

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resource Guide

DEFINING OUR CORE VALUES

one campus  many cultures



SHIPPENSBURG
UNIVERSITY

“Our ability to **reach
unity in diversity** will be
the beauty and the test
of our civilization.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

Shippensburg University welcomes students, faculty, and staff from many different national, racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds. By maintaining a university culture that encourages participation and inclusion, we grow and learn from one another.

We are committed to the recruitment and retention of a broad, inclusive campus community that represents a diverse range of interests, abilities, talents, and cultures.

The university values and welcomes diversity of thought, identity, and experience. Inclusive language is an integral tool in our pursuit of inclusive excellence.

The purpose of this language guide is to assist the university community in representing our commitment through the use of language in course syllabi, annual reports, press releases, lectures and presentations, social media, and all communications. *The guide is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive, and will continue to be reviewed and revised.*

Dr. Manuel Ruiz, *Director*
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Shippensburg University



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Defining our Core Values

Diversity is embraced at Shippensburg University. It is a hallmark of our past and is key to our future. Diversity refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences may include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, seen and unseen abilities or disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic region, and more.

Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff in every stage of Ship's education and career development, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of marginalized groups.

Inclusion is the act of creating an environment at Ship in which any individual or group feels welcome, respected, supported, and valued. An inclusive climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions so that all people can fully participate in the University's opportunities. Language, as a facet of culture, is ever evolving and transforming to better articulate and represent our diverse identities. This document is intended as a living document and will be reviewed and revised on a semi-annual basis to demonstrate our on-going commitment to inclusive excellence. If you have any suggested additions or feedback, please email diversity@ship.edu.

Race is different from ethnicity. According to the American Sociological Association, "race" refers to physical differences that groups and cultures consider socially significant, while "ethnicity" refers to shared culture, such as language, ancestry, practices, and beliefs.

Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

The purpose of this selected Glossary is to strengthen our understanding and use of common Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) terminology that supports the building of a robust DEI State System that is a coordinated and comprehensive system, where all members of the community can thrive in diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments.

Ableism

Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in physical, mental and/or emotional ability that contribute to a system of oppression; usually of able-bodied/minded persons against people with illness, disabilities or less developed skills.

Accessibility

The extent to which a facility is readily approachable and usable by individuals with physical disabilities, such as self-opening doors, elevators for upper levels, or raised lettering on signs.

Advocate

One that supports or promotes the interests of a cause or group. Advocates are relatively more impactful when they acknowledge and utilize their privilege to engage in controversial situations on behalf of marginalized people and groups who can't afford to do so in order to make social and political change.

Age-ism

Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in age; usually that of younger persons against older.

Ally

A person of one social identity group who stands up in support of members of another group. Typically, member of dominant group standing beside member(s) of targeted group; e.g., a male arguing for equal pay for women.

Assigned Sex

What a doctor determines to be your physical sex birth based on the appearance of one's primary sex characteristics.

Acculturation

A process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs, patterns, and behaviors of another group. Acculturation (n.) The process of learning and incorporating the language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that make up a distinct culture. This concept is not to be confused with assimilation, where an individual, family, or group may give up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to that of their new host country.

African American

Refers to people in the United States who have ethnic origins in the African continent. While the terms "African American" and "black" are often used interchangeably in the United States, it is best to ask individuals how they identify. For example, some individuals in immigrant communities may identify as black, but do not identify as African American.

Alaska Native

Umbrella term for the indigenous peoples of Alaska, a diverse group consisting of over 200 federally recognized tribes, and speaking 20 indigenous languages. This is a general term; Alaska Native people may prefer to define or identify themselves by their specific tribal affiliation(s). The term "Eskimo" is considered derogatory by some Alaska Native people, and should be avoided.

Anglo or Anglo-Saxon

Of or related to the descendants of Germanic peoples (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) who reigned in Britain until the Norman conquest in 1066. Often refers to white English-speaking persons of European descent in England or North America, not of Hispanic or French origin.

