

Moving Toward a **COMMON LANGUAGE**



Language Matters



Words have different meanings depending on one's lived and learned experiences. Because language is a key element of practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion, a first step to having productive conversations around DEI is adopting an accepted, shared language that guides how we engage and communicate around a myriad of topics.

Active, positive engagement around DEI requires the use of a vocabulary that is clearly defined, yet malleable, to allow for change as our language continues to evolve. Our goal is to focus DEI engagement around a common language to enhance the quality and value of discussions around our DEI work.

Our Common Language...



- promotes clear and open dialogue with others
- puts people first, making all feel included and valued
- is free from words or phrases that explicitly or implicitly stereotype, discriminate, or express prejudice
- helps to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations
- can help to build trust across lines of difference
- requires an ongoing commitment to learning and evolving

Understanding **IDENTITY**

Definition:

Identity refers to an individual's organized constellation of traits, attitudes, self-knowledge, cognitive structures, past, present, and future self-representations, social roles, relationships, and group affiliations. Together, these characteristics define who one is, heavily influence how one thinks about the self and the social world, and provide the impetus for many behaviors, judgments, and decisions.

Examples:

- Sex
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Race
- National Origin
- Disability/Ability
- Religion
- Spirituality
- Age
- Socio-economic status
- Language
- Political leanings

Understanding **POWER**

Definition:

Power is the capacity to influence, lead, dominate, or otherwise have an impact on the life and actions of others in society. 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.

Additional Context:

Power is also defined as:

- The ability to name or define.
- The ability to decide.
- The ability to set the rule, standard, or policy.
- The ability to change the rule, standard, or policy to serve one's needs, wants or desires.
- The ability to influence decision-makers to make choices in favor of your cause, issue or concern.

Understanding **TYPES OF POWER**

Definitions:

- **Personal Power** - Power that an individual possesses or builds in their personal life and interpersonal relationships (self-determination).
- **Social Power** - Power that social groups possess or build among themselves to determine and shape their collective lives. It can also be defined as a grassroots collective organization of personal power
- **Institutional Power** - Power to create, shape, and/or greatly influence the rules, policies, and actions of an institution.
- **Structural Power** - Power to create and shape the rules, policies, and actions that govern multiple and intersecting institutions or an industry.

Understanding **PRIVILEGE**

Definition:

The unearned advantages (and access) we get from being part of a dominant group whose needs have traditionally been prioritized. Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of non-dominant groups.

Additional Context:

If someone has a privilege, they have advantages over others for reasons they don't control – like their gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, ability/disability, financial status and level of education. Every person is privileged in some areas and disadvantaged in other areas and people can be disadvantaged by one identity and privileged by another.

Understanding **RACISM**

Definition:

An organized social system in which the dominant racial group, based on an ideology of inferiority, has the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices. It can also be defined as “a system in which one group of people exercises power over another on the basis of skin color; an implicit or explicit set of beliefs, erroneous assumptions, and actions based on an ideology of the inherent superiority of one racial group over another, and evident in organizational or institutional structures and programs as well as in individual thought or behavior patterns.”

Source: National Institutes of Health Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: “Understanding Racial Terms and Differences”; <https://www.edi.nih.gov/the-EDI-pulse-blog/understanding-racial-terms-and-differences#18>

Source: Dismantling Racism Works Web Workbook: “What is Racism: Racism Defined”: <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>

Source: Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2006). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society*. 3rd Ed. Toronto, ON: Nelson.

Understanding

CULTURAL RACISM

Definition:

Cultural racism is founded in the belief that one culture is inherently superior or inferior to another, often manifesting through stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination based on cultural differences. It encompasses societal values and norms that privilege certain cultures over others.

Additional Context:

In the US, cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws and is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. It does so by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression.

Understanding

INSTITUTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL RACISM

Definitions:

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which policies and practices within social institutions create different outcomes for different racial groups. In the US, these laws, policies, and practices are not necessarily explicit in mentioning any racial group, but work to create advantages for whites and disadvantages for people of color.

Structural racism refers to historical, social, political, institutional, and cultural factors that contribute to, legitimize, and maintain racial inequities. It involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism.

