

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION



2021

## GLOSSARY

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!  
D.E.I. WORDS TO KNOW



# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Glossary

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**DIVERSITY**  
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## D.E.I. WORDS TO KNOW

As the diversity, equity, and inclusion movement has exploded into business and politics on a more recognized level, the terminology has grown too.

You're already aware of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and here you can learn some of the terminology to join that conversation with a broader comprehension of what is being discussed.

This glossary is a resource of carefully researched diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice terms and definitions. It's not an exhaustive list, but it's a really good place to start.

And as the language and terms of D.E.I. evolve, we'll keep learning how to best articulate the messages we send out into the world.



# A

**Ableism** - discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals.

**Accessibility** - The extent to which a facility is readily approachable and usable by individuals with disabilities, particularly such areas as the residence halls, classrooms, and public areas.

**Acculturation** - 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 or group may give up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to that of the prevailing culture.

**Advocate** - Someone who speaks up for themselves and members of their identity group, e.g., a person who lobbies for equal pay for a specific group.

**Affirmative Action** - proactive policies and procedures for remedying the effect of past discrimination and ensuring the implementation of equal employment and educational opportunities, for recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting women, minorities, people with disabilities, and veterans in compliance with the federal requirements enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).

**African American** - Refers to the ethnic group of Americans who come from African descent.

**Ageism** - discrimination against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes.

**A-Gender** - Not identifying with any gender, the feeling of having no gender.

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

**Androgynous** - A person whose identity is between the two traditional genders. Also, someone who reflects an appearance that is both masculine and feminine, or who appears to be neither or both a male and a female.

**Androgyny** - A person who rejects gender roles entirely.

**Anti-Oppression** - Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional, and personal forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others, actively challenging the different forms of oppression.

**Anti-Racism** - the work of actively opposing discrimination based on race by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, which is set up to counter an individual's racist behaviors and impact.

Today, anti-racism is perhaps most closely associated with Ibram X. Kendi, the founding director of American University's anti-racist research center who popularized the concept with his 2019 book "How to be an Anti-Racist." In it, he wrote: "The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it — and then dismantle it."

**Anti-Racist** - Being critically aware of the existence of racism and understanding how it is systemic. An anti-racist person actively seeks to acknowledge the impacts of racism.

**Anti-Semitism** - The fear or hatred of Jews, Judaism, and related symbols.

**A-Sexuality** - Little or no romantic, emotional, and/or sexual attraction toward other persons. Asexual could be described as non-sexual, but asexuality is different from celibacy, which is a choice not to engage in sexual behaviors with another person.

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

**Assimilation** - A process by which outsiders (*persons who are others by virtue of cultural heritage, gender, age, religious background, and so forth*) are brought into or made to take on the existing identity of the group into which they are being assimilated. The term has had a negative connotation in recent educational literature, imposing coercion and a failure to recognize and value diversity. It is also understood as a survival technique for individuals or groups.

# B

**Belonging** - the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group or place. In order for people to feel like they belong, the environment (in this case, the workplace) needs to be set up to be a diverse and inclusive place.

**Bias** - a positive or negative inclination towards a person, group, or community; can lead to stereotyping.

**Bigotry** - intolerant prejudice which glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups.

**BIPOC** - An acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The term has increased in use and awareness during 2020 after the Black Lives Matter resurgence against racism and police brutality in the wake of the George Floyd shooting. BIPOC is meant to emphasize the particular hardships faced by Black and Indigenous people in the US and Canada and is also meant to acknowledge that not all people of color face the same levels of injustice.

**Bisexuality** - romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of more than one sex and/or gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.

**Black** - Any various populations that have a dark pigmentation of skin who identify as Black, including those in the African Diaspora and within Africa. It should be capitalized.

**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.

**Bullying** - intimidating, exclusionary, threatening, or hostile behavior against an individual.

**Bystander** - A person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part. Similar to an onlooker, passerby, nonparticipant, observer, spectator.