Anti-Racist

A person who identifies and challenges the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.

Anti-Semitism

Hatred, discrimination, hostility, or oppression of or against Jewish people as a group or individuals.

Arab

Of or relating to the cultures or people that have ethnic roots in the following Arabic-speaking lands: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. "Arab" is not synonymous with "Muslim." Arabs practice many religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and others.

Asexuality

A sexuality spectrum where a person rarely or never experiences sexual attraction. This means asexual persons are rarely or never drawn to people sexually and rarely or never desire to act upon attraction to others in a sexual way. People who identify as asexual may or may not be interested in pursuing romantic relationships (they can be romantic or aromantic) and asexuals also vary in their personal attitudes and willingness to have sexual relationships.

Asian-American

Of or related to Asian Americans. The US Census Bureau defines “Asian” as “people having origins in any of the original peoples of Asia or the Indian subcontinent. It includes people who indicated their race or races as ‘Asian,’ ‘Indian,’ ‘Chinese,’ ‘Filipino,’ ‘Korean,’ ‘Japanese,’ ‘Vietnamese,’ or ‘Other Asian.’ Asian Americans are approximately 3.6 percent of the total US population, and 4.2% including persons of mixed race.

Assimilation

Acculturation of a marginalized group by the dominant group. The process by which one group takes on the cultural and other traits of a larger group; usually refers to the forced acculturation of a marginalized group by the dominant group.

Bias

Prejudice; an inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

Bias Incident

A discriminatory or hurtful act that appears to be motivated or is perceived by the victim to be motivated all or in part by race, ethnicity, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. To be considered an incident, the act is not required to be a crime under any federal, state, or local statutes.

Bigotry

An unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Bicultural

Of or related to an individual who possesses the languages, values, beliefs, and behaviors of two distinct racial or ethnic groups.

Bigender/Dual Gender

A person who possesses and expresses a distinctly masculine persona and a distinctly feminine persona and is comfortable in and enjoys presenting in both gender roles.

Bi-Phobia

The fear or hatred of homosexuality (and other non-heterosexual identities), and persons perceived to be bisexual.

Biracial

A person who identifies as being of two races or who’s biological parents are of two different racial groups.

Bisexual

An identity term for people who are attracted to people of two genders, usually to both men and women. Bi* is used as an inclusive abbreviation for the bi, pan, and fluid community.

Black

Of or related to persons having ethnic origins in the African continent; persons belonging to the African Diaspora. Some individuals have adopted the term to represent all people around the world who are not of white European descent, although this usage is not common. “Black” is often used interchangeably with “African American” in the United States.

Brave Space

Honors and invites full engagement from folks who are vulnerable while also setting the expectation that there could be an oppressive moment that the facilitator and allies have a responsibility to address.

“Never doubt that a small group of **thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world.** Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

“Diversity is being invited to the party; Inclusion is being asked to dance.”

—Verna Myers

Categorization

The natural cognitive process of grouping and labeling people, things, etc. based on their similarities. Categorization becomes problematic when the groupings become oversimplified and rigid (e.g. stereotypes).

Cisgender

An abbreviation for individuals in whom there is a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their personal identity. Often referred to as a cis-male or cis-female, these terms describe the antonym to transgender.

Cis-Sexism

Oppression based assumption that transgender identities and sex embodiments are less legitimate than cis-gender ones.

Classicism

Prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in socio-economic status and income, usually referred to as class. Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups. The systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class. “Classism” can also be expressed through the use of public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equitable economic, social, and educational opportunity.

Color Blind(ness)

The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. The term “colorblind” de-emphasizes, or ignores, race and ethnicity, a large part of one’s identity. Paradoxically, this can often serve to perpetuate racism, particularly systemic and structural forms of racism. (Note: colorblindness is an ableist term and the term “color evasiveness” can be used instead.)

Color-ism

A form of prejudice or discrimination in which people are treated differently based on the social meanings attached to skin color.

