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TOOLKIT

2023 DEI Glossary

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Terms that create the base knowledge for DEI work

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 their culture in order to adapt to those of the prevailing culture.

(The National Multicultural Institute)

Assimilation

The process by which an individual of a minority group gradually adopts characteristics of the majority culture, thereby becoming a member of that culture. This can include the adoption of language, culinary tastes, interpersonal communication, gender roles, and style of dress. Assimilation can be voluntary or forced.

(NACo)

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. For people to feel like they belong, the environment (such as the workplace) needs to be a diverse and inclusive place.

(SHRM)

Brave Space

In the context of brave spaces, social justice is the "full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs." Some key ideas that promote the most productive brave spaces are "controversy with civility," "owning intentions and impacts," "challenge by choice," "respect," and "no attacks".

(NC State University)

Class

Refers to people's socioeconomic status, based on factors such as wealth, occupation, education, income, etc.

(University of Washington)

Cultural Competence

The ability of an individual or organization to understand how inequity can be (and has been) perpetuated through socialized behaviors and the use of that knowledge to disrupt inequitable practices; the ability to function effectively and empathetically as an individual and/or as an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by another's culture.

(NACo)

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Cultural Humility

An interpersonal stance that is open to individuals and different cultural communities and experiences in relation to aspects of one's own cultural identity. Maintaining cultural humility requires learning and understanding the complexity of identities and how yhey evolve over time.

(NACo)

Cultural Identity

The identity or feeling of belonging to a group based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or other types of social groups with their own distinct culture.

(NACo)

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.

(CulturalQ)

Cultural Sensitivity

Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value—positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong. It means that a person is aware people are not all the same and that the person recognizes their culture is no better than any other culture.

(LinkedIn)

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. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Culture

A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure the group's adaptation and survival. These systems are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.
(Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

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D&I

An acronym for Diversity and Inclusion

DEI

An acronym for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

DEIA

An acronym for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

DEIJ/JEDI

An acronym for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The addition of justice pushes people to acknowledge the barriers to resources and opportunities that exist for some communities, preventing them from living a full and dignified life. Justice is about fairness, balance, and dismantling these barriers so all individuals and communities can have access to a better life. (PCMA)

DIB

An acronym for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Discrimination

The unequal and unfair treatment of individuals or groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, national origin, age, intellectual or mental abilities, and other categories that may result in differences. It also describes the act of making unjustified distinctions between certain social or racial groups or classes. (NACo)

Distributional Equity

Programs, policies, and practices that result in a fair distribution of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need. (NACo)

Diversity

Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among 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 exists. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Diversity vs. Inclusion vs. Belonging

Diversity typically means proportionate representation across all dimensions of human difference. Inclusion means that everyone is included, visible, heard, and considered. Belonging means that an individual perceives themself as being a full member of the larger community and can thrive.

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Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

The ability to both manage one's own emotions and understand the emotions of other people. There are five key elements to EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. People with high EI can identify how they are feeling, what those feelings mean, and how those emotions impact their behavior and in turn, other people. It's a little harder to "manage" the emotions of other people. But if a person can identify the emotions behind others' behavior, they will have a better understanding of where others are coming from and how to best interact with them.
(Mental Health America)

Emotional Tax

The emotional toll of defending or explaining one's underrepresented history, identity, and culture to those from a dominant culture.
(SAEM)

Empowerment

When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.
(White Privilege Conference)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

A term used to describe language learning programs in the United States for individuals for whom English is not their first or native language.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any aspect of employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Equality

Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness.
(American Library Association)

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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)

Equity in the workplace is the idea that all employees are provided with fair and equal opportunities based on their individual needs. Equity recognizes that not all employees are afforded the same opportunities and addresses the imbalance of opportunities available to them. Pay equity/parity/transparency, accommodation of health conditions or disabilities, and providing diversity training are examples of equity in the workplace.
(BetterUp)

Historically Excluded Group/Population

Includes persons who identify as Black/African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latinx/Latine, Asian, LGBTQIA+, having a disability, a first-generation college student, or as a woman. This can refer to any group that has been marginalized over time. Could also be written as a historically marginalized community.
(IPUMS)

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 afforded the freedom to self-identify on their own terms.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Inclusion

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.
(UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

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 ability-inclusive language is saying "I appreciate who you are" in lieu of saying "I see you".
(The National Multicultural Institute)

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Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
(AAPF)

Justice

Presence of systems and supports (e.g., policies, practices, norms) that achieve and sustain fair treatment, equitable opportunities, and impartial outcomes for people of all races. Systematic, proactive reinforcement.
(The Inclusion Solution)

Safe Space

A space in which an individual or group may remain free of blame, ridicule, and persecution, and is in no danger of coming to mental or physical harm.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Social Equity

In the context of public administration, social equity is defined as the fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.
(NACo)

Social Justice

Active engagement toward equity and inclusion that addresses issues of institutional, structural, and environmental inequity, power, and privilege.
(University of Washington)

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.
(White Privilege Conference)

Social Self-View

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

Structural Equity

The identification and removal of institutional barriers to fair and equal opportunities, recognizing historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that routinely advantage privileged groups in society and that result in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups.
(NACo)

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Targeted Universalism

An approach to equity work that sets universal goals, followed by targeted processes to achieve said goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are set for all individuals and groups. The strategies developed to achieve the goals are targeted, based on how different groups are situated within structures and cultures and across geographies, to obtain the universal goal.
(NACo)

Tolerance

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

Underrepresented Groups (URG)

A group that is less represented in one subset 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. Replaces the term Underrepresented Minorities (URM), as minority groups will soon be the majority in the United States. Underrepresented Groups is inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals as well as veterans and People with Disabilities.
(IGI Global)

Underserved

Used to describe people who have limited or no access to acceptable and affordable resources or services, including disaster behavioral health services. The term should be used carefully and, where possible, specifics should be provided (e.g., people who are medically underserved, people living in Health Professional Shortage Areas).
(SAMHSA)

Undocumented

A foreign-born person living in a country without legal citizenship status.

Veteran

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a veteran as "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable."
(VA)

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6 Inclusive Leadership Behaviors

1 Communicate **Transparently**

- Being transparent means saying what you know and what you don't know.
- This leads to trust.

2 Foster **Psychological Safety**

- Establishing trust and safe space to engage with each other creates a culture where employees can be their authentic selves.
- It's important to model vulnerability.

3 **Invest** in Personal Growth and Development

- This is for leaders and non-leaders alike.
- Assess your own behaviors, and actively learn, ask others for feedback, read, and discuss.

4 Drive **Team Vision**

- Understand and reinforce how the values, mission of the business, and DEI are all in alignment.

5 **Collaborate** with Team Members

- Openly and proactively seek collaboration across diversity, function, and teams.
- Collaboration between business units can create outcomes that allow for alignment between DEI initiatives and business goals.

6 Engage in **Open Discussion and Debate**

- Be willing to be an Upstander.
- Actively seek new insights.

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Terms that demonstrate an individual's support for the rights of historically excluded populations

Accomplice

All accomplices are allies, but not all allies are accomplices. While an ally is willing to stand in support of a marginalized voice, risk is rarely involved. An accomplice uses the power and privilege they must challenge the status quo, often risking their physical and social well-being in the process.
(Diverse Education)

Affirm

To acknowledge, respect, and support a person's identity regarding race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, experiences, ideas, or beliefs, or encouraging the development of an individual.

Ally

Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and to work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. An ally recognizes that though they are not a member of a marginalized group(s) they support, they make a concentrated effort to better understand the struggle of another's circumstances. An ally may have more privilege and recognize that privilege in society.
(NACo)

Identity-First Language (IFL)

Identity-first language positions disability as an identity category and central to a person's sense of self. In identity-first language, the identifying word comes first in the sentence and highlights the person's embrace of their identity. Examples could be "autistic person" or "Deaf individual."
(NACo)

Person-First Language (PFL)

Person-first language conveys respect by emphasizing that people with disabilities are first and foremost people. The most common example is "person with a disability."
(NACo)

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.

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Allyship Awareness

1
Naive

- Acts with no knowledge or awareness or biases about prejudices and their negative impact
- Takes no initiative to unlearn their exclusivity
- "Clueless"

2
Perpetuator

- Aware of biases and prejudices, but engages in perceived negative behaviors and reinforces stereotypes
- "Pot Stirrer"

3
Avoider

- Tolerates unjust behavior in others to play it safe
- "Silent Supporter"

4
Inclusion Advocate

- Acts as a role model, acts when appropriate, and addresses behaviors when necessary
- "Accomplice"

5
Fighter

- Engages in aggressive communications to force others to change from intolerance behaviors
- "Defensive"

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Terms that convey prejudiced, discriminatory, and ignorant ideas or agendas

Ageism

Discrimination and prejudiced thought against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Anti-Oppression

Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional, and individual forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression.
(Center for Anti-Oppressive Education)

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 that is set up to counter an individual's racist behaviors and impact.
(Time's Up Foundation)

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," which was updated in 2022. In it, he wrote: "The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it—and then dismantle it."
(Ibram X. Kendi)

Anti-Semitism

A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward or about Jewish individuals and/or their property, or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.
(Tanenbaum)

Bias (Prejudice)

An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment. A form of prejudice that results from the universal tendency and need of individuals to classify others into categories.
(NACo)

Bigotry

An unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices.
(NACo)

Bystander

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

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Classism

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 opportunity.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Collusion

When people act to perpetuate oppression or to prevent others from working to eliminate oppression. Example: able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings more accessible because of the expense.
(White Privilege Conference)

Colonization

The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area, which can begin as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of land from the original inhabitants. The dispossession of lands is often legalized after the fact, resulting in institutionalized inequality that becomes a permanent fixture of society.
(NACo)

Colorblind Racial Ideology

The attitude that people should be treated as equally as possible, without regard to race or ethnicity. Though seemingly equitable, it tends to overlook the importance of people's cultures and the manifestations of racism in policy or institutions.
(NACo)

Colorism

Prejudice and/or discrimination against an individual with darker skin color, tone, shade, pigmentation, or complexion.