Source: National Institutes of Health Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: "Understanding Racial Terms and Differences"; <https://www.edi.nih.gov/the-EDI-pulse-blog/understanding-racial-terms-and-differences#18>

Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy: Key Equity Terms & Concepts: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Key-Equity-Terms-and-Concepts-vol1.pdf>

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

Understanding ANTI-RACISM

Definition:

Anti-Racism is a proactive approach aimed at identifying, challenging, and dismantling systems, structures, and ideologies that perpetuate racial discrimination and inequality. While there are a variety of ways to define anti-racism, generally it is an active process and commitment to analyzing self, systems, ideologies, practices, and policies that produce and reinforce inequalities in access, opportunity, legitimacy, safety, and life outcomes based on race. Anti-racism explicitly challenges systems and norms grounded in white supremacy and anti-Blackness and seeks to transform institutions toward ways of working and interacting that value and honor the full humanity of all people.

Understanding **ANTISEMITISM**

Definitions:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Additional Context:

Antisemitism is a form of ideological oppression that targets Jews, and has deep historical roots. Like all oppressions, the ideology contains elements of dehumanization and degradation, it uses exploitation, marginalization, discrimination, and violence as its tools.

Source: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: Working definition of antisemitism: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

Source: [Understanding Antisemitism: An Offering to our Movement](#), A Resource from Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (accessed July 2022).

Understanding

OPPRESSION / SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

Definitions:

Oppression is the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, a group or an institution that occurs at all levels, and is reinforced by social norms, institutional biases, interpersonal relationships and personal beliefs. Thus, oppression is both a state and a process, with the state of oppression being unequal group access to power and privilege, and the process of oppression being the ways in which that inequality is maintained.

Systems of oppression are historical, conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups.

Source: University of Michigan School of Social Work: "What is Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice?": <https://ssw.umich.edu/privilege-oppression-diversity-and-social-justice>

Source: American Psychological Association. Equity, diversity, and inclusion framework. <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/equity-division-inclusion-framework.pdf>

Understanding

RACIAL JUSTICE

Definition:

Racial justice is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Understanding **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Definitions:

Social justice refers to the commitment to creating fairness and equity in resources, rights, and treatment of marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal power in society. It is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights, and opportunities.

Additional Context:

Social justice must be considered in the context of historical systemic inequities in America's social, economic, and political systems, and the long-term generational consequences of systemic injustice.

Source: American Psychological Association. Equity, diversity, and inclusion framework. <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/equity-division-inclusion-framework.pdf>

Source: National Association of Social Workers: "Social Justice": <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=QMjTfoi058%3D&portalid=0>

Understanding **DISCRIMINATION**

Definition:

Treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a social category, usually used to describe unjust or prejudicial treatment on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, immigration status, national origin, or religion.

Additional Context:

This unjust treatment favors certain groups over others, restricting opportunities for other groups. At the individual level, discrimination may manifest as prejudice involving negative, hostile, and injurious treatment of the members of marginalized groups. At the institutional or structural level, discrimination may manifest as operating procedures, laws, and policies that favor one group over another.

Source: National Research Council (US) Panel on Race, Ethnicity, and Health in Later Life; Bulatao RA, Anderson NB, editors. Understanding Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in Late Life: A Research Agenda. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2004. 7, Prejudice and Discrimination. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK24680/>

Source: American Psychological Association. Equity, diversity, and inclusion framework. <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/equity-division-inclusion-framework.pdf>

Understanding **PREJUDICE**

Definition:

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.

Additional Context:

Prejudice is typically manifested behaviorally through discriminatory behaviors and may be conscious or unconscious. Prejudicial attitudes tend to be resistant to change because they distort perceptions of information about the marginalized person and/or group.

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

Source: American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines>

Understanding **XENOPHOBIA**

Definition:

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels oppression.

Additional Context:

Xenophobia it involves prejudice against a nationality or ethnicity, it is usually associated with assumptions of cultural/ethnic or racial superiority. It is usually experienced as a group phenomenon, but it can also be experienced and acted upon by individuals in daily life and in relationships in the workplace, schools, and other community settings.

Additional Sources / Resources

- The Program on Intergroup Relations. (2023, June). The Four Levels of Oppression (IGR Insight No. 4). <https://igr.umich.edu/IGR-Insight-Handouts>
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- American Psychological Association: "Inclusive Language Guide": <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines>
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- Pacific University, Oregon: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility Glossary of Terms: <https://www.pacificu.edu/life-pacific/support-safety/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-accessibility/edi-resources/glossary-terms>
- The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL): <https://policy.m4bl.org/glossary/>
- Center for the Study of Social Policy: Key Equity Terms & Concepts: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Key-Equity-Terms-and-Concepts-vol1.pdf>
- Dismantling Racism Works Web Workbook: "What is Racism: Racism Defined": <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>
- Young, Iris M. (1988) "Five Faces of Oppression". Philosophical Forum 19(4):270