Communities of Color

A term used primarily in the United States to describe communities of people who are not identified as White, emphasizing common experiences of racism.

Conscious Bias (Explicit Bias)

Refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level. Much of the time, these biases and their expression arise as the direct result of a perceived threat. When people feel threatened, they are more likely to draw group boundaries to distinguish themselves from others.

Co-Optation

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.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory in education challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism as they relate to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups. There are at least five themes that form the basic perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy of critical race theory in education:

The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism

The challenge to dominant ideology

The commitment to social justice

The centrality of experiential knowledge

The interdisciplinary perspective

Covert Racism

Expresses racist ideas, attitudes or beliefs in subtle, hidden or secret forms. Often unchallenged, this type of racism doesn’t appear to be racist because it is indirect behavior.

Culture

Culture is the pattern of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by a group of people. These patterns can be seen in language, governing practices, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, dating rituals, and clothing.

Cultural Appropriation

The adoption or theft of icons, rituals, aesthetic standards, and behavior from one culture or subculture by another. It is generally applied when the subject culture is a minority culture or somehow subordinate in social, political, economic, or military status to appropriating culture. This “appropriation” often occurs without any real understanding of why the original culture took part in these activities, often converting culturally significant artifacts, practices, and beliefs into “meaningless” pop-culture or giving them a significance that is completely different/less nuanced than they would originally have had.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy facilitates and supports the achievement of all students. In a culturally responsive classroom, reflective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centered context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured and utilized to promote student achievement.

Dialogue

“Communication that creates and recreates multiple understandings” (Wink, 1997). It is bi-directional, not zero-sum and may or may not end in agreement. It can be emotional and uncomfortable, but is safe, respectful and has greater understanding as its goal.

Disability

Disabilities are having a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A diagnosed or known condition that can limit one or more major life activities due to a lack of accommodations and/or the presence of accessibility barriers.

Discrimination

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, national origin, age, physical/mental abilities and other categories that may result in differences in provision of goods, services or opportunities.

Diversity

Diversity describes the myriad ways in which people differ, including the psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among all individuals, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, mental and physical ability, and learning styles. Diversity is all-inclusive and supportive of the proposition that everyone and every group should be valued. It is about understanding these differences and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of our differences.

Domestic Partner

Either member of an unmarried, cohabiting, opposite-sex and same-sex couple that seeks benefits usually available only to spouses.

Dominant Culture

The cultural values, beliefs, and practices that are assumed to be the most common and influential within a given society.

Equality

Equality is the condition under which every individual is treated in the same way, and is granted same rights and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences.

Equity

Equity ensures that individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities, as the general population. While equity represents impartiality, the distribution is made in such a way to even opportunities for all the people. Conversely equality indicates uniformity, where everything is evenly distributed among people. The effort to provide different resources and/or levels of support based on an individual’s or group’s needs that acknowledges and addresses the legacy of historical inequities in order to achieve future fairness in educational processes and outcomes.

Ethnicity/Ethnic Group

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, cultural heritage, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Ethnocentricity

Considered by some to be an attitude that views one’s own culture as superior. Others cast it as “seeing things from the point of view of one’s own ethnic group” without the necessary connotation of superiority.

Euro-Centric

The inclination to consider European culture as normative. While the term does not imply an attitude of superiority (since all cultural groups have the initial right to understand their own culture as normative), most use the term with a clear awareness of the historic oppressiveness of Eurocentric tendencies in US and European society.

Feminism

The advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.

First Nations

Indigenous peoples of Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. The term “Aboriginal Peoples” can be used to refer to the first inhabitants of Canada as a group (including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in aggregate.) These are general terms; many First Nations people prefer to define or identify themselves by their specific tribal affiliation(s).

Fundamental Attribution Error

A common cognitive action in which one attributes their own success and positive actions to their own innate characteristics, while attributing others’ success to external influences and failure to others’ innate characteristics. This operates on group levels as well, with the in-group giving itself favorable attributions, while giving the out-group unfavorable attributions, as a way of maintaining a feeling of superiority.