Confirmation Bias

Tendency to favor information that aligns with existing beliefs or attitudes; forming stereotypes or attitudes toward groups without being consciously aware of doing so. Unchecked, confirmation biases can lead to various forms of racism.
(SAIC)

Conscious/Explicit Bias

Biased attitudes about a group of which individuals are aware; these may be visible or invisible, but in any case, they can be accessed. Unconscious bias, which consists of biased attitudes operating outside one's awareness and control, is difficult to access or be aware of, and influences action more than conscious biases.
(SAIC)

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***Cultural Appropriation**

The act of adopting or stealing cultural elements (e.g., icons, rituals, aesthetic standards, or behavior) of one culture or subculture by another for personal use or profit. It is generally applied when the subject culture is a minority culture. Often occurs without any real understanding of why the original (or "appropriated") culture took part in these activities.
(NACo)

Damage Imagery

Visuals, texts/narratives, or data used to highlight inequities that are presented without appropriate historical and sociopolitical context. Damage imagery can be corrected by explaining systemic and historical barriers and focusing on solutions within the communities that are the subject of the visuals, texts/narratives, or data.
(NACo)

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 state of denial tend to believe that "People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin." In this way, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race is ignored.
(Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Environmental Racism

The disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on people of color.
(SAMHSA)

Essentialism

The practice of categorizing an entire group based on assumptions about what constitutes the "essence" of that group. Essentialism prevents observers from remaining open to individual differences within groups.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Ethnocentrism

The practice of using a particular ethnic group as a frame of reference, basis of judgment, or set of 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.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Eurocentrism

The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or set of standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

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Fatphobia

Also known as anti-fat, is the implicit and explicit bias against overweight individuals that is rooted in a sense of blame and presumed moral failing. Being overweight and/or fat is highly stigmatized in Western culture. Anti-fatness is intrinsically linked to anti-blackness, racism, classism, misogyny, and many other systems of oppression.
(Boston Medical Center)

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.
(Very Well Mind)

Gentrification

A process of economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood that happens through mechanisms such as real estate investment and increase in higher-income residents, resulting in the displacement of long-term residents and demographic changes in income, education, and racial makeup.
(NACo)

Harassment

Unwanted conduct with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment based on their race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, and/or age, among other characteristics
(NACo)

Hazing

Verbal and physical testing, often of newcomers into a society or group, which may range from practical joking to tests of physical and mental endurance.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Heteronormativity

The assumption that heterosexuality is natural, ideal, or superior to other sexual orientations.
(SAMHSA)

Heterosexism

Social structures and practices that serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality.
(University of Maryland)

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Homophobia

A fear of individuals who are not heterosexual. Often results in hostile, offensive, or discriminatory action against a person because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or 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.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Implicit Bias

Also known as hidden or unconscious bias. The unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect a person's understanding, actions, or decisions as they relate to people from different groups.
(NACo)

Institutional Racism

A pattern of social institutions—such as governmental organizations, schools, banks, and courts of law—giving negative treatment to a group of people based on their race.

Intent vs. Impact

Intentions (what one wants or hopes to do) don’t always align with what one says or does, which can impact how others receive what one says and does. Intent refers to what a person hopes or wants to do when choosing to perform an action. Impact refers to the reality (e.g., results) of one’s actions/ behaviors. The resulting impact may not always align with what the person intended.

Owning the impact: When one’s impact is being called into question, especially if the action is perpetuating oppression, it is important to recognize the action is being called into question, not the person/overall character.
(Everyday Feminism)

Internalized Racism

The conscious or unconscious development of ideas, beliefs, social structures, actions, and behaviors that confirm one's acceptance of the dominant society's racist tropes and stereotypes about their own race. It is the simultaneous hating of oneself and one's own race and valuing the dominant race.
(NACo)

Islamophobia

A closed-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims. An Islamophobe is an individual who holds a closed-minded view of Islam and promotes prejudice against or hatred of Muslims.
(Tanenbaum)

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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 is perceived as deviant and regressive.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Microaffirmation

A microaffirmation is a small gesture of inclusion, caring, or kindness. Microaffirmations include listening, providing comfort and support, being an ally, and explicitly valuing the contributions and presence of all. It is particularly helpful for those with greater power or seniority to model affirming behavior.
(Harvard)

Microaggression

The everyday slights, indignities, put-downs, and insults that people of color, women, LGBTQ+ populations, or those who are marginalized experience in their day-to-day interactions with people.
(Vox)

Microinequity

Apparently small events, which are often ephemeral and hard to prove and which are covert, often unintentional, and frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator, that occur wherever people are perceived to be different.
(MIT)

Micro-insult

Communications that subtly exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of marginalized individuals.
(PBS)

Micro-invalidation

Verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity.
(BSt)

Misgender

To refer to an individual using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, which does not correctly reflect their gender. This may be unintentional and without ill intent or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, misgendering has a harmful impact.
(PFLAG)

Misogyny

Hatred, aversion, or prejudice against women. Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including sexual discrimination, denigration of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification of women.
(NACo)

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Misogynoir—Note: This word is purposefully out of alphabetical order as the previous word provides needed context for this term

An extreme form of sexism rooted in racism. The term describes contempt for or ingrained prejudice toward Black women. The unique oppression experienced by Black women due to the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation combined with discrimination. Misogynoir utilizes and reinforces stereotypes of Black women.
(NACo)

Neo-Colonization

A term for contemporary policies adopted by international and Western, Global North nations and organizations that exert regulation, power, and control over global South nations and that are disguised as humanitarian help or aid. These policies are distinct from but related to the "original" period of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations.
(University of Maryland)

Oppression

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.
(White Privilege Conference)

Othering

The perception or intentional/unintentional placement of a group in contrast to the societal norm. The identifying of a group as a threat to the favored dominant group.
(NACo)

Patriarchy

Actions and beliefs that prioritize men in systems and positions of power, society, and privilege. Patriarchy may be practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society, or it may simply influence how individuals interact with one another interpersonally.
(NACo)

Performative Allyship

When an individual or group of power/majority/privilege (e.g., White, man, abled, unqueer, etc.) loudly profess(es) their actions in the name of "allyship" while actively conducting harm to, taking focus away from, and generally being unhelpful toward the group they claim to support, often to receive praise and attention, and without taking critical action to dismantle the systems of harm.
(Self Defined)

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Positionality

Social identities in relation to power, which influence the way we understand the world and our interactions with others.
(University of Michigan)

Power

The ability to exercise one's will over others. Power occurs when some individuals or groups wield a greater advantage over 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.
(NACo)

Privilege

Systemic favoring, enriching, valuing, validating, and including of certain social identities over others. Individuals cannot "opt out" of systems of privilege; rather, these systems are inherent in the society in which we live.
(University of Washington)

Racially Coded Language

Language that triggers racial stereotypes and other negative associations without the stigma of explicit racism. Fosters anxiety and dehumanizes people and communities of color.
(EdJustice)

Racism

A system of advantage based on race; a system of oppression based on race; or a way of organizing society based on dominance and subordination based on race. Racism penetrates every aspect of personal, cultural, and institutional life, and includes prejudice against people of color as well as exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion of, and fear and hate of people of color.
(Dismantling Racism)

Religionism

The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress non-Christians; includes anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
(NCCJ)

Stereotype

A positive or negative set of beliefs held by an individual about the characteristics of a certain group.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

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Structural Inequality

Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted in and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) and reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws, and practices. Structural inequality thus refers to the system of privilege and inequality created, designed, and maintained by interlocking societal institutions.
(NACo)

Structural Racism

The overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society. It is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial inequities. It encompasses dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Examples can include the racial gap in wealth, homeownership, and education and historical redlining practices, among other factors.
(NACo)

Transmisogyny

Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive women, which often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.
(PFLAG)

Transmisogynoir

Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive Black women, which often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.
(PFLAG)

Transphobia

Animosity, hatred, or dislike of trans and gender-expansive people, which often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Transphobia often stems from lack of knowledge about transgender people and the issues they face and can be alleviated with education and support ("trans-antagonistic" refers to those whose aversion manifests in active oppression). PFLAG does not use this term as it frequently prevents educational dialogue.
(PFLAG)

Unconscious/Implicit Bias

Unconscious, or implicit, bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, but nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Research has shown implicit bias can pose a barrier to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
(NIH)

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White Centering

Putting one's feelings as a White person above the POC causes one is supposed to be helping. White centering can manifest as anything ranging from tone policing and White fragility to White exceptionalism and outright violence.
(NPR)

White Fragility

Coined by Robin DiAngelo, it is used to describe the privilege that accrues to White people living in a society that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. DiAngelo argues that this builds an expectation of always feeling comfortable and safe, which in turn lowers the ability to tolerate racial stress and triggers a range of defensive reactions.
(Robin DiAngelo)

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.
(McIntosh)

White Supremacy

The idea (or ideology) that White people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of White people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White supremacy is ever present in institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the White group while casting People and communities of Color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, inhuman, and "undeserving."
(NACo)

Xenophobia

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and White supremacy.
(NACo)

Youngism

Ageism that is primarily generationally focused on contemporaneous generations of young adults rather than young adults in general; ageism that is focused on Millennials and Generation Z.
(Journal of Experimental Psychology: General)

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Bias in Performance Management Reviews

Types of Bias

Recency Bias

Using recent past events and experience to influence your decision (candidate reminds you of poor recent hire or made a mistake you recently saw play out poorly)

Similarity Bias

We respond to people who remind us of ourselves. This won't help support and retain talent for a diverse and inclusive company.