# C

**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 or stereotypes.

**Chicano/a/e** - Used to describe people of Mexican descent. This term should not be used to refer to the people or culture of other Latin American or Spanish-speaking countries.

**Cisgender** - a gender identity where an individual's self-perception of their gender aligns with their perceived sex.

**Classism** - Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on a difference in socioeconomic status, income, class; usually by upper classes against lower. Biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socioeconomic grouping. Classism can also be expressed as public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunities.

**Coalition** - A collection of different people or groups working toward a common goal.

**Collusion** - Willing participation in the discrimination against and/or oppression of one group (e.g., a woman who enforces dominant body ideals through her comments and actions or an able-bodied person who object to strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense.)

**Colonialism** - control by individuals or groups over the territory/behavior of other individuals or groups. (Horvath) Imperialism refers to the political or economic control, either formally or informally, and creating an empire.

**Colonization** - The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area. The action of appropriating a place or domain for one's own use.

**Color Blind** - the term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices that do not consider race or ethnicity as a determining factor. The term "colorblind" de-emphasizes or ignores race and ethnicity as a large part of one's identity.



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

**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.

**Corporate Social Responsibility** - a business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. CSR initiatives seek to make a positive impact on local communities and the environment. It is the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental, and social imperatives.

**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:

1. The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism
2. The challenge to the dominant ideology
3. The commitment to social justice
4. The centrality of experiential knowledge
5. The interdisciplinary perspective

**Cultural Assimilation** – when an individual, family, or group gives up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to the dominant culture.

**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.

**Cultural Competence** - refers to an individual's or an organization's knowledge and understanding of different cultures and perspectives. It's a measure of an individual's or a workforce's ability to work with people of different nationalities, ethnicities, languages, and religions. In short, it is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures.

**Cultural Intelligence (CQ)** - the capability to adapt, relate and work effectively across cultures. People with high CQ are not experts in every kind of culture. Instead, they have the skills to go into new environments with confidence and to make informed judgments based on observations and evidence as opposed to stereotypes and biases. They recognize shared influences among particular groups. Developing CQ allows one to be attuned to the values, beliefs, and attitudes of people from different cultures and to respond with informed empathy and real understanding.

**Cultural Sensitivity** - being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value. (Southeastern University)

Cultural sensitivity skills can ensure the ability to work effectively alongside people with different cultural attitudes and behaviors.

**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.

**Cultural Pluralism** - recognition of the contribution of each group to a common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different lifestyles, languages, and convictions. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society.

**Culture** - a social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.

# D

**D.A.C.A (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)** - An American immigration policy that allows some individuals who were brought to the United States without inspection as children to receive a two-year renewable period of deferred action from deportation and become eligible for a work permit in the U.S.

**Denial** - the refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges that are granted or denied based on an individual's identity components. Those who are in a stage of denial tend to believe, "People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin" or "All Lives Matter" counter to the "Black Lives Matter" statement, and in this way, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race is ignored.

**Dialogue** - Communication that creates and recreates multiple understandings. It is bi-directional, not zero-sum, and may or may not end in agreement. It can be emotional and uncomfortable, but it is safe, respectful, and has greater understanding as its goal.

**Disability** - physical or mental impairment, the perception of a physical or mental impairment, or a history of having had a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Replaces the term *Handicap* or *The Handicapped*, which do not reflect the individuality, equality, or dignity of people with disabilities.

**Discrimination** - unfavorable or unfair treatment towards an individual or group based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, socioeconomic status, education, sex, marital status, parental status, veteran's status, political affiliation, language, age, gender, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Diversity** - psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles. A diverse group, community, or organization is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.

**Domestic Partner** - Either member of an unmarried, cohabiting, straight, 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.

**Drag Queen / King** - A man or woman dressed as the opposite gender, usually for the purpose of performance or entertainment. Many times, overdone or outrageous and may present a "stereotyped image."

