

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Glossary of Terms

The purpose of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Glossary of Terms is to serve as a reference guide of DEI terms that are critical to our shared understanding for the need to advance efforts to address systemic racism in our system. While the list of terms is not exhaustive, the glossary identifies key terms informed by the DEI Workgroup to help individuals engage in meaningful conversations on equity. This glossary is a living document and will be updated on an annual basis to reflect the evolution of our understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion.

DEI TERMS

Ally: Person in a dominant position of power actively working in solidarity with individuals that do not hold that same power or they do not share a social identity with to end oppressive systems and practices. In the context of racial justice, allyship often refers to White people working to end the systemic oppression of people of color.¹

Anti-Racist: Person who actively opposes racism and the unfair treatment of people who belong to other races. They recognize that all racial groups are equal (i.e. nothing inherently superior or inferior about specific racial groups) and that racist policies have caused racial inequities. They also understand that racism is pervasive and has been embedded into all societal structures. An anti-racist challenges the values, structures, policies, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism, and they are also willing to admit the times in which they have been racist. Persons are either anti-racist or racist.

that exist.²

Anti-Racism: A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas. Practicing antiracism requires constantly identifying, challenging, and upending existing racist policies to replace them with antiracist policies that foster equity between racial groups.³

Bias: Is an inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or

Co-conspirators: Are people who are willing to put something on the line to use their privilege to disband systems of oppression. In contrast to allyship, co-conspirators do not just educate themselves about systemic injustice and racism, but like modern-day activists, they take personal risks to pursue meaningful action.⁵

Color Blindness: Is a racial ideology that assumes the best way to end prejudice and discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. This ideology is grounded in the belief that race-based differences do not matter and should not be considered for decisions, impressions, and behaviors. However, the term “colorblind” de-emphasizes, or ignores, race and ethnicity, a large part of one’s identity and lived experience. In doing so, it perpetuates existing racial inequities and denies systematic racism.⁶

Color-Evasiveness: Is a racial ideology that describes the same concept as color-blindness where individuals reject or minimize the significance of race. Color-evasiveness, however, avoids describing people with disabilities as problematic or deficient by using blindness as a metaphor for ignorance.⁷

Covert Racism: A form of racial discrimination that is disguised and indirect, rather than public or obvious. Covert racism discriminates against individuals through often evasive or seemingly passive methods. Since racism is viewed as socially unacceptable by mainstream society, people engage in covert racism in subtle ways, and therefore it may go unchallenged or unrecognized.⁸

Culture: Is the values, beliefs, traditions, behavioral norms, linguistic expression, knowledge, memories, and collective identities that are shared by a group of people and give meaning to their social environments. Culture is learned and inherited behavior that distinguishes members of one group from another group. Culture is not static and can change over time.⁹

Cultural Change: Refers to the stages of development or new patterns of culture that occur as a response to changing societal conditions. Within an organization, cultural

⁵ *Ally vs. co-conspirator: What it means to be an abolitionist teacher* [Video].

change is a new method of operating and a reorientation of one's role and responsibilities in the organization. Effective cultural change in an organization involves moving the organization toward a new vision or desired state. This change is influenced by many factors including effective leadership in all aspects of the change process, intentional alignment of structures, systems and policies with the new culture, ensuring staff and stakeholder participation, clear and frequent communication regarding the cultural change, obtaining feedback and evaluating progress, and managing any emotional response to the change.¹⁰

Cultural Competence: Is the ability to honor and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviors of those receiving and providing services. Individuals practicing cultural competency have knowledge of the intersectionality of social identities and the multiple axes of oppression that people from different racial, ethnic, and other minoritized groups face. Individuals striving to develop cultural competence recognize that it is a dynamic, on-going process that requires a long-term commitment to learning. In the context of education, cultural competence refers to the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures **other than one's own. It entails developing personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, learning specific bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills for effective cross-cultural teaching.**¹¹

Cultural Fluency: Is the ability to effectively interact with people from different cultures, racial, and ethnic groups. It includes an awareness of how to properly respond to differences in communication and conflict as well as the appropriate application of respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, interests, curiosity, openness, the willingness to suspend judgement, tolerance for ambiguity, and sense of humor.¹²

Deficit-Minded Language: Is language that blames students for their inequitable outcomes instead of examining the systemic factors that contribute to their challenges. It labels students as inadequate by focusing on qualities or knowledge they lack, such as the cognitive abilities and motivation needed to succeed in college, or shortcomings socially linked to the student, such as cultural deprivation, inadequate socialization, or family ~~deficiencies of various types and being "at-risk" or "high-need"~~ inadequacies in students. Examples of this type of language include at-risk or high-need,

¹⁰ Gibson, D.E. & Barsade, S.G. (2003). Managing organizational culture change: The case of long-term care. *Journal of Social Work in Long-Term Care*, 2(1/2), 11-34.; Kanter, R.M., Stein, B.A., & Jick, T.D. (1992). *The challenge of organizational change*. The Free Press.; Wuthnow, R. (1992). Cultural change and sociological theory. In Haferkamp, H. & Smelser, N.J. (Eds.), *Social change and modernity* (pp. 256-277). University of California Press.

Educational Equity Gap: The condition where there is a significant and persistent disparity in educational attainment between different groups of students.¹⁸

Equity-Minded: Is a schema that provides an alternative framework for understanding the causes of equity gaps in outcomes and the action needed to close them. Rather than attribute inequities in outcomes to student deficits, being equity-minded involves interpreting inequitable outcomes as a signal that practices are not working as intended. Inequities are eliminated through changes in institutional practices, policies, culture, and routines. Equity-mindedness encompasses being (1) race conscious, (2) institutionally focused, (3) evidence based, (4) systemically aware, and (5) action oriented.¹⁹

Ethnicity: Is a category of people who identify as a social group on the basis of a shared culture, origins, social background, and traditions that are distinctive, maintained between generations, and lead to a sense of identity, common language or religious traditions.²⁰

~~Gender: In essence, from 'sex' which is the biological classification of males or females based on physiological and biological features. Gender is socially constructed roles, behavior, activities, and attributes that society considers "appropriate" for men and women. In a binary world, a person's gender may not necessarily correspond to their sex. Gender may not be limited to the gender binary (woman/man).²¹~~

~~Gender Identity: One's internal 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. Gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others, which differentiates it from gender expression (i.e., how people display their gender to the world around them).²²~~

Implicit Bias: Bias that results from the tendency to process information based on or declared beliefs.²³

¹⁸ 101: Equity gaps in higher education. (2019). Higher Learning Advocates. Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://higherlearningadvocates.org/resource/higher-ed-101/101-equity-gaps-in-higher-education/>.

¹⁹ Malcolm-Piqueux, L. (2017). Taking equity-minded action to close equity gaps. *Association of American Colleges & Universities*.; Malcom-Piqueux, L., & Bensimon, E. M. (2017). Taking equity-minded action to close equity gaps. *Peer Review*, 19118.58 192.77 Tm0.333 0.341 0.349 rg0.333 0.341 0.349 RG[(118.58 192.77 (-)-17(-)-28(i)-20ETQq50.333 0.341 0.349 rg0.333 0.341 0.349

Inclusion: Authentically bringing tr

Privilege: Is 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.³⁷

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. Race presumes human worth and social status for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. Race is independent of ethnicity.³⁸

Racial Justice: The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice —or racial equity — **goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence** of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.³⁹

Racism: Is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others on the basis of race. Racism refers to a variety of practices, beliefs, social relations,