Conformity bias

If you know how others feel about an employee, your assessment may be influenced. Avoid sharing your insights until a debrief meeting.

Availability Bias

A tendency to think that examples of things that come readily to mind are more representative than is the case

Halo/Horns Effect

Something a candidate says positively or negatively influences your decision

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Terms that support and explain the range of divergence in people

Ableism

Discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Accessibility

The intentional design or redesign of physical spaces, technology, policies, systems, entities, products, and services (to name a few) that increase one's ability to use, access, and obtain the respective element.
(NACo)

Accommodation

A change in the environment or in the way things are customarily done that allows an individual with a disability to have equal opportunity, access, and participation.
(NACo)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA, a U.S.-based law, is a civil rights law signed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities.
(ADA)

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.
(Department of Justice)

Invisible/Hidden/Non-apparent Disability

A physical, mental, or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities. Unfortunately, since these conditions are invisible, their existence can lead to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments.
(Invisible Disabilities Association)

Neurodiversity

When neurological differences are recognized and respected as are any other kind of human differences or variations. These differences can include Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Condition Spectrum, and Tourette Syndrome.
(Harvard)

Neurodiversity Paradigm

A theory that views neurodivergence, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit [hyperactivity] disorder (AD[H]D), dyslexia, and dyspraxia, as a natural human variation.
(The London School of Economics)

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Neurotypical Advantage/Privilege

The special and unearned advantage afforded by those who happen to have the most common cognitive expression; these individuals order their thoughts and communicate ideas in the most typically seen way. This privilege comes from living in a world that favors and is built for this specific neurology.
(The London School of Economics)

People with Disabilities (PwD)

Refers to individuals with disabilities. This term utilizes Person-First Language, which posits that a person isn't a disability, condition, or diagnosis, but rather that a person has a disability, condition, or diagnosis.
(ADA)

Universal Designed Environment

The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.
(Centre for Excellence in Universal Design)

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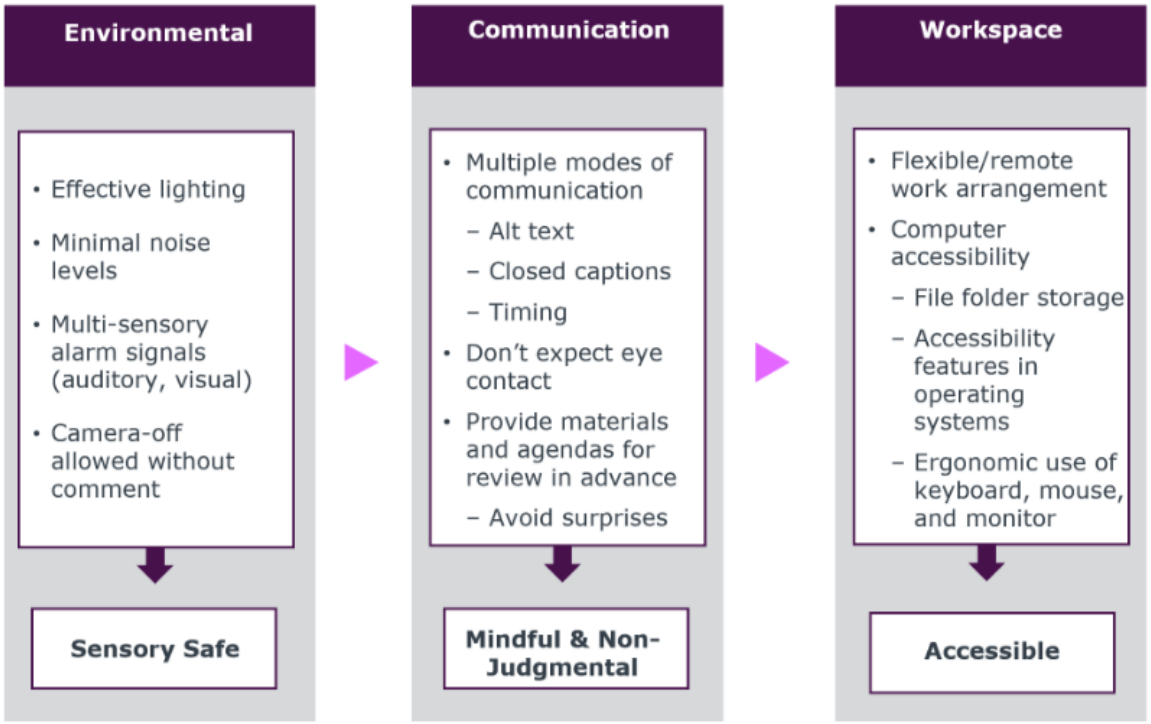
Universal Design in the Workplace



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Terms that support and explain all gender identities

Bicurious

People who are open to experimenting with genders that are not only their own, but do not know if they are open to forming any sort of relationship with multiple genders.
(The PBHS Closet)

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.
(Ochs)

Cisgender/cis

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
(HRC)

Coming Out

The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.
(HRC)

Deadnaming

Occurs when an individual, intentionally or not, refers to the name that a transgender or gender-expansive individual used at a different time in their life. Avoid this practice, as it can cause trauma, stress, embarrassment, and even danger. Some may prefer the terms birth name, given name, or old name.
(PFLAG)

Ethical Non-Monogamy

The practice of taking part in romantic relationships that are not completely exclusive between two people.
(Verywell Mind)

Feminism

A 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.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Gay

People of the same sex who are attracted sexually and emotionally to each other. More commonly utilized to describe men's attraction to other men.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Gender

The socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles a particular sex performs.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

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Gender Expansive (Gender Nonconfirming)

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.
(PFLAG)

Gender Expression

External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics, or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
(HRC)

Gender Identity

One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
(HRC)

Gender Neutral

Gender-neutral language, also referred to as gender-inclusive language, can be defined as speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender, or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.
(STEM Women)

Gender Nonconforming

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 neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender nonconforming people do.
(HRC)

(Personal) Gender Pronouns (PGPs)

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.
(PFLAG)

Genderqueer

Genderqueer 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 "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both man and woman, neither man nor woman, or as falling completely outside these categories.
(HRC)

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Heterosexual

The attraction to a gender different from one's own, commonly used to describe someone who is gender binary (female or male) and attracted to the other binary gender.
(The PBHS Closet)

Homosexual

The attraction to a gender the same as one's own, commonly used to describe someone who is gender binary (female or male) and attracted to the same binary gender. Sometimes referred to as gay.
(The PBHS Closet)

Indigiqueer

Another term sometimes used alongside or to refer to the Two-Spirit identity; more often it is a term used by some LGBTQ+ Indigenous people who do not self-identify as Two-Spirit, or by those who identify with both.
(University of Alberta)

Lesbian

A woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women.
(UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center)

LGBT/LGBTQ+/LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other sexual identities; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Ally/Asexual/Aromantic/Agender, and other sexual identities

Nonbinary

An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Nonbinary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.
(HRC)

Pansexuality

A term reflective of those who feel they are sexually, emotionally, and spiritually capable of falling in love with all genders.
(Queers United Activists)

Polyamory

The practice or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved.
(Queers United Activists)

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Queer

This term embraces a range of genders and sexualities who may not identify with a specific LGBT+ label. It acknowledges the fluidity of gender and sexuality, including people who are not exclusively heterosexual and/or non-binary people. Previously used as a slur, this term is now used by choice and with pride by parts of the LGBTQ+ community.
(HRC)

Questioning

People who are debating their own sexuality/gender.
(The PBHS Closet)

Romantic Orientation

Who a person is romantically attracted to, meaning wanting to be in a romantic relationship with; unrelated to sexual attraction.
(The PBHS Closet)

Sex Assigned at Birth

The biological category given at birth based on biological characteristics (i.e., physical anatomy and hormones).
(SAMHSA)

Sexual Orientation

A concept referring to sexual desire for emotional and sexual relationships with others based on their sex/gender; often implies that sexual object choice is an essential inborn characteristic.
(University of Washington)

SOGI

Acronym for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. It is typically used as a shorthand in writing and is rarely pronounced out loud.
(PFLAG)

Trans*

When said out loud, some refer to the term as "trans asterisk." Others call it "trans star." Originally used to include explicitly both transsexual and transgender, or (now usually) to indicate the inclusion of gender identities such as gender-fluid, agender, etc., alongside transsexual and transgender.
(OED)

Transgender

An individual whose gender identity differs from the societal expectations of their physical birth sex. Transgender or "trans" does not imply any form of sexual orientation. Cisgender is a gender identity in which an individual's self-perception of their gender matches their birth sex.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

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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.
(PFLAG)

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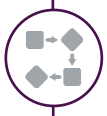
Key Findings from Seramount's Gender Gap Study

Men were **twice as likely** as women to aspire to CEO (20% vs. 9%)



Only 40% of women want to be executives compared to 59% of men

Multicultural women are **more than twice as likely** to aspire to be CEO **and less likely to be satisfied** with their current level than White women

77% of women say a **top barrier to gender equity** is lack of information on how to advance

28% of women vs. 53% of men **participated in a leadership development program** in the past 24 months