# E

**Emotional Tax** - the combination of being on guard to protect against bias and feeling different from peers at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work. It particularly affects BIPOC employees. (Catalyst)

**Employee Resource Group (Business Resource Group)** - ERGs are communities of employees organized around a common dimension (similar backgrounds, experiences, or interests) to network, share views, learn from others, further professional growth and development, and drive business.

**Empowerment** - when target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.

**Environmental Equity** - measures the amelioration of the myriad inequities and disproportionate impacts that groups in society have faced, especially in the realm of environmental protection and access to nature and the environmental goods that aren't equally shared.

**Equal Employment Opportunity** - (EEO) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibit discrimination in any aspect of employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

**Equality** - evenly distributed access to resources and opportunities necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness. (Kranich)

**Equity** - the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity).

**ESL** - (E)nglish as a (S)econd (L)anguage. A term used to describe language learning programs in the United States for individuals for whom English is not their first or native language.

**Essentialism** - the practice of categorizing an entire group based on assumptions about what constitutes the "essence" of that group. Essentialism prevents individuals from remaining open to individual differences within groups.

**Ethnicity** - a social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Examples of different ethnic groups are but not limited to:

- Haitian
- African American (Black)
- Chinese
- Korean
- Vietnamese (Asian)
- Cherokee, Mohawk
- Navajo (Native American)
- Cuban
- Mexican
- Puerto Rican (Latino)
- Polish
- Irish
- Swedish (White)

**Ethnocentrism (Ethnocentricity)** - the practice of using a particular ethnic group as a frame of reference, the basis of judgment, or standard criteria from which to view the world. Ethnocentrism favors one ethnic group's cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other ethnic groups.

**Eurocentric** - the practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.

# F

**Feminism** - theory and practice that advocates for educational and occupational equity between men and women; undermines traditional cultural practices that support the subjugation of women by men and the devaluation of women's contributions to society.

**Femme** - A person who expresses and/or identifies with femininity.

**First Nation People** - Individuals who identify as those who were the first people to live on the Western Hemisphere continent. People also identified as Native Americans.

**Fundamental Attribution Error** - A common cognitive action in which one attributes their own success and positive actions to their own innate characteristics (*'I'm a good person'*) and failure to external influences (*'I lost it in the sun'*), while attributing others' success to external influences (*'He had help and got lucky'*) and failure to others' innate characteristics (*'They're bad people'*). This operates on group levels as well as the classic "double standard" with the in-group giving itself favorable attributions while giving the out-group unfavorable attributions as a way of maintaining a feeling of superiority.



# G

**Gaslighting** - a form of psychological manipulation in which a person or a group covertly sows seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or group, making them question their own memory, perception, or judgment, often evoking in them cognitive dissonance and other changes, including low self-esteem.

**Gay** - people of the same sex who are attracted sexually and emotionally to each other. More commonly utilized to describe male attraction to other males.

**Gender** - the socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles a particular sex performs.

**Gender Bending** - Dressing or behaving in such a way as to question the traditional feminine or masculine qualities assigned to articles of clothing, jewelry, mannerisms, activities, etc.

**Gender Dysphoria (Gender Identity Disorder)** - Significant, clinical distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) considers Gender Identity Disorder as "intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

**Gender Expansive (Gender Non-Confirming)** - used to describe those who view their gender identity as one of many possible genders beyond strictly man or woman. These individuals have expanded notions of gender expression and identity beyond what is perceived as the expected gender norms for their society or context. Some gender-expansive individuals identify as a man or a woman, some identify as neither, and others identify as a mix of both.

**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** - Your internal sense of self; how you relate to your gender(s). A personal conception of one's own gender, often in relation to a gender opposition between masculinity

and femininity. Gender expression is how people externally communicate or perform their gender identity to others.