Gay

An identity term used to describe a male-identified person who is attracted to other male-identified people in a romantic, sexual, and/or emotional sense. Also, an umbrella term used to refer to people who experience same-sex or same-gender attraction.

Gender Expression

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics.

Gender Fluid

A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Gender Identity

Refers to all people’s internal, deeply felt sense of being a man, woman, both, in between, or outside of the gender binary, which may or may not correspond with sex assigned at birth. Because Gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others, which differentiates it from gender expression.

Gender Non-Conforming

A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit into a category.

Gender Queer

Gender queer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as “gender queer” may see themselves as both male or female aligned, neither male or female or as falling completely outside these categories.

Hate Crime

Hate crime legislation often defines a hate crime as a crime motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.

Health Equity

Attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Efforts to ensure that all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.

Heterosexism

The individual, societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices that favor heterosexuality and assume that heterosexuality is the only natural, normal, or acceptable sexual orientation. This creates an imbalance in power, which leads to systemic, institutional, pervasive, and routine mistreatment of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Heterosexual

An identity term for a female-identified person who is attracted to male-identified people or a male-identified person who is attracted to female-identified people.

“Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about **embracing one another’s uniqueness.**”

—Ola Joseph

Hispanic/Latino

The US Census Bureau defines Hispanics as “those people who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the Census 2000 questionnaire (Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, or Cuban.

“Hispanic” is a term that was instituted by federal agencies and some find the term offensive as it honors the colonizers and not the indigenous groups the term represents. The term Hispanic is typically used on the East Coast and in the South to describe persons from Latin America, whereas other parts of the country typically use the term Latino. Chicano is a term that describes someone of Mexican-American descent, in other words, those who are beyond first generation. Latinx is a gender appropriate term, which omits any masculine or feminine roots and is typically used by younger generation Latinos.

Homophobia

The fear or hatred of homosexuality (and other non-heterosexual identities), and persons perceived to be gay or lesbian.

Homosexual

A person who is primarily attracted to members of what they identify as their own sex or gender. Many people reject the term homosexual because of its history as a term denoting mental illness and abnormality - the terms Gay or Lesbian are preferred.

Indigenous people

Umbrella term for people who were and remain native to lands prior to European colonialization. There are thousands of indigenous groups across all continents who have very diverse cultures and ways of life.

Implicit Bias

Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold; also known as unconscious or hidden bias. 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 be favored above individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that people may profess.

Impostor Syndrome

Refers to individuals' feelings of not being as capable or adequate as others. Common symptoms of the impostor phenomenon include feelings of phoniness, self-doubt, and inability to take credit for one's accomplishments. The literature has shown that such impostor feelings influence a person's self-esteem, professional goal directedness, locus of control, mood, and relationships with others.

Inclusion/Inclusiveness

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Inclusive Language

Refers to language that “includes” all persons in its references. For example, “a writer needs to proofread his work” excludes females due to the masculine reference of the pronoun. Likewise, “a nurse must disinfect her hands” is exclusive of males and stereotypes nurses as females.

In-Group Bias (Favoritism)

The tendency for groups to “favor” themselves by rewarding group members economically, socially, psychologically, and emotionally in order to uplift one group over another.

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.

Intercultural Competency

A process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, thereby broadening our own understanding and ability to participate in a multicultural process. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.

Inter-Group Conflict

Tension and conflict which exists between social groups and which may be enacted by individual members of these groups.

Internalized Oppression

The process whereby individuals in the target group make oppression internal and personal by coming to believe that the lies, prejudices, and stereotypes about them are true. Members of target groups exhibit internalized oppression when they alter their attitudes, behaviors, speech, and self-confidence to reflect the stereotypes and norms of the dominant group. Internalized oppression can create low self-esteem, self-doubt, and even self-loathing. It can also be projected outward as fear, criticism, and distrust of members of one's target group.

Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is a phenomenon that occurs when a group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of a racist system by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that reinforce that system. In the US this generally involves reinforcement of white supremacy. Internalized racism involves four essential and interconnected elements: 1) Decision-making; 2) Resources; 3) Resources; 4) Standards; and 5) Naming the problem.

Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. When private beliefs are put in interaction with others, racism resides in the interpersonal realm. Examples: public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias and bigotry between individuals. These are biases that occur when individuals interact with others and their private racial beliefs affect their public interactions.

Intersectionality

The idea that various biological, social, and cultural categories-- including gender, race, class, ethnicity and social categories-- interact and contribute towards systematic social inequality. This concept recognizes that individuals: 1) belong to more than one social category simultaneously and 2) may experience either privileges or disadvantages on that basis depending on circumstances and relationships. Exposing [one's] multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression. For example, a Black woman in America does not experience gender inequalities in exactly the same way as a white woman, nor is her racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.

Intersex

The term "intersex" refers to atypical internal and/or external anatomical sexual characteristics, where features usually regarded as male or female may be mixed to some degree. This is a naturally occurring variation in humans and not a medical condition, and is distinct from transsexuality.

ISM

A social phenomenon and psychological state where prejudice is accompanied by the power to systemically enact it.

Latinx

A gender-inclusive term that is used by some people of Latin American descent.

Lesbian

The term is used to describe female-identified people attracted emotionally, physically, and/or sexually to other female-identified people.

LGBT/LGBTQIA/LGBT+/LGBTIQ, etc.

LGBTQ: This acronym is an umbrella term used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer or questioning people. Another common acronym used is **LGBTQIA**, which encompasses intersex and asexual identities, although there doesn't seem to be consensus within the intersex or asexual communities about wanting to be included in or directly linked to the LGBTQ community.

Lines of Difference

A person who operates across lines of difference is one who welcomes and honors perspectives from others in different racial, gender, socioeconomic, generational, regional groups than their own. [Listing is not exhaustive]

MĀHŪ

(‘In the middle’) in Kanaka Maoli (Hawaiian) and Maohi (Tahitian) cultures are third gender persons with traditional spiritual and social roles within the culture.

Marginalized/Marginalization

The process by which minority groups/cultures are excluded, ignored or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community. A tactic used to devalue those that vary from the norm of the mainstream, sometimes to the point of denigrating them as deviant and regressive.

Microaggression

Everyday insults, indignities and demeaning messages sent to historically marginalized groups by well-intentioned members of the majority group who are unaware of the hidden messages being sent.

Micro-Insults

Verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity. An example is an employee who asks a colleague of color how she got her job, implying she may have landed it through an affirmative action or quota system.

Micro-Invalidation

Communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of color. For instance, white individuals often ask Asian-Americans where they were born, conveying the message that they are perpetual foreigners in their own land.

Model Minority

Refers to a minority ethnic, racial, or religious group whose members achieve a higher degree of success than the population average. This success is typically measured in income, education, and related factors such as low crime rate and high family stability.

Mono-Racial

To be of only one race (composed of or involving members of one race only; (of a person) not of mixed race.)

Multicultural

Of or pertaining to more than one culture.

Multiethnic

An individual that comes from more than one ethnicity.

Multiracial

An individual that comes from more than one race.

MUXE

Derived from the Spanish word for woman (Mujer), muxes generally represent Mexican people who are assigned male at birth and identify as different genders. The iterations among the muxe community and their self-identifications vary—some identify as male but are female-expressing, while others identify as female and are more closely associated with Western culture's understanding of transgender. Others defy gender entirely. But, in Mexican culture, the term "third gender" is often tacked to the muxe community.

Naming

When one articulates a thought that traditionally has not been discussed.