The top obstacles for women cited by respondents were **lack of training, lack of information about jobs, and understanding career pathing**

Men were **more than twice as likely to have P&L experience** and their average income was significantly higher than women's

41% of women vs. 62% of men have a **strategic network** of coaches, sponsors, and mentors

Women with P&L responsibility are more likely to have a strategic network than women without **(55% vs. 34%)**

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Terms that demonstrate how DEI impacts the community

Environmental Justice

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
(SAMHSA)

Global North/South

These are terms that denote the generic geographic, historical, economic, educational, and political division between North and South. North America, Europe, and developed parts of East Asia (formerly known as first world countries) disproportionately control global resources. Disparities of wealth, housing, education, digital media access, and numerous other factors underscore the power and privilege enjoyed by the Global North (referenced above), while the Global South (formerly known as third world countries) is home to the majority of natural resources and population, is excluded.
(IGI Global)

Health at Every Size (HAES)

A social and health promotion movement that challenges social stigma based on weight, size, and shape. The movement emphasizes body positivity, health outcomes, and eating and movement for well-being rather than weight control.
(ASDAH)

Health Equity

This means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health, such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.
(NACo)

Human Rights

Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.
(United Nations)

Imposter Syndrome

The fear some high-achieving individuals have of being exposed as a fraud or inadequate, inhibiting their ability to recognize their own accomplishments; common in members of underrepresented groups.
(NACo)

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Opportunity Gap

The way uncontrollable factors can contribute to lower rates of success in educational achievement, career prospects, and other life aspirations.
(Close the Gap Foundation)

Procedural Equity

An examination of procedural rights that includes authentic engagement through inclusive and accessible development and implementation of fair programs or policies.
(NACo)

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is believing one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. When there is psychological safety in the workplace, people feel comfortable being themselves. They bring their full selves to work and feel okay laying all of themselves on the line.
(CCL)

Racial Anxiety

The concerns that often arise both before and during interracial interactions. People of color experience racial anxiety when they worry that they will be subject to discriminatory treatment. White people experience it when they worry that they will be perceived as racist.
(NACo)

Racial Disparity

The imbalances and incongruities between the treatment of racial groups, including economic status, income, housing options, societal treatment, safety, and many other aspects of life and society. Contemporary and past discrimination in the United States and globally has profoundly impacted the inequalities seen in society today. Also see: racial equity and racial justice.
(NACo)

Racial Equity

The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer influenced how one fares. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.
(Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

Racial Justice

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice 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.
(NACo)

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Employee Voices on Companies Speaking Out on Divisive Topics

From a Seramount Access360 Employee Voice Session with 235 employees from 36 companies after the 2022 Supreme Court decision to reverse *Roe v. Wade*

Value Alignment During the "Great Reshuffle"

- "If my company's values aren't aligned with mine, I don't want to work there. We cannot be productive employees if we are not safe or not valued. We need to know what options we have regarding healthcare coverage and travel expenses or if we need time off. If not, employee engagement will suffer."
- "It tells us how they value women. These are human issues impacting us all and our abilities to show up at work. Not acknowledging or dismissing this altogether would be a huge miss."
- "If they don't address it, it's a clear signal to me that it's not a good fit and I should find a company who does care enough about rights to say something."

Personal Views Vs. Appropriate Workplace Conversations

- "I'm fearful that as the climate we're living in becomes more polarized and personal, it'll become harder for me to keep my personal views out of work. I don't want to help partners who think it's a victory to take rights away. I fear my company won't flat out say at some point (if this gets worse) that this is wrong—and that will make me feel less a part of my work community."
- "Professionally, I am very opposed to companies weighing in on this topic and my company chose to speak on it. It has disrupted our workplace unnecessarily while people struggle with this outside of work."

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Terms that support and explain various aspects of race and ethnicity

AANAPISI

An acronym that stands for Asian American and Native American Pacific Island Serving Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 10 percent or more of the student demographic is Asian American or Native American Pacific Islander.
(NACo)

AAPI

An acronym that stands for Asian American and Pacific Islander. The term is used to describe a diverse and fast-growing population of 23 million Americans that includes roughly 50 ethnic groups with roots in more than 40 countries. This includes all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins to the countries, states, jurisdictions, and/or diasporic communities of these geographic regions.
(NACo)

AAVE

An acronym that stands for African American Vernacular English. The term describes a dialect of American English characterized by pronunciations and vocabulary uniquely spoken in African American communities. It stems from a variety of African, British English, and Caribbean Creole English dialects.
(NACo)

Affirmative Action

Proactive policies and procedures for remedying the effects of past discrimination and ensuring the implementation of equal employment and educational opportunities and for recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting women and other historically excluded groups, such as people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans. This is done in compliance with federal requirements enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).
(SHRM)

African American

An American with Black African ancestry. Not all Black people who reside in the United States identify with the term African American. While the US Census groups Black or African American as one category, there is a clear distinction between the two.
(Whiteness at Work)

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American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS)

This term refers to all Black Americans who are descendants of formerly enslaved people and are committed to seeking reparations for chattel slavery and its ongoing consequences, including the racial wealth gap, incarceration, systemic inequities in education and healthcare, redlining, and gentrification, all of which disproportionately affect Black people in the United States. ADOS are also committed to advocating for policies that eliminate the discrimination experienced by Black people of all backgrounds in the United States.
(ADOS)

ANNHSI

An acronym that stands for Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 20 percent or more of the student demographic is Native Alaskan and 10 percent or more is Native Hawaiian.

Asian

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
(U.S. Census Bureau)

BIPOC

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

Black

Relating or belonging to any of the various human populations characterized by dark skin pigmentation, specifically the dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Oceania, and Australia. In the United States this term most often refers to people of African descent, including African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latino, and African immigrants living in the United States. The term Black has a specific political significance in the race discourse in the United States, as it covers a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
(Whiteness at Work)

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Black Lives Matter

A human rights movement, originating in the African American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism toward Black people. The movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African American teen Trayvon Martin in February 2012.
(Black Lives Matter)

Chicano/a

A term adopted by some Mexican Americans to demonstrate pride in their heritage, born out of the national Chicano Movement, which was politically aligned with the Civil Rights Movement to end racial oppression and social inequalities experienced by Mexican Americans. Chicano pertains to the experience of Mexican-descended individuals living in the United States. Not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano.
(NACo)

Code-switching

The conscious or unconscious act of altering one's communication style and/or appearance depending on the specific situation of to whom one is speaking, what is being discussed, and the relationship of power and/or community dynamics between those involved. Often members of the non-dominant group code-switch to minimize the impact of bias from the dominant group.
(NACo)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

An academic and legal framework that denotes that systemic racism is part of US society—from education and housing to employment and healthcare. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is embedded in laws, policies, and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities. According to CRT, societal issues such as Black Americans' higher mortality rate, outsized exposure to police violence, the school-to-prison pipeline, denial of affordable housing, and the rates of the death of Black women in childbirth are not unrelated anomalies.
(Legal Defense Fund)

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.
(White Privilege Conference)

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First Nations

This term came into usage in the 1970s, replacing the use of Indian or Native; First Nations refers to the groups of people that are officially recognized as Indians under the Indian Act of Canada. First Nations also refers to the separate nations that occupied the unceded territory before European colonization. There are over 630 First Nations in Canada. For instance, the Okanagan Nation is composed of seven member communities including the Penticton Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Westbank First Nation, and Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands.
(FNDI)

HBCU

An acronym that stands for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines HBCU as "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."
(National Center for Education Statistics)

Hispanic

A term adopted in the United States in an attempt to group immigrants and their descendants whose countries of origin derive from Latin America. Hispanic is often used interchangeably with "Latino" or "Latina" despite the potential to convey slightly different connotations. These terms refer only to a person's origin and history. A Hispanic/Latino/Latina person can be any race or color.
(Encyclopedia Britannica)

HSI

An acronym that stands for Hispanic-Serving Institutions. To be eligible for this distinction, institutions of higher education must have an enrollment rate of 25 percent or more Hispanic undergraduate full-time equivalent students.

Indigenous Peoples

Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations that inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions.
(ILO)

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Latine

Latine is a gender-neutral form of the word Latino created by gender non-binary and feminist communities in Spanish-speaking countries.

Latinx

A gender-neutral or nonbinary term that refers to a person of Latin American origin or descent (gender-neutral version of Latino or Latina).

MENA

This term refers to the geographical region of the Middle East and North Africa, which is composed of 22 nations—Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Mauritania, and the Comoros Islands.
(Whiteness at Work)

Multicultural

Of or pertaining to more than one culture.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Multiculturalism

The practice of acknowledging and respecting the various cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes, and opinions within an environment. The theory and practice promote peaceful coexistence of all identities and people.
(University of Maryland)

NASNTI

An acronym that stands for Native American Indian Serving, Non-Tribal Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 10 percent or more of the student demographic is Native American, but the institution does not qualify as a Tribal College or University (TCU).

