

Definitions/Terminologies

Accessibility:

Accessibility means “providing access.” Access means, “freedom or ability to obtain or make use of something”. As organizations, being accessible means that we structure our spaces in such a way that people can make use of our space, services, resources, etc.

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.

Anti-Racist:

An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

It is a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do.

(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.

Colorism:

A prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group; a form of oppression that is expressed through the differential treatment of individuals and groups based on skin color. Typically, favoritism is demonstrated toward those of lighter complexions while those of darker complexions experience rejection and mistreatment.

Co-opting:

To divert to or use in a role different from the usual or original one. Taking an idea, disassembling it, reassembling it with original pieces as well as retrofitted ones; giving the modified thing a different name than the original and then claiming originality.

It also refers to various processes by which members of the dominant cultures or groups assimilate members of target groups, reward them, and hold them up as models for other members of the target groups. Tokenism is a form of co-optation.

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.

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 color.

It is enacted by individuals within organizations, who because of their socialization, training and allegiance to the organization abide by and enforce these rules, policies and regulations. It essentially maintains a system of social control that favors the dominant groups in society (status quo).

Intersectionality:

A prism to see the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment. It looks at the way that racism, many times, interacts with patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia — seeing that the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually create specific kinds of challenges. The term was coined by Black lawyer and scholar [Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw](#) in 1989.

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.

Privilege:

Unearned access to resources (social power) only readily available to some individuals as a result of their social group.

Tokenism:

Making only a symbolic or the minimum effort to do a particular thing; often in relation to including a small number of people from under-represented groups in order to give the appearance of full inclusion or diversity

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.

This concept does not imply that a white person has not worked for their accomplishments but rather, that they have not faced barriers encountered by others.

White Supremacy:

Does not allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. Instead it refers to a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings.

This glossary was compiled using the following resources:

- The Canadian Race Relations Foundation. [CRRF Glossary of Terms](#).
- Georgetown University Library. [Anti-Racism Toolkit](#).
- The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth and Student Organisation. [Intersectionality Toolkit](#). 2014.
- Joanna Simpson. [A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality](#). CRIAW/ICREF. June 2009.
- Pacific University Oregon. Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. [Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Glossary of Terms](#).
- [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#).
- Sydney Worth. [The Language of Antiracism](#). *Yes! Magazine*. February 2020.
- David Gillborn. [The Language of White Supremacy](#). *The Atlantic*. October 2017.