

# Racial Equity & Social Justice

## Key Concepts and Definitions

Ally	Ally is one whose personal commitment to dismantling oppression is reflected in a willingness to educate oneself about oppression, challenge one's own prejudices, learn and practice the skills of anti-oppression, interrupt oppressive remarks, behaviors, policies and institutional structures.
Anti-Racism	Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.
Bias	Bias is a preference or inclination toward or against something, someone, or some group.
Bias, Explicit	Attitudes or beliefs that we endorse consciously.
Bias, Implicit	Preferences that we are unaware of.
Bias, Individual	Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
Bias, Institutional	Policies, practices, and procedures that work to the benefit of certain people and to the detriment of others.
Bias, Structural	A history and current reality of institutional bias across all institutions. This combines a system that negatively impacts certain groups: people of color, women, LGBT people, etc.
Discrimination	The unjust treatment of an individual or a group of people due to their identity.
Equity	Just and fair inclusion into a society in which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.
Ethnicity	Social groups that have a common national or cultural tradition.
Historically Marginalized Groups	All groups that have not been granted equal status in law and in treatment throughout our country's history resulting in continuing inequitable treatment today.
Inclusion	Inclusion is the ability to belong and contribute while being true to one's whole self and not having to give up cultural or personal ways of being or assimilate. It is belonging.
Intersectionality	The multiple identities that every individual has, how they overlap, and how privilege and oppressed identities combine for each individual. Each combination of identities has unique oppressions and privileges.
Microaggressions	Everyday verbal, nonverbal, slights or insults which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target non-privileged persons based solely upon their group membership. Can be both intentional and unintentional.
Multiculturalism	All identities can collaborate and dialogue with each other without having to sacrifice their particular identifies.
Oppression	Oppression is prejudice toward a targeted group plus the power to unjustly distribute the resources through control of institutions, cultural attitudes, economy, and political systems. The exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner.
People of Color	The term refers to peoples of the Americas, Africa, Asia, the Arab world and the Pacific Islands.

Prejudice	Judgment that is not based on reason and/or actual experience. Often based on stereotypes of people based on their (actual or perceived) affiliation with a group.
Privilege	Privilege is an advantage or right that a person is born into or acquires during their lifetime. It is supported by the formal and informal institutions of society and conferred to all members of a dominant group, by virtue of their group membership.
Race	Race is a socially constructed concept that is fluid and changeable, as opposed to rigid and natural, that places individuals into categories based on appearances that are ascribed with cultural characteristics.
Racism	Racism is individual, institutional, and systematic bias and oppression based on race.
Stereotype	An exaggerated, oversimplified belief about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences.
Tokenism	The practice of including one or a limited number of diverse identities only to maintain appearances and prevent criticism. The remedy for tokenism is inclusion – allowing diverse voices to impact outcomes and inform decision making.
Transformative Leadership	An inspired and collective vision toward structural change in the areas of human rights and social justice.
White People	This term is typically understood as those people of European descent. Research demonstrates that groups of people that have been able to claim white status have changed based on legal definitions throughout our country's history.

In talking about issues of racial equity, a common vocabulary is essential to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Words often have different meanings to different people, based on their experiences. The purpose of this handout is to help avoid such misunderstandings. Not everyone will agree on the definition of every word; but everyone should have a common understanding of how words are being used in particular circumstances.