

Community Services Division - Serving Those Who Served

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Terminology

This glossary is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every word and term used in our work and conversation about equity, diversity, and inclusion. They are basic definitions to help us move the conversation forward.

Equality: Sameness - Everybody gets exactly the same thing regardless of need, may or may not result in equitable outcomes.

Equity: Fairness - Everybody gets what they need to have the same opportunity or experience. 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.

Diversity: Difference-Variety of human identity, culture, experience. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued to allow for diverse ideas and perspectives.

Inclusion: Participation-Not just asked to join in but being seen, heard, and valued. Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Justice: Liberation-The structural, systemic, and historical barriers that have been in the way of some people and groups are identified, owned, and removed.

IDEA/COP – IDEA is the equity, diversity, and inclusion Community of Practice (COP) for the Economic Services Administration. A Community of Practice is a group of people who share a craft, profession, or passion and who meet regularly to increase knowledge and build skill.

Ability — Power or capacity to do or act physically, mentally, legally, morally, financially, etc.

Access — Creating the necessary conditions so that individuals and organizations desiring to, and who are eligible to, use our services, facilities, programs and employment opportunities.

Ally - Describes someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of racial identity, gender, faith identity, sexual orientation, etc.) Allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups than their own; take risks and supportive action on their behalf.

Bigotry – Intolerant prejudice that glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups

Colorblind – unable to distinguish certain colors. When creating materials be inclusive, keep in mind those that are colorblind. Also used as an unconscious bias “I don't see color”, “I see everyone the same”. Being “colorblind”, does not value differences and uniqueness, (see “denial”).

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, and habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

Cultural 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 and an openness to learn from them.

Denial - Refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges (see the term "privilege") that are granted or denied based on an individual's ethnicity or other grouping. 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" (see "colorblind").

Disability – a physical, mental or cognitive impairment or condition that requires special accommodations to ensure programmatic and physical access.

Discrimination – The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

Empowerment - When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and their subordinate status and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably

Ethnicity – A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as a shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, history and ancestral geographical base. For example, Haitian, Korean, Cherokee, Cuban, Mexican, Polish, Irish.

Gender – Gender is a spectrum, not a fixed male-female binary. Some may also use the term gender identity, which may or may not correspond with their birth sex.

Identity – How one refers to themselves and has others refer to them, for example, multi-racial, African-American, Black, Latina, he/him, she/her (see "pronouns") etc.

Implicit Bias – Also known as unconscious or hidden bias. Implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness.

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, for example, government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African American (also known as "red-lining")

Isms - A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.

LGBTQ – The acronym that means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

Marginalization – Treatment of a person, group or concept as insignificant and places them outside of the mainstream society.

Micro aggressions – Intentional or unintentional verbal, nonverbal or environmental slights/insults that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to people based upon their marginalized group.

Oppression – Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm: when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access

Person of color — A person who is not white or of European parentage. A person who self-identifies as a person of color. See “Identity”.

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 benefit, right or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identities. Because hierarchies of privilege exist, even within the same group, people who are part of the group in power (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) often deny they have privilege even when evidence of differential benefit is obvious.

Pronouns — Refers to the pronoun one has chosen for themselves to describe their gender identity; how one refers to themselves and has others refer to them (I.e. she/her, he/him, they/them); Best practice is to never assume someone's pronouns based on physical appearance, because gender identity doesn't always parallel outward gender expression.

Race — A political construction created to concentrate power with white people and legitimize dominance over non-white people

Racism — A common definition is prejudice plus power. Racism leads to different consequences for different groups.

Sources:

[Webster's dictionary](#)

<http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org>

[Ally's Guide to Terminology](#)

www.racialequitytools.org

uh.edu

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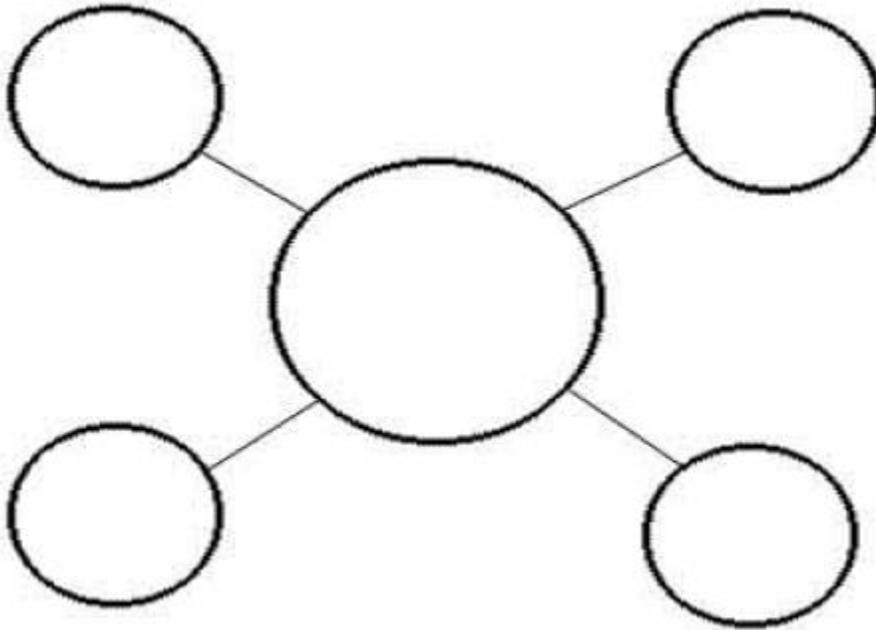
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My Identity

This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the importance of individuals self-defining their identities and challenging stereotypes.

Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write an **important aspect of your identity** in each of the satellite circles – an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, dancer, Jewish, photographer, or any descriptor with which you identify.



Select **one** of the following to discuss with your partner:

1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify yourself with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) _____ but I am NOT (a/an) _____.

(For ex. I was born in Mexico, but I am not undocumented)