Native American

This term came into use in the 1960s, referring to the over 2,000 tribal groups and their descendants that are native to the land of what became the United States and its territories through European colonization. Native American is not a monolithic term; there are numerous languages, cultures, and tribal membership systems within Native American communities.
(National Museum of the American Indian)

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Native Lives Matter (NLM)

In response to a national discussion surrounding police violence against marginalized communities in the United States, the Lakota People's Law Project (LPLP) created the Native Lives Matter coalition to influence public discourse on how Native Americans suffer the most adverse effects of a structurally unjust criminal justice system. Proportionally, Native Americans are the racial group most likely to be killed by the police, Native American men are admitted to prison at four times the rate of White men, and Native American women are imprisoned at six times the rate of White women.
(LPLP)

Pacific Islander

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
(U.S. Census Bureau)

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)

PBI

An acronym that stands for Predominantly Black Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 40 percent or more of the student demographic is Black.
(NACo)

People of Color (POC)

A collective term for individuals of Asian, African, Latinx, and Native American backgrounds with the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. While each oppressed group is affected by racism differently and maintains its own unique identity and culture, there is also the recognition that racism has the potential to unite oppressed people in a collective of resistance. For this reason, many individuals who identify as members of racially oppressed groups also claim the identity of being People of Color. This in no way diminishes their specific cultural or racial identity; rather, it is an affirmation of the multiple layers of identity of every individual.
(NACo)

PWIs

An acronym that stands for Predominantly White Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 50 percent or more of the student demographic is White.
(NACo)

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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.
(White Privilege Conference)

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 themself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.
(White Privilege Conference)

TCU

An acronym that stands for Tribal Colleges and Universities. These are institutions of higher learning in which 50 percent or more of the student demographic is Native American, Inuit, or Alaska Native.

White

The top classification of the socially constructed and structurally reinforced racial categories. Those both perceived and categorized as White are granted social, cultural, institutional, psychological, and material resources. Most often White people are of European descent.
(Whiteness at Work)

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Seramount's Global and US Inclusion Indexes

Global Inclusion Index

- Current report is based on data from 16 countries and next year's report will be based on 24 countries
- 2022 countries include: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom
- 2023 countries include: the above (except Argentina) and Colombia, Israel, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, the Philippines, Portugal, and Romania
- Questions include:
  - Measurements of women's progress
  - Most common demographics captured
  - Pay equity

Find more information here

Inclusion Index

- Based on U.S. data
- Companies that receive a score of 70 percent or higher qualify as a Leading Inclusion Index company
- Evaluates trends and opportunities of issues such as:
  - Demographic representation
  - Advancement of historically excluded groups
  - Leadership accountability
  - Inclusive corporate culture

Find more information here

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Terms that either originated in the workplace or hold the most impact in a work environment

Affinity Group vs. Employee Resource Group (ERG) vs. Business Resource Group (BRG)

Affinity groups, or affinity networks, are primarily social spaces where people with a shared identity or interest can meet and discuss common issues.

Employee resource groups (ERGs) are more structured, with mission statements, executive sponsors, and goals in place. They are usually focused on recruitment, education, and advancement efforts within the workplace and are usually affinity-based.

Business resource groups (BRGs) are similar to ERGs, but are tied directly to business goals, including internal goals (increasing representation, retention, and promotion rates) and marketplace goals (adding to market share, cultural competence on customer segments, and increasing supplier diversity). These groups have specific metrics that are often linked to leaders' performance evaluations. Most of these groups are also affinity-based.
(Seramount)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the ways a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental, and social imperatives, while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders. Historically, CSR has been used to promote sustainability and philanthropic efforts but lacks metrics for holding leaders accountable for results.
(UNIDO, Seramount)

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

The three criteria of ESG are environmental, which measures how well a company is able to mitigate the negative effects of their business operations on environmental issues; social, which measures the way an organization operates with consumers, suppliers, the external community, and talent; and governance, which assesses a company's leadership and takes issues such as executive pay, board diversity, and stakeholder engagement into account. Institutional investors, stock exchanges, and boards are increasingly using sustainability and social responsibility disclosure information to explore the relationship between a company's management of ESG risk factors and its business performance.
(Seramount)

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Golden Rule vs. Platinum Rule of How to Treat Employees

The maxim "treat people as you want to be treated" is viewed as the "Golden Rule." This statement negates the experiences of those an individual interacts with, which may include neurodivergence and disability aspects that should be respected. Instead, the "Platinum Rule" states "lead people the way they want to be led," which focuses on understanding the unique differences between employees and coworkers and recognizes that the same leadership style might not work for everyone.
(Inc.)

Historically Excluded Talent (HET)

Employees who are from groups that have been marginalized over time. Companies may implement preparation programs and accountability policies for diversifying and advancing this talent.
(Seramount)

Pay Equity

The equal compensation of employees who perform the same or similar job duties, while accounting for other factors, such as experience level, job performance, and tenure with the employer.
(SHRM)

It ensures the fairness of compensation paid to employees for performing comparable work, without regard to gender, race, or other categories protected by law (such as national origin or sexual orientation). It includes fairness in terms of both base pay and 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.
(Trusaic)

Stakeholder Capitalism

A model of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) stewardship 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.
(World Economic Forum)

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Supplier Diversity

Supplier diversity is an inclusion initiative that links companies with suppliers of goods and services owned by people from underrepresented groups, including people of color, women, LGTBQ+ people, people with disabilities, and veterans. Diverse suppliers offer a different perspective on how things can and should get done, especially when it comes to reaching out to people from their own communities. Supplier diversity is increasingly linked to ESG and to efforts to build community wealth.
(Seramount)

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Employee Lifecycle with an E/BRG

During orientation, a new hire meets with ERG leaders and develops confidence that the organization promotes inclusivity

This mid-career professional joins an ERG info session on career pathing and development opportunities in the company

Through the event, the employee identifies they need more leadership responsibility to ascend to their dream role. After 6 months at the company and as a member of the ERG, they apply and receive an ERG leadership role as a Vice Chair

After a year as a Vice Chair of the ERG, this employee is identified as a nominee for succession planning because of the ERG's performance

With the support of the ERG, this employee had notice of development opportunities, became a Vice Chair, was identified as rising talent, and now has a network of sponsors and mentors to guide them

85 percent

Of current ERG members say [these groups help their careers]

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(NACo)

AAPI

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(NACo)

AAVE

An acronym that stands for African American Vernacular English. The term describes a dialect of American English characterized by pronunciations and vocabulary uniquely spoken in African American communities. It stems from a variety of African, British English, and Caribbean Creole English dialects.
(NACo)

Ableism

Discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Accessibility

The intentional design or redesign of physical spaces, technology, policies, systems, entities, products, and services (to name a few) that increase one's ability to use, access, and obtain the respective element.
(NACo)

Accommodation

A change in the environment or in the way things are customarily done that allows an individual with a disability to have equal opportunity, access, and participation.
(NACo)

Accomplice

All accomplices are allies, but not all allies are accomplices. While an ally is willing to stand in support of a marginalized voice, risk is rarely involved. An accomplice uses the power and privilege they have to challenge the status quo, often risking their physical and social wellbeing in the process.
(Diverse Education)

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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 their culture in order to adapt to those of the prevailing culture.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Affinity Group vs. Employee Resource Group (ERG) vs. Business Resource Group (BRG)

Affinity groups, or affinity networks, are primarily social spaces where people with a shared identity or interest can meet and discuss common issues. Employee resource groups (ERGs) are more structured, with mission statements, executive sponsors, and goals in place. They are usually focused on recruitment, education, and advancement efforts within the workplace and are usually affinity-based. Business resource groups (BRGs) are similar to ERGs, but are tied directly to business goals, including internal goals (increasing representation, retention, and promotion rates) and marketplace goals (adding to market share, cultural competence on customer segments, and increasing supplier diversity). These groups have specific metrics that are often linked to leaders' performance evaluations. Most of these groups are also affinity-based.
(Seramount)

Affirm

To acknowledge, respect, and support a person's identity regarding race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, experiences, ideas, or beliefs, or encouraging the development of an individual.

Affirmative Action

Proactive policies and procedures for remedying the effects of past discrimination and ensuring the implementation of equal employment and educational opportunities and for recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting women and other historically excluded groups, such as people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans. This is done in compliance with federal requirements enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).
(SHRM)

African American

An American with Black African ancestry. Not all Black people who reside in the United States identify with the term African American. While the US Census groups Black or African American as one category, there is a clear distinction between the two.
(Whiteness at Work)

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Ageism

Discrimination and prejudiced thought against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Ally

Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and to work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. An ally recognizes that, though they are not a member of a marginalized group(s) they support, they make a concentrated effort to better understand the struggle of another's circumstances. An ally may have more privilege and recognize that privilege in society. (NACo)

American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS)

This term refers to all Black Americans who are descendants of formerly enslaved people and are committed to seeking reparations for chattel slavery and its ongoing consequences, including the racial wealth gap, incarceration, systemic inequities in education and healthcare, redlining, and gentrification, all of which disproportionately affect Black people in the United States. ADOS are also committed to advocating for policies that eliminate the discrimination experienced by Black people of all backgrounds in the United States. (ADOS)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA, a U.S.-based law, is a civil rights law signed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. (ADA)

ANNHSI

An acronym that stands for Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 20 percent or more of the student demographic is Native Alaskan and 10 percent or more is Native Hawaiian.