Native American

Can be used to refer broadly to the indigenous peoples of North and South America, but is more commonly used as a general term for the indigenous peoples of the contiguous United States. This term has been used interchangeably with the term "American Indian," although some Native Americans find this latter term offensive since "Indian" is a misnomer. These are general terms which refer to groups of people with different tribal affiliations; many Native American individuals prefer to identify themselves by their specific tribal affiliation(s).

Oppression

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society. Oppression also signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.

Pan-Sexual

A term referring to the potential for sexual attractions or romantic love toward people of all gender identities and biological sexes. The concept of pan-sexuality deliberately rejects the gender binary and derives its origin from the transgender movement.

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are **equal in value no matter what their color.”**

—Maya Angelou

Pacific Islander, or Pasifika

Refers to the indigenous inhabitants of the Pacific Islands, specifically persons whose origins are of the following sub-regions of Oceania: Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

Person/People of Color

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. (This definition parallels the Communities of Color definition.)

Power

Power is unequally distributed globally and in US society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access to and control over resources. Wealth, Whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates.

Prejudice

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Privilege

Unearned social power (set of advantages, entitlements, and benefits) accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to the members of a dominant group (e.g., white/Caucasian people with respect to people of color, men with respect to women, heterosexuals with respect to homosexuals, adults with respect to children, and rich people with respect to poor people). Privilege tends to be invisible to those who possess it, because its absence (lack of privilege) is what calls attention to it. In other words, men are less likely to notice/acknowledge a difference in advantage because they do not live the life of a woman; white people are less likely to notice/acknowledge racism because they do not live the life of a person of color; straight people are less likely to notice/acknowledge heterosexism because they do not live the life of a gay/lesbian/bisexual person.

Privileged Group Member

A member of an advantaged social group privileged by birth or acquisition, i.e. Whites, men, owning class, upper-middle-class, heterosexuals, gentiles, Christians, non-disabled individuals.

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”

—Malcolm Forbes

Post-Racial

A theoretical term to describe an environment free from racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice. Like the idea of colorblindness/color evasiveness, the belief in a post-racial society can paradoxically lead to perpetuating racism, particularly systemic and structural forms.

Queer

Queer is a multi-faceted word that is used in different ways and means different things to different people. It can refer to any combination of gender identify and sexual orientation. Reclaimed from its earlier negative use, the term is valued by some for its defiance, by some because it can be inclusive of the entire community, and by others who find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities. Due to its varying meanings, this word should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as queer (i.e. “My cousin identifies as queer.”).

Questioning

A term used to refer to an individual who is uncertain of their sexual orientation or identity.

Race

A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color), cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. There are no distinctive genetic characteristics that truly distinguish between groups of people. Created by Europeans (Whites), race presumes human worth and social status for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. Race is independent of ethnicity.

Racism

The term “racism” specifically refers to individual, cultural, institutional, and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for different racial groups. Racism is often grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race over groups historically or currently defined as non-white (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.). Racism can also be defined as “prejudice plus power.” The combination of prejudice and power enables the mechanisms by which racism leads to different consequences for different groups.

Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity is no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When this term is used, the term may imply that racial equity is one part of racial justice, and thus also includes work to address the root causes of inequities, not just their manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Racial and Ethnic Identity

An individual’s awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe themselves based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

Racial Justice

The proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Racial Profiling

The use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed an offense.

Rainbow Flag

The Rainbow Freedom Flag was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker to designate the great diversity of the LGBTIQ community. It has been recognized by the International Flag Makers Association as the official flag of the LGBTIQ civil rights movement.

Re-Fencing (Exception-Making)

A cognitive process for protecting stereotypes by explaining any evidence/example to the contrary as an isolated exception.

Reverse Racism

Perceived discrimination against a dominant group or political majority. Commonly used by opponents to affirmative action who believe that these policies are causing members of traditionally dominant groups to be discriminated against.

Safe Space(r)

A place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability. Safer Space: A supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety.

Scapegoating

The action of blaming an individual or group for something when, in reality, there is no one person or group responsible for the problem. It targets another person or group as responsible for problems in society because of that person’s group identity.

