

A Glossary of Terms Advancing Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Accessibility/ Accommodation	The degree to which an institution, facility, or business is easily available and usable by individuals with disabilities, especially in public areas, classrooms, offices, buildings.
Age-ism	Biased perceptions and actions based on age, usually those of a younger person towards an older person or people.
Roles in a racist society include ...	
Ally	Ally: A person of one identity group who stands in support of an identity group other than their own.
Advocate	Advocate: A person who lobbies for themselves and members of their identity group.
Agent	Agent: A person who is a perpetrator of discrimination and/or oppression; usually a member of the dominant, non-oppressed group.
Anti-racist	As in comparison to a non-racist, someone who consciously and persistently works to challenge racism – including their own biases and privilege -- and actively opposes all forms of discrimination against people of color. Made popular by Ibram X. Kendi's, <i>How to be an Anti-Racist</i> .
Bias	Prejudice in perception and/or action; a preference or negative predisposition that clouds a person's impartial judgment.
Cisgender	A person who identifies as the gender with which they were born; a term usually used by a LBGQTIA+ person towards a non-LBGQTIA+ person.
Color Blind (non-racist)	A belief that, in treating everyone the same, one is treating everyone equally; based on a presumption that differences are best ignored or avoided. Often used by those who call themselves "color blind" as a defense of their behavior. This belief denies the reality that institutional/systemic racism is perpetuated by those who actively discriminate as well as those who avoid it or fail to challenge it, i.e. "silence equals complicity."
Conscious/Unconscious Bias	The beliefs and attitudes we have about a person or group at a conscious or unconscious level, which are often based on inaccurate or incomplete information and include the personal histories we bring to a situation. Conscious bias is also called explicit bias; unconscious bias is also known as implicit bias.
Culture	A person's or group's culture are the deep-rooted patterns of daily life, learned unconsciously and consciously throughout their life. Patterns may include religion, language, principles, food, geography, customs, arts, rituals and holiday celebrations, clothing and dating/marriage rules.

Cultural Appropriation	The mis-adoption or co-opting of icons, rituals, aesthetics and behavior – consciously or unconsciously-- of one culture by another; generally used when a minority or subordinate culture is co-opted by the dominant group that, without any real understanding, turns the cultural subject into meaningless or offensive pop-culture.
Disability	A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive, developmental impairment (or combination of impairments) that substantially limits a person's life activities; a disability may be present at birth or may occur during a person's lifetime. Many people with disabilities see their disabilities as gifts and special opportunities more than limitations. It is preferable to use the term <i>"a person with disabilities"</i> rather than <i>"a disabled person."</i>
Discrimination	Unfair treatment or the denial of justice by individuals and institutions in many areas including housing, education, employment, banking, and voting.
Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging	Diversity means balanced representation among group members across all dimensions of human differences; Inclusion means all members are included, heard, and considered within the group; Belonging means every member thrives because they are valued, empowered and feel like full members of the total group.
Equity v. Equality	Equality means treating everyone the same way, assuming that everyone begins on equal footing with the same opportunities. Equity means making the effort to create fair outcomes for people and groups by treating them in ways that address their unique disadvantages or advantage.
Ethnicity	A social paradigm that divides individuals into social groups based on common characteristics like language, history, values, political and social interests, behavioral preferences, ancestral roots and geographical experience. Examples include Chinese, Korean, Cherokee, African American, Cuban, Irish, and Indigenous People.
Feminism	The pursuit of women's rights on the basis of the equality of men and women.
Gender Identity	A way of identifying oneself by gender. Binary gender identities include male / masculine and female / feminine. Gender Non-binary or Gender Non-conforming is a way to identify oneself as outside the binary categories of male/female.
Institutional/Systemic Racism	While we often encounter racism at a personal level, the reality is that racism is, by definition, institutional and systemic. Institutions (and even larger systems like governments and industries) carry the power to reward, penalize and perpetuate common standards of behavior. They reward by providing resources, opportunities, authority, social goods, perks/benefits and behavioral discretion to some while withholding these for others. Many of these practices are so entrenched that they are hard to recognize and even harder to permanently address.