**Gender-Neutral** - used to denote a unisex or all-gender inclusive space, language, etc.

Examples: a gender-neutral bathroom is a bathroom open to people of any gender identity and expression; gender-neutral job descriptions are used to attract qualified, diverse candidates.

**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 nor female, nor as falling completely outside these categories.

**Global Environmental Racism** - race is a potent factor in sorting people into their physical environment and explaining social inequality, political exploitation, social isolation, and quality of life. Racism influences land use, industrial facility siting, housing patterns, infrastructure development, and "who gets what, when, where, and how much." Environmental racism refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color.

# H

**Harassment** - unwelcome, intimidating, exclusionary, threatening, or hostile behavior against an individual that is based on a category protected by law.

**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.

**Hazing** - verbal and physical testing, often of newcomers into a society or group, that may range from practical joking to tests of physical and mental endurance.

**Hermaphrodite** - An individual having the reproductive organs and many of the secondary sex characteristics of both sexes. (*Not a preferred term. See: Intersex*)

**Heterosexism** - social structures and practices which serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality. (University of Maryland)

**Hispanic** - Describes people, descendants, and cultures of Spanish-speaking countries, including many Latin American countries and Spain.

**Homophobia** - a fear of individuals who are not heterosexual. Can result in hostile, offensive, or discriminatory action against a person because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer-identified, or because they are perceived to be. These actions may be verbal or physical and can include insulting or degrading comments, taunts, or 'jokes' and excluding or refusing to cooperate with others because of their sexuality.

**Human Rights** - the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.



**Identity-First Language** - many people with disabilities embrace Identity-First Language, which positions disability as an identity category. In identity-first Language, the identifying word comes first in the sentence and highlights the person's embrace of their identity.

In recent years, many self-advocates (particularly in the autism community) have expressed a preference for identity-first language such as "autistic," "autistic person," or "autistic individual," comparing this phrasing to the way we refer to "Muslim" or "African American" or "LGBTQ" individuals.

**Identity Group** - a particular group, culture, or community with which an individual identifies or shares a sense of belonging. Individual agency is crucial for identity development; no person should be pressured to identify with any existing group, but instead, the freedom to self-identify on their own terms.

**Implicit Bias** - Implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically and without conscious awareness. 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. Implicit biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences.

**Inclusion** - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power. The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

**Inclusive Language** - words or phrases that include all potential audiences from any identity group. Inclusive language does not assume or connote the absence of any group. An example of gender-inclusive language is using "police officers" instead of "policemen."

**Indigenous** - originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides.

**Individual Racism** - the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism; can occur at both a conscious and unconscious level and can be active or passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of Whites.

**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** - 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 creates advantages for Whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as People of Color. An example includes City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

**Intent vs. Impact** - this distinction is an integral part of inclusive environments; the intent is what a person meant to do, and impact is the effect it had on someone else. Regardless of intent, it is imperative to recognize how behaviors, language, actions, etc., affect or influence other people. An examination of what was said or done and how it was received is the focus, not necessarily what was intended.

**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.

**Internalized Homophobia** - Among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, internalized sexual stigma (*also called internalized homophobia*) refers to the personal acceptance and endorsement of sexual stigma as part of the individual's value system and self-concept. It is the counterpart to sexual prejudice among heterosexuals.

**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 Racism** - occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power.

**Intersectionality** - An approach largely advanced by women of color, arguing that classifications such as gender, race, class, and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually constitutive. 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 racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each race and gender intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.

As coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, it is a framework for understanding how different aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, physical appearance, etc.) combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality identifies advantages and disadvantages that are felt by people due to this combination of factors.

**Intersex** - An umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female.

**"-isms"** - a way of describing any attitude, action, or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group: race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), age (ageism), religion, sexual orientation, language, etc.

**Invisible Disability (Hidden Disability)** - an umbrella term that captures a whole spectrum of hidden disabilities or challenges that are primarily neurological in nature. Invisible disability, or hidden disability, is defined as disabilities that are not immediately apparent.

