impairment, the perception of a physical or mental impairment, or a history of having had a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. (The Department of Justice)

Discrimination - The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories. 2. [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. (Racial Equity Tools)

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. (Racial Equity Tools)

Empowerment - When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

Environmental Equity - Measures the amelioration of the myriad inequities and disproportionate impacts that groups in society have faced, especially in the realm of environmental protection and access to nature and the environmental goods that aren't equally shared.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any aspect of employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Equality - Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness. (Kranich)

Equity - The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity).

ESL (E)nglish as a (S)econd (L)anguage - A term used to describe language learning programs in the United States for individuals for whom English is not their first or native language. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Essentialism - The practice of categorizing an entire group based on assumptions about what constitutes the “essence” of that group. Essentialism prevents individuals from remaining open to individual differences within groups. (The National Multicultural Institute)

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). (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

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

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

Feminism - Theory and practice that advocates for educational and occupational equity between men and women; undermines traditional cultural practices that support the subjugation of women by men and the devaluation of women’s contributions to society. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Gay - People of the same sex who are attracted sexually and emotionally to each other. More commonly utilized to describe male attraction to other males. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Gender - The socially-constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles a particular sex performs. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Gender Identity - A personal conception of one’s own gender; often in relation to a gender opposition between masculinity and femininity. Gender expression is how people externally communicate or perform their gender identity to others. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Global Environmental Racism - race is a potent factor in sorting people into their physical environment and explaining social inequality, political exploitation, social isolation, and quality of life. Racism influences land use, industrial facility siting, housing patterns, infrastructure development, and “who gets what, when, where, and how much.” Environmental racism refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended

or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color. (Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit)

Governance - Refers to all of processes of oversight, whether undertaken by a government, organization or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through the laws, norms, power or language. It relates to the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of rules, decisions, norms and institutions. A nonprofit organization's system of governance includes a decision-making body (Board of Directors) who engages a leader (Chief Operating Officer or Executive Director) who implements those decisions.

Handicap - (See Disability)

Harassment - Unwelcome, intimidating, exclusionary, threatening or hostile behavior against an individual that is based on a category protected by law. (Sierra Club Employee Handbook)
Hazing - Verbal and physical testing, often of newcomers into a society or group, that may range from practical joking to tests of physical and mental endurance. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Heterosexism - Social structures and practices which serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality. (University of Maryland)

Hispanic - The U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanic as people who classified themselves as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories, which also included the subgroups Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican or Cuban. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Homophobia - A fear of individuals who are not heterosexual. Often results in hostile, offensive, or discriminatory action against a person because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer identified, or because they are perceived to be. These actions may be verbal or physical and can include insulting or degrading comments; taunts or 'jokes'; and excluding or refusing to cooperate with others because of their sexuality. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Human Rights - The basic rights and freedoms, to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language)

Identity Group - A particular group, culture, or community with which an individual identifies or shares a sense of belonging. Individual agency is crucial for identity development; no person should be pressured to identify with any existing group, but instead the freedom to self-identify on their own terms. (The National Multicultural Institute)

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. (Staats)

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

Inclusion - The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

Indigenous - Originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides. (University of Maryland); Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, by conquest, settlement or other means and reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a state structure which incorporates mainly national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant.

(Example: Maori in territory now defined as New Zealand; Mexicans in territory now defined as Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma; Native American tribes in territory now defined as the United States). (United Nations, Racial Equity Glossary)

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

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. An example includes City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color. (Potapchuk, Leiderman, Bivens and Major)

Institution - A society or organization founded for a religious, educational, social, or similar purpose (Oxford English Dictionary)

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

Internalized Racism - 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. (Bivens)

Intersectionality - The ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. (African American Policy Forum)

"-isms" - A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group: race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), age (ageism), religion, sexual orientation, language, etc. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Latinx - Individual living in the United States originating from, or having a heritage relating to Latin America. (University of Maryland)

Lesbian - A woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women. (UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center)

Leader (Leadership) - The individuals who are the leaders in an organization, regarded collectively; The activity of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to do this. Leadership involves:

1. Establishing a clear vision;
2. Sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly;
3. Providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision; and
4. Coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders.

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

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

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. (Wing Sue)

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. Movement building requires a range of intersecting approaches through a set of distinct stages over a long-term period of time. Through movement building, organizers can

- Propose solutions to the root causes of social problems;
- Enable people to exercise their collective power;
- Humanize groups that have been denied basic human rights and improve conditions for the groups affected;
- Create structural change by building something larger than a particular organization or campaign; and
- Promote visions and values for society based on fairness, justice and democracy.

Multicultural – Of, or pertaining to, more than one culture. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Multiculturalism - The practice of acknowledging and respecting the various cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes, and opinions within an environment. The theory and practice promotes peaceful coexistence of all identities and people. (University of Maryland)

Neo-Colonization - Term for contemporary policies adopted by international and western “1st world” nations and organizations that exert regulation, power and control over “3rd world” nations disguised as humanitarian help or aid. These policies are distinct but related to the “original” period of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations. (University of Maryland)

Norm - An ideal standard binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate power and acceptable behavior. (Effective Philanthropy)

Oppression - The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

Pan-Africanism - Describes the theory relating to the desire to educate all peoples of the African diaspora of their common plight and the connections between them. Some theorists promote linking all African countries across the continent through a common government, language, ideology, or belief. (University of Maryland)

Pansexuality - A term reflective of those who feel they are sexually, emotionally, and spiritually capable of falling in love with all genders. (Queers United Activists)

Partner - A person or entity who engages in a mutual undertaking, through formal or informal arrangements, with shared responsibility, risks and benefits