Scientific Racism

The use of scientific techniques, theories, and hypotheses to sanction the belief of racial superiority, inferiority, or racism. The view was popularized in the US by the field of eugenics in the early twentieth century. Examples include Tuskegee Syphilis Trial, the stem cells of Henrietta Lacks, Indigenous Races of the Earth, using IQ tests to argue for a natural order of the races, etc.

Sex

The biological classification of male or female based on physiological and biological features. A person’s sex may differ from their gender identity.

Sexism

Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on a difference in sex/gender; usually by men against women.

Sexual Orientation

Refers to the sex(es) or gender(s) to whom a person is emotionally, physically, sexually, and/or romantically attracted. Examples of sexual orientation include gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, pansexual, queer, etc.

Social Identity

Involves the ways in which one characterizes oneself, the affinities one has with other people, the ways one has learned to behave in stereotyped social settings, the things one values in oneself and in the world, and the norms that one recognizes or accepts governing everyday behavior.

Social Justice

A broad term for action intended to create genuine equality, fairness, and respect among peoples.

Social Oppression

This condition exists when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another group for its own benefit.

Social Self-Esteem

The degree of positive/negative evaluation an individual holds about their situation regarding their social identities.

Social Self-View

An individual's perception about which social identity group(s) they belong.

Stereotype

Widely held beliefs, unconscious associations and expectations about members of certain groups that are presumed to be true of every member of that group, and that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information and are highly generalized and/or inflammatory.

Structural Racism

The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics—historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal—that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism—all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

System of Oppression

Conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups.

Tolerance

Acceptance, and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences.

Token-ism

Hiring or seeking to have representation such as a few women and/or racial or ethnic minority persons so as to appear inclusive while remaining mono-cultural - not significantly changing systems, structures, and practices that maintain the current power structure and the status quo.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their assigned sex at birth (i.e. the sex listed on their birth certificates). Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies using hormones and/or gender affirmation surgery. Transgender people may identify with any sexual orientation, and their sexual orientation may or may not change before, during, or after transition (linked definition). Use “transgender,” not “transgendered.”

Transition

The process that people go through as they change their gender expression and/or physical appearance (e.g. through hormones and/or surgery) to align with their gender identity. A transition may occur over a period of time, and may involve coming out to family, friends, coworkers and others; changing one's name and/or sex designation on legal documents; and/or medical intervention. Some people find the term “transition” offensive, and prefer terms such as “gender affirmation”. It is best to ask individuals which terms they prefer.

“We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or perish together as fools.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Trans Misogyny

The negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and transfeminine people.

Transphobia

Fear or hatred of transgender people; transphobia is manifested in a number of ways, including violence, harassment, and discrimination. This phobia can exist in LGB and straight communities.

Two Spirit

An umbrella term for a wide range of non-binary culturally recognized gender identities and expressions among Indigenous people. A Native American term for individuals who identify both as male and female. In western culture, these individuals are identified as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or trans-gendered.

Unconscious Bias (Implicit Bias)

Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

Undocumented Student

Students that do not have US citizenship or another legal immigration status. This includes both people who legally entered the United States but remained in the country without authorization and those who entered the US without inspection or valid entry documents. This also includes Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA recipients, which gives undocumented students temporary legal immigration status. They face unique legal uncertainties and limitations within the United States educational system.

Veteran Status

Whether or not an individual has served in a nation's armed forces (or other uniformed service).

Whiteness

A broad social construction that embraces the white culture, history, ideology, racialization, expressions, and economic, experiences, epistemology, and emotions and behaviors and nonetheless reaps material, political, economic, and structural benefits for those socially deemed white.

White Fragility

Term used to describe discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.

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.

White Supremacy

White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

Worldview

The perspective through which individuals view the world; comprised of their history, experiences, culture, family history, and other influences.

Xenophobia

Hatred or fear of foreigners/strangers or of their politics or culture.

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