

Glossary of Terms & Definitions

1. ANTI-BLACK

The Council for Democratizing Education defines anti-Blackness as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies.

The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism.

SOURCE:

- The Movement for Black Lives

2. ANTI-RACISM

Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviours and impacts.

SOURCE:

- Race Forward

3. ASSIMILATIONIST

One who is expressing the racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviourally inferior and is supporting cultural or behavioural enrichment programs to develop that racial group.

SOURCE:

- Ibram X Kendi, How to be an Antiracist, Random House, 2019

4. BIGOTRY

Intolerant prejudice that glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups.

SOURCE:

- National Conference for Community and Justice - St. Louis Region. Unpublished handout used in the Dismantling Racism Institute program.

5. BLACK LIVES MATTER

A political movement to address systemic and state violence against African Americans. Per the Black Lives Matter organizers: “In 2013, three radical Black organizers—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman. The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. [Black Lives Matter] members organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”

SOURCE:

- Black Lives Matter, “Herstory”

6. COLONIZATION

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.

Ongoing and legacy Colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. For example, white supremacy as a philosophy was developed largely to justify European colonial exploitation of the Global South (including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrining cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonizing and colonizer nations). See also: Decolonization.

SOURCE:

- Colonization and Racism. Film
- Emma LaRocque, PhD
- Aboriginal Perspective
- Also see Race and Colonialism, ed. Robert Ross and Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy Andrea Smith

7. 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.

SOURCE:

- “Colours of Resistance Archive”
Accessed June 28 2013.

8. CULTURAL MISAPPROPRIATION

Cultural misappropriation distinguishes itself from the neutrality of cultural exchange, appreciation, and appropriation because of the instance of colonialism and capitalism; cultural misappropriation occurs when a cultural fixture of a marginalized culture/community is copied, mimicked, or recreated by the dominant culture against the will of the original community and, above all else, commodified.

One can understand the use of “misappropriation” as a distinguishing tool because it assumes that there are 1) instances of neutral appropriation, 2) the specifically referenced instance is non-neutral and problematic, even if benevolent in intention, 3) some act of theft or dishonest attribution has taken place, and 4) moral judgement of the act of appropriation is subjective to the specific culture from which is being engaged.

SOURCE:

- Resources on What ‘Cultural Appropriation’ Is and Isn’t, Devyn Springer

9. CULTURAL RACISM

Cultural racism refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviours 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 behaviour, 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 racialized ideals and assumptions (for example, what “nude” means as a colour, which facial features and body types are considered beautiful, which child-rearing practices are considered appropriate.)

SOURCE:

- <http://racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts#cultural>

10. DECOLONIZATION

Decolonization may be defined as the active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonized nations’ own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically and also applies to personal and societal psychic, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression.

Per Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang: “Decolonization doesn’t have a synonym”; it is not a substitute for ‘human rights’ or ‘social justice’, though undoubtedly, they are connected in various ways. Decolonization demands an Indigenous framework and a cantering of Indigenous land, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous ways of thinking.

SOURCE:

- The Movement for Black Lives
- What Is Decolonization and Why Does It Matter? Eric Ritskes

11. DISCRIMINATION

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

[In the United States] the law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, colour, 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.

SOURCE:

- Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, “Laws Enforced by EEOC” Accessed June 28 2013

12. 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.

It is important to note that many activists and thinkers critique diversity alone as a strategy. For instance, Baltimore Racial Justice Action states: “Diversity is silent on the subject of equity. In an anti-oppression context, therefore, the issue is not diversity, but rather equity. Often when people talk about diversity, they are thinking only of the “non-dominant” groups.”

SOURCE:

- UC Berkeley Centre for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, Glossary of Terms
- Baltimore Racial Justice Action

13. ETHNICITY

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural 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).

SOURCE:

- Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. Routledge, 1997.

14. 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 behaviour 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.

