

Living Glossary for Racial Justice, Equity & Inclusion

(compiled by Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center and Racial Reconciliation and Healing)

Ableism: discrimination in favor of able-bodied people

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. (OpenSource Leadership Strategies, The Dynamic System of Power, Privilege and Oppressions). 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. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development.)

Cisgender: when the gender a person feels they are, matches the sex their parents were told at birth. Individuals whose biological sex, gender expression, and gender identity neatly align and experience a level of congruence as they encounter the world around them.

Class¹: Relative social status based on income, wealth, race, power, position, occupation and education.

Classism: unfair treatment of people because of their social or economic class.

Colonialism: 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. (Colonization and Racism Film, Emma LaRocque)

Colorism: or shadism, skin tone bias, pigmentocracy and colour complex, which refers to the prejudiced attitude and/or discriminatory acts against people with darker color/shade/tone skin, typically among people of the same racial or ethnic group

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

¹ Source: Classmatters.org, which contains materials from Betsy Leondar-Wright's *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists*. (forthcoming, spring 2005, New Society Publishers).

styles of communication. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, A Community Builder's Toolkit).

Cultural Humility: the “ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person].” Cultural humility is different from other culturally-based training ideals because it focuses on self-humility rather than achieving a state of knowledge or awareness. Cultural humility was formed in the physical healthcare field and adapted for therapists and social workers to increase the quality of their interactions with clients and community members.

Diversity: Each individual is unique, and groups of individuals reflect multiple dimensions of difference: race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, cognitive styles and much more. Valuing diversity means embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of difference that exist in groups. (Adapted from Diversity Initiatives Campaign, The Diversity Project.)

Equity: All groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate opportunity and resource gaps, and thereby, improve the quality of their lives. (= Process) AND, Differences in life outcomes cannot be predicted on the basis of race, class, or other dimensions of identity. (= Outcomes)

Gender: Gender on the other hand is far more complicated. It is the complex interrelationship between an individual's sex (gender biology), one's internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither (gender identity) as well as one's outward presentations and behaviors (gender expression) related to that perception, including their gender role. Together, the intersection of these three dimensions produces one's authentic sense of gender, both in how people experience their own gender as well as how others perceive it. the state of being male or female that is socially created and is not biological

Health Disparities: Differences between the health of one population and another in measures of who gets disease, who has disease, who dies from disease, and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the US.²

Health Equity: The opportunity for everyone to attain his or her full health potential. No one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of his or her social position (e.g. class, socioeconomic status) or socially assigned circumstance (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, geography, etc.).

Health Inequities: Differences in health status and mortality rates across population groups that are systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust. These differences are rooted

² Hook, J.N. (2013). *Cultural Humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients*. Journal of Counseling Psychology
adapted from NIH

social and economic injustice, and are attributable to social, economic and environmental conditions in which people live, work, and play.³

Homophobia: dislike, fear, prejudice or hatred of gay and lesbian people

Implicit Bias: Learned stereotypes and prejudices that operate automatically, and unconsciously, when interacting with others. Also referred to as *unconscious bias*. When a person's actions or decisions are at odds with their intentions this is implicit bias. (John Powell)

Inclusion: A value and practice of authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. (Adapted from OpenSource Leadership Strategies)

Intersectionality: is a Feminist theory* first highlighted by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989). Intersectionality is a methodology of studying "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations" (McCall 2005). Suggesting that—and seeking to examine how—various socially and culturally constructed categories gender, race, class, disability, etc interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination. (adapted from CiteLighter and Oxford Dictionary)

Islamophobia: fear and hatred of the Muslim community

Marginalized Communities: is a group that's confined to a lower status society. Such a group is denied involvement in mainstream economic, political, cultural and social activities.