Anti-Oppression

Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional, and individual forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression. (Center for Anti-Oppressive Education)

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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 that is set up to counter an individual's racist behaviors and impact.
(Time's Up Foundation)

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," which was updated in 2022. In it, he wrote: "The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it—and then dismantle it."
(Ibram X. Kendi)

Anti-Semitism

A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward or about Jewish individuals and/or their property, or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.
(Tanenbaum)

Asian

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian sub-continent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
(U.S. Census Bureau)

Assimilation

The process by which an individual of a minority group gradually adopts characteristics of the majority culture, thereby becoming a member of that culture. This can include the adoption of language, culinary tastes, interpersonal communication, gender roles, and style of dress. Assimilation can be voluntary or forced.
(NACo)

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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 (such as the workplace) needs to be a diverse and inclusive place.
(SHRM)

Bias (Prejudice)

An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment. A form of prejudice that results from the universal tendency and need of individuals to classify others into categories.
(NACo)

Bicurious

People who are open to experimenting with genders that are not only their own, but do not know if they are open to forming any sort of relationship with multiple genders.
(The PBHS Closet)

Bigotry

An unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices.
(NACo)

BIPOC

An acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The term has increased in use and awareness since 2020, after the Black Lives Matter resurgence against racism and police brutality in the wake of the George Floyd murder. BIPOC is meant to emphasize the particular hardships faced by Black and Indigenous people in the United States 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.
(Ochs)

Black

Relating or belonging to any of the various human populations characterized by dark skin pigmentation, specifically the dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Oceania, and Australia. In the United States this term most often refers to people of African descent, including African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latino, and African immigrants living in the United States. The term Black has a specific political significance in the race discourse in the United States, as it covers a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
(Whiteness at Work)

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Black Lives Matter

A human rights movement, originating in the African American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism toward Black people. The movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African American teen Trayvon Martin in February 2012.
(Black Lives Matter)

Brave Space

In the context of brave spaces, social justice is the "full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs." Some key ideas that promote the most productive brave spaces are "controversy with civility," "owning intentions and impacts," "challenge by choice," "respect," and "no attacks".
(NC State University)

Bystander

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

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Chicano/a

A term adopted by some Mexican Americans to demonstrate pride in their heritage, born out of the national Chicano Movement, which was politically aligned with the Civil Rights Movement to end racial oppression and social inequalities experienced by Mexican Americans. Chicano pertains to the experience of Mexican-descended individuals living in the United States. Not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano. (NACo)

Cisgender/cis

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. (HRC)

Class

Refers to people's socioeconomic status, based on factors such as wealth, occupation, education, income, etc. (University of Washington)

Classism

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 opportunity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Code-switching

The conscious or unconscious act of altering one's communication style and/or appearance depending on the specific situation of to whom one is speaking, what is being discussed, and the relationship of power and/or community dynamics between those involved. Often members of the non-dominant group code-switch to minimize the impact of bias from the dominant group. (NACo)

Collusion

When people act to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression. Example: able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings more accessible because of the expense. (White Privilege Conference)

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Colonization

The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area, which can begin as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of land from the original inhabitants. The dispossession of lands is often legalized after the fact, resulting in institutionalized inequality that becomes a permanent fixture of society.
(NACo)

Colorblind Racial Ideology

The attitude that people should be treated as equally as possible, without regard to race or ethnicity. Though seemingly equitable, it tends to overlook the importance of people's cultures and the manifestations of racism in policy or institutions.
(NACo)

Colorism

Prejudice and/or discrimination against an individual with darker skin color, tone, shade, pigmentation, or complexion.

Coming Out

The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.
(HRC)

Confirmation Bias

Tendency to favor information that aligns with existing beliefs or attitudes; forming stereotypes or attitudes toward groups without being consciously aware of doing so. Unchecked, confirmation biases can lead to various forms of racism.
(SAIC)

Conscious/Explicit Bias

Biased attitudes about a group of which individuals are aware; these may be visible or invisible, but in any case, they can be accessed.
(SAIC)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the ways a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental, and social imperatives), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders. Historically, CSR has been used to promote sustainability and philanthropic efforts but lacks metrics for holding leaders accountable for results.
(UNIDO, Seramount)

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Critical Race Theory (CRT)

An academic and legal framework that denotes that systemic racism is part of US society—from education and housing to employment and healthcare. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is embedded in laws, policies, and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities. According to CRT, societal issues such as Black Americans' higher mortality rate, outsized exposure to police violence, the school-to-prison pipeline, denial of affordable housing, and the rates of the death of Black women in childbirth are not unrelated anomalies.
(Legal Defense Fund)

Cultural Appropriation

The act of adopting or stealing cultural elements (e.g., icons, rituals, aesthetic standards, or behavior) of one culture or subculture by another for personal use or profit. It is generally applied when the subject culture is a minority culture. Often occurs without any real understanding of why the original (or "appropriated") culture took part in these activities.
(NACo)

Cultural Competence

The ability of an individual or organization to understand how inequity can be (and has been) perpetuated through socialized behaviors and the use of that knowledge to disrupt inequitable practices; the ability to function effectively and empathetically as an individual and/or as an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by another's culture.
(NACo)

Cultural Humility

An interpersonal stance that is open to individuals and different cultural communities and experiences in relation to aspects of one's own cultural identity. Maintaining cultural humility requires learning and understanding the complexity of identities and how they evolve over time.
(NACo)

Cultural Identity

The identity or feeling of belonging to a group based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or other types of social groups with their own distinct culture.
(NACo)

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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. (CulturalQ)

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. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

Cultural Sensitivity

Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value—positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong. It means that a person is aware that people are not all the same and that the person recognizes their culture is no better than any other culture. (LinkedIn)

Culture

A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure the group's adaptation and survival. These systems are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

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D&I

An acronym for Diversity and Inclusion

Damage Imagery

Visual, texts/narratives, or data used to highlight inequities that are presented without appropriate historical and sociopolitical context. Damage imagery can be corrected by explaining systemic and historical barriers and focusing on solutions within the communities that are the subject of the visuals, texts/narratives, or data.
(NACo)

Deadnaming

Occurs when an individual, intentionally or not, refers to the name that a transgender or gender-expansive individual used at a different time in their life. Avoid this practice, as it can cause trauma, stress, embarrassment, and even danger. Some may prefer the terms birth name, given name, or old name.
(PFLAG)

DEI

An acronym for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

DEIA

An acronym for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. Including accessibility in the acronym calls out more specifically inclusion needs for people with disabilities.

DEIB

An acronym for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Including belonging in the acronym represents the positive relationships that are formed between employees of various backgrounds when businesses actively promote DEI in the workplace.

DEIJ/JEDI

An acronym for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The addition of justice pushes people to acknowledge the barriers to resources and opportunities that exist for some communities, preventing them from living a full and dignified life. Justice is about fairness, balance, and dismantling these barriers so all individuals and communities can have access to a better life.
(PCMA)

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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 that "People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin." In this way, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race is ignored.
(Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

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.
(Department of Justice)

Discrimination

The unequal and unfair treatment of individuals or groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, national origin, age, intellectual or mental abilities, and other categories that may result in differences. It also describes the act of making unjustified distinctions between certain social or racial groups or classes.
(NACo)

Distributional Equity

Programs, policies, and practices that result in a fair distribution of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need.
(NACo)

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.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Diversity vs. Inclusion vs. Belonging

Diversity typically means proportionate representation across all dimensions of human difference. Inclusion means that everyone is included, visible, heard, and considered. Belonging means that an individual perceives themself as being a full member of the larger community and can thrive.

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Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

The ability to both manage one's own emotions and understand the emotions of other people. There are five key elements to EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. People with high EI can identify how they are feeling, what those feelings mean, and how those emotions impact their behavior and in turn, other people. It's a little harder to "manage" the emotions of other people. But if a person can identify the emotions behind others' behavior, they will l have a better understanding of where others are coming from and how to best interact with them.
(Mental Health America)

Emotional Tax

The emotional toll of defending or explaining one's underrepresented history, identity, and culture to those from a dominant culture.
(SAEM)

Empowerment

When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.
(White Privilege Conference)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

A term used to describe language learning programs in the United States for individuals for whom English is not their first or native language.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Environmental Justice

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
(SAMHSA)

Environmental Racism

The disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on people of color.
(SAMHSA)

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Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

The three criteria of ESG are environmental, which measures how well a company is able to mitigate the negative effects of their business operations on environmental issues; social, which measures the way an organization operates with consumers, suppliers, the external community, and talent; and governance, which assesses a company's leadership and takes issues such as executive pay, board diversity, and stakeholder engagement into account. Institutional investors, stock exchanges, and boards are increasingly using sustainability and social responsibility disclosure information to explore the relationship between a company's management of ESG risk factors and its business performance.
(Seramount)

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any aspect of employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Equality

Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness.
(American Library Association)

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)

Equity in the workplace is the idea that all employees are provided with fair and equal opportunities based on their individual needs. Equity recognizes that not all employees are afforded the same opportunities and addresses the imbalance of opportunities available to them. Pay equity/parity/transparency, accommodation of health conditions or disabilities, and providing diversity training are examples of equity in the workplace.
(BetterUp)

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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. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Ethical Non-Monogamy

The practice of taking part in romantic relationships that are not completely exclusive between two people. (Verywell Mind)

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. (White Privilege Conference)

Ethnocentrism

The practice of using a particular ethnic group as a frame of reference, basis of judgment, or set of 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. (The National Multicultural Institute)

Eurocentrism

The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or set of standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups. (The National Multicultural Institute)

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Fatphobia

Also known as anti-fat, is the implicit and explicit bias against overweight individuals that is rooted in a sense of blame and presumed moral failing. Being overweight and/or fat is highly stigmatized in Western culture. Anti-fatness is intrinsically linked to anti-blackness, racism, classism, misogyny, and many other systems of oppression.
(Boston Medical Center)

Feminism

A 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.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

First Nations

This term came into usage in the 1970s, replacing the use of Indian or Native; First Nations refers to the groups of people that are officially recognized as Indians under the Indian Act of Canada. First Nations also refers to the separate nations that occupied the unceded territory before European colonization. There are over 630 First Nations in Canada. For instance, the Okanagan Nation is composed of seven member communities including the Penticton Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Westbank First Nation, and Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands.
(FNDI)

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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.
(Very Well Mind)