People/Person of Color - Is not a term that refers to real biological or scientific distinction between people, but the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. While each oppressed group is affected by racism differently and each group maintains its own unique identity and culture, there is also the recognition that racism has the potential to unite oppressed people in a collective of resistance. For this reason, many individuals who identify as members of racially oppressed groups also claim the political identity of being People of Color. This in no way diminishes their specific cultural or racial identity; rather it is an affirmation of the multiple layers of identity of every individual. This term also refrains from the subordinate connotation of triggering labels like “non-White” and “minority.” (Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns of Unitarian Universalist Association)

Policies - A set of written documents and principles that define, regulate and inform how you and your organization operate. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Board charter
- Finance policy
- Human resources policy
- Code of conduct - your ‘organizational rules’ covering what is acceptable or unacceptable
- Whistle-blower policy
- Data protection policy
- Equal opportunity policy

Polyamory - The practice or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved. (Queers United Activists)

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 and control over resources. Wealth, whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates. Although power is often conceptualized as power over other individuals or groups, other variations are power with (used in the context of building collective strength) and power within (which references an individual's internal strength). Learning to "see" and understand relations of power is vital to organizing for progressive social change. (Intergroup Resources)

Post-racial - Denoting or relating to a period or society in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist (Oxford dictionary)

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. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Privilege - Power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups. (University of Maryland)

Process(es) - A series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end. Organizational processes include formal or informal ways of taking action. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Hiring processes
- Budgeting processes
- Program planning processes
- Technology selection processes
- Succession planning processes
- Board recruitment processes

Queer - Term used to refer to people or culture of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community. A term once perceived as derogatory is now embraced by some members of the LGBTQ community. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Race - A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the political needs of a society at a given period of time. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

Racial and Ethnic Identity - An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and the ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

Racial Equity - The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer influenced how one fares. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

Racism - Individual and institutional practices and policies based on the belief that a particular race is superior to others. This often results in depriving certain individuals and groups of civil liberties, rights, and other resources, hindering opportunities for social, educational, and political advancement. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Racism (endorsed by Dismantling Racism Training) - A system of advantage based on race. A system of oppression based on race. A way of organizing society based on dominance and subordination based on race. Penetrates every aspect of personal, cultural, and institutional life. Includes prejudice against people of color, as well as exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion of, and fear and hate of people of color. Racism = Prejudice + the POWER to implement that prejudice. (Exchange Project of the Peace & Development Fund)

Reverse Discrimination - Unfair treatment of members of a dominant or majority group. (Society of Human Resources Management); according to the National Multicultural Institute, this term is often used by opponents of affirmative action who believe that these policies are causing members of traditionally dominant groups to be discriminated against. The Supreme Court considers it to be illegal to consider race and other demographic categories in hiring and other employment related decisions.

Safe Space - A space in which an individual or group may remain free of blame, ridicule and persecution, and are in no danger of coming to mental or physical harm. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Sex - System of classification based on biological and physical differences, such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Differentiated from gender, which is based on the social construction and expectations of the categories "men" and "women." (University of Maryland)

Sexual Orientation - The direction of one's sexual attraction toward the same gender, opposite gender, or other genders. It is on a continuum and not necessarily a set of absolute categories. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

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

Social Power - Access to resources that enhance chances of getting what one needs or influencing others in order to lead a safe, productive, and fulfilling life. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

Social Sector - The term social sector refers to that part of social and economic activity done for the purpose of benefiting society and which is funded, in part or whole, through charitable gifts. Other common terms relating to those organizations in this sector are nonprofit, not-for-profit, philanthropic sector, mission-based sector, non-governmental organizations, and tax-exempt organizations. Since not all charitable giving goes to entities that have official tax-exempt status bestowed by a governmental entity, the term “tax exempt” is not as inclusive in its definition, as are the other terms.

Stereotype - A positive or negative set of beliefs held by an individual about the characteristics of a certain group. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Technical Assistance - Non-financial assistance provided by specialists. It can take the form of sharing information and expertise, instruction, skills training, transmission of working knowledge, and consulting services and may also involve the transfer of technical data.

Tolerance - Acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences. (University of Maryland)

Transgender - An individual whose gender identity differs from the societal expectations of their physical sex. Transgender or “trans” does not imply any form of sexual orientation. Cisgender is a gender identity where an individual’s self-perception of their gender matches their sex. For example, a cisgender female is a female with a female identity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

User Centered Design - A framework of processes in which the needs, wants, and limitations of end users of a product, service or process are given extensive attention at each stage of the design process.

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.



Structural White Privilege: A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal. The system includes powerful incentives for maintaining white privilege and its consequences, and powerful negative consequences for trying to interrupt white privilege or reduce its consequences in meaningful ways. The system includes internal and external manifestations at the individual, interpersonal, cultural and institutional levels.

The accumulated and interrelated advantages and disadvantages of white privilege that are reflected in racial/ethnic inequities in life-expectancy and other health outcomes, income and wealth and other outcomes, in part through different access to opportunities and resources. These differences are maintained in part by denying that these advantages and disadvantages exist at the structural, institutional, cultural, interpersonal and individual levels and by refusing to redress them or eliminate the systems, policies, practices, cultural norms and other behaviors and assumptions that maintain them.

Interpersonal White Privilege: Behavior between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.

Cultural White Privilege: A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonizes other world views.

Institutional White Privilege: Policies, practices and behaviors of institutions -- such as schools, banks, non-profits or the Supreme Court -- that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white. The ability of institutions to survive and thrive even when their policies, practices and behaviors maintain, expand or fail to redress accumulated disadvantages and/or inequitable outcomes for people of color. (McIntosh; CAPD; Racial Equity Glossary)

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. (Martinas)