

Diversity and Inclusion Glossary

The terms in this glossary are some that are frequently used in lessons and conversations about diversity and social justice. This is not an exhaustive list and is a living document that will be amended as understanding and usage evolves. Your input is welcome and ensures authenticity, accuracy, and relevance.

- Ally:** An individual who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and works 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.
- Bias:** Prejudice; an inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment. A tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc., are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly.
- Bigotry:** Intolerant prejudice that glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups.
- Cisgender:** A term for people whose gender identity, gender expression, and sex assigned at birth align.
- Culture:** The shared patterns of behavior and interactions, cognitive constructs and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.
- Discrimination:** The unequal treatment of individuals and groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories. Discrimination is action; prejudice is an attitude. Discrimination often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.
- Diversity:** All the ways in which people differ, encompassing all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. A broad definition includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.
- Equity:** Equity implies ensuring that people have what they need to reach their full potential. Dimensions of diversity such as ability, ethnicity, or socioeconomics should not be barriers. Equity reflects fairness in the distribution of and access to opportunity for all individuals.

Ethnicity: A concept referring to a shared culture and a way of life. This can be reflected in language, religion, material culture such as clothing and cuisine, and cultural products such as music and art. Ethnicity is often a major source of social cohesion as well as social conflict.

Gender: Socially constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity often inaccurately linked to biological sex.

Gender

Expression: The way a person communicates gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body characteristics.

Gender

Identity: A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, or non-binary. One's gender identity may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Because gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others.

Gender

Non-

Conforming: An umbrella term to describe individuals whose gender expression, gender identity, or gender role differs from gender norms society has associated with their assigned birth sex.

Homophobia: The fear or hatred of homosexuality and of people who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, etc.

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 subvert individuals' stated commitment to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. Also referred to as unconscious bias.

Inclusion: Inclusion reflects the manner in which individuals of diverse backgrounds are not only included, but valued as necessary voices within an organization.

Inclusive

Excellence: Inclusive excellence is the recognition that an organization's success is dependent on how well it values, engages and includes the rich diversity of its community members.

Inter-

sectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as subjecting people who have more than one marginalized identity to overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

LGBTQQIA: An acronym encompassing people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual.

Micro-Aggression: Micro-aggressions are slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by often 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 inclusion, representation, and a sense of community in programs, policies, and practices.

Nativism: An irrational prejudice against immigrants, and in favor of the native-born members of a particular culture.

People of Color: A term used primarily in the United States to describe any person who is not white; the term is meant to be inclusive among non-white groups, emphasizing common experiences of racism.

Prejudice: An opinion, prejudgment, or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive, but usually refers to a negative attitude. Prejudices are often accompanied by ignorance, fear, or hatred.

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: The social concept of artificially dividing people into groups based on perceived physical characteristics (color, hair texture, eyes) and ancestral heritage. Race is a social construct rather than a biological reality because there are no distinctive genetic or physical characteristics that scientifically distinguish one group of people from another. Instead, groups share overlapping characteristics. Race has been historically used to justify privilege and exploitation 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.

Sex: Separate from gender, this term refers to the cluster of biological, chromosomal, and anatomical features categorized as male, female, or intersex.

Sexual

Orientation: One's natural attraction to sexual partners including, but not limited to homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual.

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.

Socio-Economic

Status: An economic and sociological measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. In addition to income level, references to socio-economic status may include subjective perceptions of social status and social class.

Stereotype: An exaggerated belief, image, or distorted truth about a person or group – a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation. Stereotypes are based on images in mass media, or reputation passed on by parents, peers and other members of society. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

Transgender: Transgender has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Not everyone whose appearance or behavior is gender non-conforming identifies as a transgender person.

White

Supremacy: A belief system that holds that white people, white culture, and things associated with whiteness are superior to those of other racial groups. It assumes as normal and rational that the interests and perceptions of white individuals are central in society. This ideology may be unexamined or unconscious.

Ze: Gender neutral pronouns that can be used instead of he/she. Pronounced "zee." The pronoun "they" is also used.

Zir: Gender neutral pronoun that can be used instead of his/her. Pronounced "here". The pronoun "their" is also used.

Sources:

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