Gay

People of the same sex who are attracted sexually and emotionally to each other. More commonly utilized to describe men's attraction to other men.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Gender

The socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles a particular sex performs.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Gender Expansive (Gender Nonconfirming)

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.
(PFLAG)

Gender Expression

External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics, or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
(HRC)

Gender Identity

One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
(HRC)

Gender Neutral

Gender-neutral language, also referred to as gender-inclusive language, can be defined as speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender, or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.
(STEM Women)

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Gender Nonconforming

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 neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender nonconforming people do.
(HRC)

(Personal) Gender Pronouns (PGPs)

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.
(PFLAG)

Genderqueer

Genderqueer 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 "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both man and woman, neither man nor woman, or as falling completely outside these categories.
(HRC)

Gentrification

A process of economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood that happens through mechanisms such as real estate investment and increase in higher-income residents, resulting in the displacement of long-term residents and demographic changes in income, education, and racial makeup.
(NACo)

Global North/South

These are terms that denote the generic geographic, historical, economic, educational, and political division between North and South. North America, Europe, and developed parts of East Asia (formerly known as first world countries) disproportionately control global resources. Disparities of wealth, housing, education, digital media access, and numerous other factors underscore the power and privilege enjoyed by the Global North (referenced above), while the Global South (formerly known as third world countries) is home to the majority of natural resources and population, is excluded.
(IGI Global)

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Harassment

Unwanted conduct with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment based on their race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, and/or age, among other characteristics.
(NACo)

Hazing

Verbal and physical testing, often of newcomers into a society or group, which may range from practical joking to tests of physical and mental endurance.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

HBCU

An acronym that stands for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines HBCU as "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."
(National Center for Education Statistics)

Health at Every Size (HAES)

A social and health promotion movement that challenges social stigma based on weight, size, and shape. The movement emphasizes body positivity, health outcomes, and eating and movement for well-being rather than weight control.
(ASDAH)

Health Equity

This means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health, such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.
(NACo)

Heteronormativity

The assumption that heterosexuality is natural, ideal, or superior to other sexual orientations.
(SAMHSA)

Heterosexism

Social structures and practices that serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality.
(University of Maryland)

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Heterosexual

The attraction to a gender different from one's own, commonly used to describe someone who is gender binary (female or male) and attracted to the other binary gender.
(The PBHS Closet)

Hispanic

A term adopted in the United States in an attempt to group immigrants and their descendants whose countries of origin derive from Latin America. Hispanic is often used interchangeably with "Latino" or "Latina" despite the potential to convey slightly different connotations. These terms refer only to a person's origin and history. A Hispanic/Latino/Latina person can be any race or color.
(Encyclopedia Britannica)

Historically Excluded Group/Population

Includes persons who identify as Black/African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, LGBTQIA+, having a disability, a first-generation college student, or as a woman. This can refer to any group that has been marginalized over time. Could also be written as a historically marginalized community.
(IPUMS)

Historically Excluded Talent (HET)

Employees who are from groups that have been marginalized over time. Companies may implement preparation programs and accountability policies for diversifying and advancing this talent.
(Seramount)

Homophobia

A fear of individuals who are not heterosexual. Often results in hostile, offensive, or discriminatory action against a person because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or 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.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Homosexual

The attraction to a gender the same as one's own, commonly used to describe someone who is gender binary (female or male) and attracted to the same binary gender. Sometimes referred to as gay.
(The PBHS Closet)

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HSI

An acronym that stands for Hispanic-Serving Institutions. To be eligible for this distinction, institutions of higher education must have an enrollment rate of 25 percent or more Hispanic undergraduate full-time equivalent students.

Human Rights

Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.
(United Nations)

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Identity-First Language (IFL)

Identity-first language positions disability as an identity category and central to a person's sense of self. In identity-first language, the identifying word comes first in the sentence and highlights the person's embrace of their identity. Examples could be "autistic person" or "Deaf individual."
(NACo)

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 accorded the freedom to self-identify on their own terms.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Implicit Bias

Also known as hidden or unconscious bias. The unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect a person's understanding, actions, or decisions as they relate to people from different groups.
(NACo)

Imposter Syndrome

The fear some high-achieving individuals have of being exposed as a fraud or inadequate, inhibiting their ability to recognize their own accomplishments; common in members of underrepresented groups.
(NACo)

Inclusion

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.
(UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

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 ability-inclusive language is saying "I appreciate who you are" in lieu of saying "I see you".
(The National Multicultural Institute)

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Indigenous Peoples

Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations that inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions.
(ILO)

Indigiqueer

Another term sometimes used alongside or to refer to the Two-Spirit identity; more often it is a term used by some LGBTQ+ Indigenous people who do not self-identify as Two-Spirit, or by those who identify with both.
(University of Alberta)

Institutional Racism

A pattern of social institutions—such as governmental organizations, schools, banks, and courts of law—giving negative treatment to a group of people based on their race.

Intent vs. Impact

Intentions (what one wants or hopes to do) don't always align with what one says or does, which can impact how others receive what one says and does. Intent refers to what a person hopes or want to do when choosing to perform an action. Impact refers to the reality (e.g., results) of one's actions/ behaviors. The resulting impact may not always align with what the person intended.

Owning the impact: When one's impact is being called into question, especially if the action is perpetuating oppression, it is important to recognize the action is being called into question, not the person/overall character
(Everyday Feminism)

Internalized Racism

The conscious or unconscious development of ideas, beliefs, social structures, actions, and behaviors that confirm one's acceptance of the dominant society's racist tropes and stereotypes about their own race. It is the simultaneous hating of oneself and one's own race and valuing the dominant race.
(NACo)

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
(AAPF)

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Invisible/Hidden/Non-apparent Disability

A physical, mental, or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities. Unfortunately, since these conditions are invisible, their existence can lead to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments.
(Invisible Disabilities Association)

Islamophobia

A closed-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims. An Islamophobe is an individual who holds a closed-minded view of Islam and promotes prejudice against or hatred of Muslims.
(Tanenbaum)

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Justice

Presence of systems and supports (e.g., policies, practices, norms) that achieve and sustain fair treatment, equitable opportunities, and impartial outcomes for people of all races. Systematic, proactive reinforcement.
(The Inclusion Solution)

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Latine

Latine is a gender-neutral form of the word Latino created by gender non-binary and feminist communities in Spanish-speaking countries.

Latinx

A gender-neutral or nonbinary term that refers to a person of Latin American origin or descent (gender-neutral version of Latino or Latina).

Lesbian

A woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women.
(UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center)

LGBT/LGBTQ+/LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other sexual identities; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Ally/Asexual/Aromantic/Agender, and other sexual identities

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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 is perceived as deviant and regressive.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

MENA

This term refers to the geographical region of the Middle East and North Africa, which is composed of 22 nations—Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Mauritania, and the Comoros Islands.
(Whiteness at Work)

Microaffirmation

A microaffirmation is a small gesture of inclusion, caring, or kindness. Microaffirmations include listening, providing comfort and support, being an ally, and explicitly valuing the contributions and presence of all. It is particularly helpful for those with greater power or seniority to model affirming behavior.
(Harvard)

Microaggression

The everyday slights, indignities, put-downs and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations, or those who are marginalized experience in their day-to-day interactions with people.
(Vox)

Micro-inequity

Apparently small events, which are often ephemeral and hard to prove and which are covert, often unintentional, and frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator, that occur wherever people are perceived to be different.
(MIT)

Micro-insult

Communications that subtly exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a marginalized individuals.
(PBS)

Micro-invalidation

Verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity.
(BSt)

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Misgender

To refer to an individual using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, which does not correctly reflect their gender. This may be unintentional and without ill intent or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, misgendering has a harmful impact.
(PFLAG)

Misogynoir

An extreme form of sexism rooted in racism. The term describes contempt for or ingrained prejudice toward Black women. The unique oppression experienced by Black women due to the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation combined with discrimination. Misogynoir utilizes and reinforces stereotypes of Black women.
(NACo)

Misogyny

Hatred, aversion, or prejudice against women. Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including sexual discrimination, denigration of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification of women.
(NACo)

Multicultural

Of or pertaining to more than one culture.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Multiculturalism

The practice of acknowledging and respecting the various cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes, and opinions within an environment. The theory and practice promote peaceful coexistence of all identities and people.
(University of Maryland)

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NASNTI

An acronym that stands for Native American Indian Serving, Non-Tribal Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 10 percent or more of the student demographic is Native American, but the institution does not qualify as a Tribal College and University (TCU).