Intersectionality	The interweaving of social identities such that one's gender, race, ethnicity, class, etc. cannot be considered in isolation because they overlap in a person's life, in society, in institutions, etc. Every intersection of race, gender, etc., generates a uniquely distinct life experience in a person.
Latinx	Used as a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina to identify a person of Latin American origin.
LGBTQIA+	An acronym used to identify groups of people who identify as lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual, with the "+" encompassing all other queer identities not included in the letters of the acronym.
Microaggressions	Small day-to-day racial slights and indignities – intentional or unintentional – that include verbal, non-verbal, symbolic or environmental messages that stereotype, degrade, deflate, exclude, dismiss, delegitimize or reject. Such hurts are so commonplace that they are often beyond the perpetrator's awareness or consciousness. They are the persistently annoying "papercuts" of a racist society.
Otherness	The state of being different or other than the dominant groups around you. Otherness in race, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc. can lead to isolation, anger, depression and other internal emotions. Otherness can also occur when a person within a fixed identity group has a divergent view or attitude and hesitates to express that unique difference.
Prejudice	Biases or negative attitudes and behaviors toward a certain group or groups of people.
Preferred Gender Pronouns (PGPs)	Pronouns to use when self-identifying yourself in a diverse group. Gendered pronouns include he, him, she, ze or his, hers, hir, it. Plural gender-neutral pronouns include they, them, theirs.
Power	The possession of control, authority, or influence over others; the currency with which people get things done and have an impact within a group or organization.
Race	A social paradigm that artificially categorizes people into distinct groups based on physical appearance (particularly skin color and hair), heritage, ethnic/cultural affiliation and history. Scientists have shown that there is no biological or genetic basis for racial groupings. DNA tests increasingly show that many of us are blends of multiple ethnicities and races. An emerging term related to the term race is casteism, made popular by Isabel Wilkinson in her book, <i>Caste</i> .

Racism	Discriminatory thoughts and behaviors based on a difference in race/ethnicity, typically by white/European groups against people of color. Racism = prejudice + power. Intentionally or unintentionally, racism uses power to oppress, exploit, disfavor and separate others. Racism defends and confers certain privileges or advantages on the dominant group at the expense of subordinate groups.
Religious Practice	A system of spiritual beliefs, rituals, and behaviors, sometimes casual but often in formal, organized institutions e.g. Mormon, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim.
Sexual Orientation	A person's natural preference in sexual partners and lifestyle i.e., heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality. Sexual orientation is not a choice and is determined by a complex blend of biological, genetic and environmental factors.
Social Justice	The pursuit of action intended to create greater equality, fairness, and mutual respect among people and groups.
Social Responsibility	The state of being different or other than the dominant groups around you. Otherness in race, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc. can lead to isolation, anger, depression and other internal emotions. Otherness can also occur when a person within a fixed identity group has a divergent view or attitude and hesitates to express that unique difference.
Stereotype	Any absolute belief about members of a certain group that represents prejudiced attitudes, oversimplified perceptions or negative judgment. Stereotypes go way beyond generalizations, are generally negative, and are not based on actual or scientific information.
White Fragility	The term describes the privilege accrued to white people living in a society that insulates and protects them from racial stress. This isolation leads to a feeling of safety and comfort which leads to a lowered ability (fragility) to handle racial stress and triggers a range of defensive reactions. The term was coined by Robin D'Angelo, author of <i>White Fragility</i> .
White Privilege	In a racist society, the unearned and oft times unseen advantages afforded white people by virtue of their white skin, regardless of whether they seek such favor or not. The most obvious example is the "flesh-tone" band-aid; the greatest advantage is the freedom of not having to think about any of it.
White Supremacy	Originally used by racist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, the term is used now to describe the historic, systemic and institutionalized system of exploitation and oppression of people of color and the system that sustains white people's relative wealth, power and privilege. Baseless wealth, power and privilege often leads to a false perception of superiority among white people.