

Diversity Glossary

- Allies:** Individuals who make 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.
- Bystander:** An individual (or group) who observes an act of discrimination or other form of distress and does nothing to help. The greater the number of onlookers, the higher the likelihood of inaction – a phenomenon known as the bystander effect.
- Cultural Competency:** The application of a defined set of values, principles, skills, attitudes, policies, and behaviors that enable individuals and groups to work effectively across cultures. Cultural competence is a developmental process (and continuum) that evolves over time for both individuals and organizations.
- Discrimination:** The unequal treatment of individuals and groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religions, and other categories. Discrimination is action; prejudice is an attitude.
- Diversity:** The wide range of human characteristics used to mark or identify individual group identities. These characteristics include, but are not limited to ethnicity, race, national origin, age, personality, sexual orientation, gender, class, religion, ability, and linguistics preferences.
- Equity:** A condition that balances two dimensions: fairness and inclusion. As a function of fairness, equity implies ensuring that people have what they need to participate in school life and reach their full potential. Dimensions of diversity such as ability, ethnicity, or socioeconomics should not be barriers. As a function of inclusion, equity ensures that essential educational programs, services, activities, and technologies are accessible to all. Equity is not equality; it is the expression of justice, ethics, and the absence of discrimination.
- Implicit Bias:** A bias that occurs automatically and outside of conscious awareness and control. It differs from an *explicit stereotype*, which is the kind that individuals deliberately think about and report. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications even though individuals may not be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitment to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.

Inclusion/

Inclusivity: Encompassing all; taking every individual's experience and identity into account; creating conditions where all feel accepted, safe, empowered, supported, and affirmed; expanding the sense of community to include all and giving all an equal voice.

Micro-

Aggression: Micro-aggressions are slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned, moral and decent family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, students, teachers, clerks, waiters, waitresses, employers, health care professionals, and educators. The power of micro-aggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator, who is unaware that he or she has engaged in a behavior that threatens and demeans the recipient of such a communication.

Multi-

culturalism: The bringing together and celebrating of many distinctive cultures and backgrounds by building and sustaining a sense of community in programs, policies, and practices. Multiculturalism involves building on the diversity of a school environment or on the diversity a school is striving to achieve.

Privilege: Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do. Privilege in dominant groups often renders its bearers oblivious to the conditions it imposes on members of subordinate groups.

Race: A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color); ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation; cultural history; ethnic classification; and upon the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time.

Racism: The belief that race is the primary determinant of human characteristics and capacities and that racial differences result in inherent superiority of a particular race over others. Also, a system of advantage based on race that is supported intentionally or unintentionally by institutional power and authority, to the advantage of one race and the disadvantage of other races.

Social Justice: A vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole.

Excerpted from the "Glossary of Key Terms for Diversity Work in Independent Schools" compiled by Caroline G. Blackwell, VP for Equity and Justice at NAIS, included in the publication, *Diversity Work in Independent Schools: The Practice and The Practitioner*, edited by Gene Batiste, Ed., D., Executive Director, Independent Education.

The definition of microaggression is from *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* by Derald Wing Sue, PhD, Professor of Psychology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.