# L

**Latino/a** - individual living in the United States originating from or having a heritage relating to Latin America.

**Latinx** - a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina.

**Lesbian** - a woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women.

**LGBTQIA+** - Acronym encompassing the diverse groups of lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and asexual and/or corresponding queer alliances/associations. It is a common misconception that the "A" stands for allies/ally. The full acronym is "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, with all other queer identities that are not encompassed by the letters themselves being represented by the "+."

**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.

# M

**Marginalization** - the placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the dominant culture is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive.

**Microaggressions** - the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. These messages may be sent verbally ("*You speak good English*" or "*You talk white*"), non-verbally (*clutching one's purse more tightly around people from certain race/ethnicity*), or environmentally (*symbols like the confederate flag or using Native American mascots*). Such communications are usually outside the level of conscious awareness of perpetrators.

**Micro-inequity** - subtle, often unconscious messages and behavior that devalue, discourage, and impair workplace performance. It can appear as individuals who are overlooked, singled out, or ignored and is based on characteristics such as race, gender, ability, etc. Micro-inequities can be conveyed through facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice/choice of words. The term was coined in 1973 by MIT professor Mary Rowe.

**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*).



**Multi-Cultural** - This term is used in a variety of ways and is less often defined by its users than terms such as multiculturalism or multicultural education. One common use of the term refers to the raw fact of cultural diversity: "multicultural education ... responds to a multicultural population." Another use of the term refers to an ideological awareness of diversity: "[multicultural theorists] have a clear recognition of a pluralistic society." Still, others go beyond this and understand multiculturalism as reflecting a specific ideology of inclusion and openness toward "others." Perhaps the most common use of this term in the literature is in reference simultaneously to a context of cultural pluralism and an ideology of inclusion or "mutual exchange of and respect for diverse cultures."

When the term is used to refer to a group of persons (*or an organization or institution*), it most often refers to the presence of and mutual interaction among diverse persons (*in terms of race, class, gender, and so forth*) of significant representation in the group.

**Multi-Ethnic** - An individual that comes from more than one ethnicity. An individual whose parents are born with more than one ethnicity.

**Multiplicity** - The quality of having multiple, simultaneous social identities (e.g., being male and Buddhist and working-class).

**Multi-Racial** - An individual that comes from more than one race.

# N

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

**National Origin** - The political state from which an individual hails; may or may not be the same as that person's current location or citizenship.

**Neo-Colonization** - a term for contemporary policies adopted by international and western "1st world" nations and organizations that exert regulation, power, and control over "3rd world" nations disguised as humanitarian help or aid. These policies are distinct but related to the "original" period of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations.

**Neo-Liberalism** - A substantial subjugation and marginalization of policies and practices informed by the values of social justice and equity.

**Neurodiversity** - refers to the variation in the human brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood, and other mental functions. According to the UK-based Autism Awareness Centre, it recognizes that all variations of human neurological function need to be respected as just another way of being and that neurological differences like autism and ADHD are the result of normal/natural variations in the human genome.

**Non-Binary/Gender Queer/Gender Variant** - Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Norm** - an ideal standard binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate power and acceptable behavior. (Effective Philanthropy)

## O

**Oppression** – Oppression results from the use of institutional power and privilege where one person or group benefits at the expense of another. Oppression is the use of power and the effects of domination. Found in the systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness.

## P

**Pan-Africanism** - describes the theory relating to the desire to educate all peoples of the African diaspora of their common plight and the connections between them. Some theorists promote linking all African countries across the continent through a common government, language, ideology, or belief. (University of Maryland)

**Pansexuality** - a term reflective of those who feel they are sexually, emotionally, and spiritually capable of falling in love with all genders.