Misogyny: hatred of women

Movement Building: 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

³ Adapted from Margaret Whitehead

- Promote visions and values for society based on fairness, justice and democracy (Movement Strategy Center)

Oppression: Unjust use of power and authority. Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access. (WPC Glossary from 14th Annual White Privilege Conference Handbook)

Power: the ability to achieve purpose, which is in all of us. 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)

Patriarchy/Sexism: a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

People of Color: A political construct created by People of Color to describe people who would generally not be categorized as White.

Prejudice: An unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.

Privilege: Advantages and immunities enjoyed by one, usually powerful group or class, especially to the disadvantage of others. Systemic advantages that are granted based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or other dimensions of diversity, regardless of an individual's personal effort and often invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it. **White Privilege:** Advantages and immunities enjoyed by whites in the US. 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.

Race: A socially constructed way of grouping people, based on skin color and other apparent physical differences, which has no genetic or scientific basis. This social construct was created and used to justify social and economic oppression of people of color by Whites.⁴

⁴ Adapted from Race: The Power of an Illusion.

Racial Discrimination: Unfair treatment because of an individual's actual or perceived racial or ethnic background.⁵

Racial Justice: The creation and proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment and outcomes for all people, regardless of race.⁶

Racism: A system of advantage based on a socially constructed concept of race. (David Wellman) created to justify social, political, and economic hierarchy.⁷ Racism operates on four levels⁸

- **Internalized Racism** - The set of private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals have about the superiority of Whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized racial oppression. Among Whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.
- **Interpersonal Racism** - The expression of racism between individuals. These are interactions occurring between individuals that often take place in the form of harassing, racial slurs, or telling of racial jokes.
- **Institutional Racism** - Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, based on race. that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.
- **Structural Racism** - Racial bias across institutions and society over time. It's the cumulative and compounded effects of an array of factors such as public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms that work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial inequity.

⁵ Adapted from Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

⁶ Adapted from *the Applied Research Center*

⁷ Adapted from multiple sources.

⁸ Race Forward

Levels of Racism



Source: Race Forward

"Radical democracy" means "the root of democracy". Laclau and Mouffe claim that liberal democracy and deliberative democracy, in their attempts to build consensus, oppress differing opinions, races, classes, genders, and worldviews. In the world, in a country, and in a social movement there are many (a plurality of) differences which resist consensus. Radical democracy is not only accepting of difference, dissent and antagonisms, but is dependent on it. Laclau and Mouffe argue based on the assumption that there are oppressive power relations that exist in society and that those oppressive relations should be made visible, re-negotiated and altered. By building democracy around difference and dissent, oppressive power relations existing in societies are able to come to the forefront so that they can be challenged.⁹

Reparations: States have a legal duty to acknowledge and address widespread or systematic human rights violations, in cases where the state caused the violations or did not seriously try to prevent them. Reparations initiatives seek to address the harms caused by these violations. They can take the form of compensating for the losses suffered, which helps overcome some of the consequences of abuse. They can also be future oriented—providing rehabilitation and a better life to victims—and help to change the underlying causes of abuse. Reparations publicly affirm that victims are rights-holders entitled to redress. (International Center for Transitional Justice)

Sex: physical attributes such as external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and internal reproductive structures used to identify individuals as male or female at birth. The biological, reproductive parts (penis, vagina, etc) that divide people into categories of male and female at birth.

Sexism: prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.

Social Determinants of Health: The circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, play, and age that influence access to resources and opportunities that

⁹ Laclau, E and Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso: London.

promote health. The social determinants of health include housing, education, employment, environmental exposure, health care, public safety, food access, income, and health and social services.

Stereotype: A standardized mental picture that is held in common about members of a group that represents an oversimplified opinion, attitude, or unexamined judgment, without regard to individual difference.

Transgender: when the gender a person feels they are differs from the sex their parents were told at birth. Gender identity is fluid; a person can identify as both male and female or identify with neither.

Transphobia: fear and hatred of transgender people

White Fragility:

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. (Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, Sharon Mathias)