SOURCE:

- State of the Science Implicit Bias Review 2013, Cheryl Staats, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.

15. INCLUSION

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

SOURCE:

- OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Some Working Definitions

16. INDIVIDUAL RACISM

Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.

Examples:

- Telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of whites over other groups;
- Avoiding people of colour whom you do not know personally, but not whites whom you do not know personally (e.g., white people crossing the street to avoid a group of Latino/a young people; locking their doors when they see African American families sitting on their doorsteps in a city neighbourhood; or not hiring a person of colour because “something doesn't feel right”);
- Accepting things as they are (a form of collusion).

SOURCE:

- Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building. Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005.

17. 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, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of colour.

Examples:

- Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining").
- City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of colour.
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SOURCE:

- Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building. Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005.

18. INTERNALIZED RACISM

Internalized racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements:

Decision-making - Due to racism, people of colour do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we 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 colour 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 colour to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving "everybody."

Standards - With internalized racism, the standards for what is appropriate or "normal" that people of colour accept are white people's or Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them.

Naming the problem - There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of colour and blames the disease - emotional, economic, political, etc. - on people of colour. With internalized racism, people of colour might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatized violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support.

SOURCE:

- Internalized Racism: A Definition, Donna Bivens, Women's Theological Centre. 1995

19. INTERSECTIONALITY

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 racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each race and gender intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.

SOURCE:

- Intergroup Resources, 2012

20. 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.

SOURCE:

- Derald Wing Sue, "Microaggressions: More than Just Race," Psychology Today, November 17, 2010, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>

21. PEOPLE OF COLOR

Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of colour” (not to be confused with the pejorative “coloured people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While “people of colour” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-White”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

SOURCE:

- Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide"

22. 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.

SOURCE:

- Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.

23. PRIVILEGE

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

SOURCE:

- Colours of Resistance Archive
Accessed June 28 2013.

24. RACE

For many people, it comes as a surprise that racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. There are three important concepts linked to this fact:

Race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact. Race designations have changed over time. Some groups that are considered “white” in the United States today were considered “non-white” in previous eras, in U.S. Census data and in mass media and popular culture (for example, Irish, Italian and Jewish people).

The way in which racial categorizations are enforced (the shape of racism) has also changed over time. For example, the racial designation of Asian American and Pacific Islander changed four times in the 19th century. That is, they were defined at times as white and at other times as not white. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as designated groups, have been used by whites at different times in history to compete with African American labour.

SOURCE:

- PBS, Race: Power of an Illusion
- Paul Kivel, Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002), p.141.

25. 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 him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

SOURCE:

- Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. Routledge, 1997.

26. RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

SOURCE:

- Centre for Assessment and Policy Development

27. RACIAL JUSTICE

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—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.

Racial Justice [is defined] as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

SOURCE:

- Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide"
- Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment Report, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Centre, 2009.

28. RACIAL HEALING

To restore to health or soundness; to repair or set right; to restore to spiritual Wholeness.

SOURCE:

- Racial Equity Resource Guide, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Michael R. Wenger, 2012.

29. RACISM

Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power

Racism = a system of advantage based on race

Racism = a system of oppression based on race

Racism = a white supremacy system

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having 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.

SOURCE:

- Dismantling Racism Works Web Workbook

30. WHITE FRAGILITY

Per Robin DiAngelo, white fragility is “a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.”

SOURCE:

- White Fragility, Robin DiAngelo

31. 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 behaviours and assumptions that maintain them.

Interpersonal White Privilege: Behaviour 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 behaviours 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 behaviours maintain, expand or fail to redress accumulated disadvantages and/or inequitable outcomes for people of colour.

SOURCE:

- White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies. Peggy McIntosh. 1988.
- Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity, CAPD, MP Associates, World Trust Educational Services, 2012.

32. WHITE SUPREMACY

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Colour and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of colour as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and "undeserving." Drawing from critical race theory, the term "white supremacy" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

SOURCE:

- Dismantling Racism Works web workbook