**Pay Equity** - compensating employees the same when they perform the same or similar job duties while accounting for other factors, such as their experience level, job performance, and tenure with the employer. It ensures the fairness of compensation paid to employees for performing comparable work, without regard to gender or race or other categories protected by law (such as national origin or sexual orientation). It includes fairness both in terms of base pay and in total compensation, including bonuses, overtime, employee benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Pay equity does not mean that all employees are paid the same. Generally, pay equity focuses on ensuring those employees performing comparable work are receiving comparable compensation.

**People/Person of Color** - is not a term that refers to the real biological or scientific distinction between people, but the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latin, and Native American backgrounds, as opposed to the collective "White" for those of European ancestry.

This term also refrains from the subordinate connotation of triggering labels like "non-White" and "minority." (Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns of Unitarian Universalist Association)

**People/Person-First Language** - emphasizes the individuality, equality, and dignity of people with disabilities. Rather than defining people primarily by their disability, people-first language conveys respect by emphasizing the fact that people with disabilities are first and foremost just that—people.

**Performative Allyship** - (versus Allyship) - is when someone from a nonmarginalized group (white, able-bodied, etc.) professes support and solidarity with a marginalized group in a way that either isn't helpful or that actively harms that group. Performative allyship refuses to engage with the complexity below the surface or say anything new. It refuses to acknowledge any personal responsibility for the systemic issues that provided the context for the relevant tragedy.

**Personal Gender Pronoun** - the pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual personally uses and would like others to use when referring to them. Replaces the term *Preferred Gender Pronoun*, which incorrectly implies that their use is optional.

**Personal Identity** - Our identities as individuals including our personal characteristics, history, personality, name, and other characteristics that make us unique and different from other individuals.

**Polyamory** - the practice or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved.

**Prejudice** - a pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or group 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 access to resources (social power) only readily available to some individuals as a result of their social group. Power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups.

**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.

**Post-Racial** - A theoretical term to describe an environment free from racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice.

**Psychological Safety** - a climate in which people are comfortable being (and expressing) themselves without repercussions. It is about creating an environment where employees feel empowered to express an idea or contribution fully, without fear of negative consequences to themselves, their status, or their career. It includes being courageous enough to showcase their vulnerability, to own their mistakes and turn them into learning, and trust that their work environment and co-workers will not shame them for doing so.

## Q

**Queer** - term used to refer to people or culture of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community. A term once perceived as derogatory is now embraced by some members of the LGBTQ community.

## R

**Race** - a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the political needs of a society at a given period of time.

**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 him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

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

**Racism** - individual and institutional practices and policies based on the belief that a particular race is superior to others. This often results in depriving certain individuals and groups of civil liberties, rights, and other resources, hindering opportunities for social, educational, and political advancement.

**Racial Trauma** - Racial Trauma or race-based stress comes from dealing with racial harassment, racial violence, or institutional racism (*see Institutional Racism*). It can result from major experiences of racism such as workplace discrimination or hate crimes, or it can be the result of the accumulation of many small occurrences, such as microaggressions.

**Racism** - Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on a difference in race/ethnicity, usually by white/European descent groups against persons of color. Racism is racial prejudice plus power. It is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others. The use of power is based on a belief in superior origin, the identity of supposed racial characteristics. Racism confers certain privileges on and defends the dominant group, which in turn sustains and perpetuates racism.

**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.

**Religionism** - the individual, cultural and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress non-Christians, which includes Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

**Reverse Discrimination** - unfair treatment of members of a dominant or majority group. According to the National Multicultural Institute, this term is often used by opponents of affirmative action who believe that these policies are causing members of traditionally dominant groups to be discriminated against. The Supreme Court considers it to be illegal to consider race and other demographic categories in hiring and other employment-related decisions.

# S

**Safe Space** - Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.

**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.

**Saliency** - The quality of a group identity in which an individual is more conscious and plays a larger role in that individual's day-to-day life; for example, a man's awareness of his "maleness" in an elevator with only women.

**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.

**Sex** - Biological classification of male or female (based on genetic or physiological features); as opposed to gender.

**Sexism** - Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on a difference in sex/gender, usually by men against women.

**Sexual Orientation** - One's natural preference in sexual partners; examples include homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality. Sexual orientation is not a choice; it is determined by a complex interaction of biological, genetic, and environmental factors.

**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 Identity Development** - The stages or phases that a person's group identity follows as it matures or develops.

**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.

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

**Social Power** - access to resources that enhance chances of getting what one needs or influencing others in order to lead a safe, productive, and fulfilling life.

**Stakeholder Capitalism** - a model of environmental, social, governance, and data stewardship (ESG&D) focused on environmental and social risks and opportunities. This model posits that companies should consider all their stakeholders—not just the owners but also employees, customers, and suppliers for the long-term success and health of the business—as opposed to the shareholder-primacy model, which focuses on financial and operational costs and benefits and can engender entrenched inequality and damage to the environment.

**Stereotype** - Blanket beliefs and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment. They go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information, and are highly generalized.

**Supplier Diversity** - a corporate program that encourages and ensures the use of minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, LGBT-owned, veteran-owned, and other historically underutilized businesses determined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in the procurement of goods and services for any business or organization.

**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.

**Systemic Racism** - Complex interactions of culture, policy, and institutions that create and maintain racial inequality in nearly every facet of life for people of color.

# T

**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.

**Transgender** - an individual whose gender identity differs from the societal expectations of their physical sex. Transgender or "trans" does not imply any form of sexual orientation. Cisgender is a gender identity where an individual's self-perception of their gender matches their sex. For example, a cis-gendered female is a female with a female identity.

**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.

**Transexual** - One who identifies as a gender other than that of their biological sex.

**Two-Spirit** - A term used within some American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. The term--which was created in 1990 by a group of AI/AN activists at an annual Native LGBTQ conference--encompasses sexual, cultural, gender, and spiritual identities and provides unifying, positive, and encouraging language that emphasizes reconnecting to tribal traditions.

## U

**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. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

**Underrepresented Groups (URG)** - a group that is less represented in one subset (e.g., employees in a particular sector, such as IT) than in the general population. This can refer to gender, race/ethnicity, physical or mental ability, LGBTQ+ status, and many more. The term also refers to populations who are not represented in STEM professions in proportions equal to White STEM workers.

**Undocumented** - A foreign-born person living in the United States without legal citizenship status.

**Undocumented Student** - School-aged immigrants who entered the United States without inspection/overstayed their visas and are present in the United States with or without their parents. They face unique legal uncertainties and limitations within the United States educational system.

**Upstander** - a person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

## V

**Veteran** - A person who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during a period specified and was honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances. The Armed Forces are defined as the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including all components thereof, and the National Guard.

# W

**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 Centering** - putting your feelings as a White person above the Black and POC causes you're supposed to be helping. Layla F. Saad explains in her book, *Me and White Supremacy*, "White centering is the centering of White people, white values, white norms and white feelings over everything and everyone else." White centering can manifest as anything ranging from tone policing and white fragility to white exceptionalism and outright violence.

**White Fragility** - 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. White people who experience such privilege may or may not be conscious of it. It means, for example, that a White person in the United States has privilege simply because one is White. It means that as a member of the dominant group, a White person has greater access or availability to resources because of being White. It means that White ways of thinking and living are seen as the norm against which all people of color are compared.

Life is structured around those norms for the benefit of White people. White privilege is the ability to grow up thinking that race doesn't matter. It is not having to daily think about skin color and the questions, looks, and hurdles that need to be overcome because of one's color. White Privilege may be less recognizable to some White people because of gender, age, sexual orientation, economic class, or physical or mental ability, but it remains a reality because of one's membership in the White dominant group.

**White Supremacy** - White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and individuals of color by white individuals 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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