Native American

This term came into use in the 1960s, referring to the over 2,000 tribal groups and their descendants that are native to the land of what became the United States and its territories through European colonization. Native American is not a monolithic term; there are numerous languages, cultures, and tribal membership systems within Native American communities.
(National Museum of the American Indian)

Native Lives Matter (NLM)

In response to a national discussion surrounding police violence against marginalized communities in the United States, the Lakota People's Law Project (LPLP) created the Native Lives Matter coalition to influence public discourse on how Native Americans suffer the most adverse effects of a structurally unjust criminal justice system. Proportionally, Native Americans are the racial group most likely to be killed by the police, Native American men are admitted to prison at four times the rate of White men, and Native American women are imprisoned at six times the rate of White women.
(LPLP)

Neo-Colonization

A term for contemporary policies adopted by international and Western, global North nations and organizations that exert regulation, power, and control over global South nations and that are disguised as humanitarian help or aid. These policies are distinct from but related to the "original" period of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations.
(University of Maryland)

Neurodiversity

When neurological differences are recognized and respected as are any other kind of human differences or variations. These differences can include Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Condition Spectrum, and Tourette Syndrome.
(Harvard)

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Neurotypical Advantage/Privilege

The special and unearned advantage afforded by those who happen to have the most common cognitive expression; these individuals order their thoughts and communicate ideas in the most typically seen way. This privilege comes from living in a world that favors and is built for this specific neurology.
(The London School of Economics)

Nonbinary

An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Nonbinary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.
(HRC)

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Opportunity Gap

The way uncontrollable factors can contribute to lower rates of success in educational achievement, career prospects, and other life aspirations.
(Close the Gap Foundation)

Oppression

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.
(White Privilege Conference)

Othering

The perception or intentional/unintentional placement of a group in contrast to the societal norm. The identifying of a group as a threat to the favored dominant group.
(NACo)

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Pacific Islander

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
(U.S. Census Bureau)

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.
(Queers United Activists)

Patriarchy

Actions and beliefs that prioritize men in systems and positions of power, society, and privilege. Patriarchy may be practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society, or it may simply influence how individuals interact with one another interpersonally.
(NACo)

Pay Equity

The equal compensation of employees who perform the same or similar job duties, while accounting for other factors, such as experience level, job performance, and tenure with the employer.
(SHRM)

It ensures the fairness of compensation paid to employees for performing comparable work, without regard to gender, race, or other categories protected by law (such as national origin or sexual orientation). It includes fairness in terms of both base pay and 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.
(Trusaic)

PBI

An acronym that stands for to Predominantly Black Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 40 percent or more of the student demographic is Black.
(NACo)

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People of Color (POC)

A collective term for individuals of Asian, African, Latinx and Native American backgrounds with the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. While each oppressed group is affected by racism differently and maintains its own unique identity and culture, there is also the recognition that racism has the potential to unite oppressed people in a collective of resistance. For this reason, many individuals who identify as members of racially oppressed groups also claim the identity of being People of Color. This in no way diminishes their specific cultural or racial identity; rather, it is an affirmation of the multiple layers of identity of every individual.
(NACo)

People with Disabilities (PwD)

Refers to individuals with disabilities. This term utilizes Person-First Language, which posits that a person isn't a disability, condition, or diagnosis, but rather that a person has a disability, condition, or diagnosis.
(ADA)

Performative Allyship

When an individual or group of power/majority/privilege (e.g., White, man, abled, unqueer, etc.) loudly profess(es) their actions in the name of "allyship" while actively conducting harm to, taking focus away from, and generally being unhelpful toward the group they claim to support, often to receive praise and attention, and without taking critical action to dismantle the systems of harm.
(Self Defined)

Person-First Language (PFL)

Person-first language conveys respect by emphasizing that people with disabilities are first and foremost people. The most common example is "person with a disability."
(NACo)

Polyamory

The practice or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved.
(Queers United Activists)

Positionality

Social identities in relation to power, which influence the way we understand the world and our interactions with others.
(University of Michigan)

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Power

The ability to exercise one's will over others. Power occurs when some individuals or groups wield a greater advantage over 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.
(NACo)

Privilege

Systemic favoring, enriching, valuing, validating, and including of certain social identities over others. Individuals cannot "opt out" of systems of privilege; rather, these systems are inherent in the society in which we live.
(University of Washington)

Procedural Equity

An examination of procedural rights that includes authentic engagement through inclusive and accessible development and implementation of fair programs or policies.
(NACo)

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is believing one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. When there is psychological safety in the workplace, people feel comfortable being themselves. They bring their full selves to work and feel okay laying all of themselves on the line.
(CCL)

PWIs

An acronym that stands for Predominantly White Institutions. These are institutions of higher learning in which 50 percent or more of the student demographic is White.
(NACo)

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Queer

This term embraces a range of genders and sexualities who may not identify with a specific LGBT+ label. It acknowledges the fluidity of gender and sexuality, including people who are not exclusively heterosexual and/or non-binary people. Previously used as a slur, this term is now used by choice and with pride by parts of the LGBTQ+ community.
(HRC)

Questioning

People who are debating their own sexuality/gender.
(The PBHS Closet)

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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. (White Privilege Conference)

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 themself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience. (White Privilege Conference)

Racial Anxiety

The concerns that often arise both before and during interracial interactions. People of color experience racial anxiety when they worry that they will be subject to discriminatory treatment. White people experience it when they worry that they will be perceived as racist. (NACo)

Racial Disparity

The imbalances and incongruities between the treatment of racial groups, including economic status, income, housing options, societal treatment, safety, and many other aspects of life and society. Contemporary and past discrimination in the United States and globally has profoundly impacted the inequalities seen in society today. Also see racial equity and racial justice. (NACo)

Racial Equity

The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer influenced how one fares. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

Racial Justice

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice 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. (NACo)

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Racially Coded Language

Language that triggers racial stereotypes and other negative associations without the stigma of explicit racism. Fosters anxiety and dehumanizes people and communities of color.
(EdJustice)

Racism

A system of advantage based on race; a system of oppression based on race; or a way of organizing society based on dominance and subordination based on race. Racism penetrates every aspect of personal, cultural, and institutional life, and includes prejudice against people of color as well as exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion of, and fear and hate of people of color.
(Dismantling Racism)

Religionism

The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress non-Christians; includes anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
(NCCJ)

Romantic Orientation

Who a person is romantically attracted to, meaning wanting to be in a romantic relationship with; unrelated to sexual attraction.
(The PBHS Closet)

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Safe Space

A space in which an individual or group may remain free of blame, ridicule, and persecution, and is in no danger of coming to mental or physical harm.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Sex Assigned at Birth

The biological category given at birth based on biological characteristics (i.e., physical anatomy and hormones).
(SAMHSA)

Sexual Orientation

A concept referring to sexual desire for emotional and sexual relationships with others based on their sex/gender; often implies that sexual object choice is an essential inborn characteristic.
(University of Washington)

Social Equity

In the context of public administration, social equity is defined as the fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.
(NACo)

Social Justice

Active engagement toward equity and inclusion that addresses issues of institutional, structural, and environmental inequity, power, and privilege.
(University of Washington)

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.
(White Privilege Conference)

Social Self-view

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

SOGI

Acronym for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. It is typically used as a shorthand in writing and is rarely pronounced out loud.
(PFLAG)

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Stakeholder Capitalism

A model of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) stewardship 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.
(World Economic Forum)

Stereotype

A positive or negative set of beliefs held by an individual about the characteristics of a certain group.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Structural Equity

The identification and removal of institutional barriers to fair and equal opportunities, recognizing historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that routinely advantage privileged groups in society and that result in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups.
(NACo)

Structural Inequality

Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted in and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) and reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws, and practices. Structural inequality thus refers to the system of privilege and inequality created, designed, and maintained by interlocking societal institutions.
(NACo)

Structural Racism

The overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society. It is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial inequities. It encompasses dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Examples can include the racial gap in wealth, homeownership, and education and historical redlining practices, among other factors.
(NACo)

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Supplier Diversity

Supplier diversity is an inclusion initiative that links private businesses with suppliers of goods and services owned by people from underrepresented groups, including people of color, women, LGTBQ+ people, people with disabilities, and veterans. Diverse suppliers offer a different perspective on how things can and should get done, especially when it comes to reaching out to people from their own communities. Supplier diversity is increasingly linked to ESG and to efforts to build community wealth.

Systemic Racism

An interlocking and reciprocal relationship between the individual, institutional, and structural levels that functions as a system of racism. These various levels of racism operate together in a lockstep model and function together as a whole system. These levels are: (1) Individual (within interactions between people), (2) Institutional (within institutions and systems of power), and (3) Structural or societal (among institutions and across society). In many ways "systemic racism" and "structural racism" are synonymous. If there is a difference between the terms, it can be said to exist in the fact that a structural racism analysis pays greater attention to the historical, cultural, and social-psychological aspects of our currently racialized society. (NACo)

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Targeted Universalism

An approach to equity work that sets universal goals, followed by targeted processes to achieve said goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are set for all individuals and groups. The strategies developed to achieve the goals are targeted, based on how different groups are situated within structures and cultures and across geographies, to obtain the universal goal.
(NACo)

TCU

An acronym that stands for Tribal Colleges and Universities. These are institutions of higher learning in which 50 percent or more of the student demographic is Native American, Inuit, or Alaska Native.

Tolerance

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

Trans*

When said out loud, some refer to the term as "trans asterisk." Others call it "trans star." Originally used to include explicitly both transsexual and transgender, or (now usually) to indicate the inclusion of gender identities such as gender-fluid, agender, etc., alongside transsexual and transgender.
(OED)

Transgender

An individual whose gender identity differs from the societal expectations of their physical birth sex. Transgender or "trans" does not imply any form of sexual orientation. Cisgender is a gender identity in which an individual's self-perception of their gender matches their birth sex.
(The National Multicultural Institute)

Transmisogynoir

Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive Black women, which often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.
(PFLAG)

Transmisogyny

Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive women, which often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.
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Transphobia

Animosity, hatred, or dislike of trans and gender-expansive people, which often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Transphobia often stems from lack of knowledge about transgender people and the issues they face and can be alleviated with education and support ("trans-antagonistic" refers to those whose aversion manifests in active oppression). PFLAG does not use this term as it frequently prevents educational dialogue.
(PFLAG)

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.
(PFLAG)

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Unconscious/Implicit Bias

Unconscious, or implicit, bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, but nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Research has shown implicit bias can pose a barrier to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
(NIH)

Underrepresented Groups (URG)

A group that is less represented in one subset 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. Replaces the term Underrepresented Minorities (URM), as minority groups will soon be the majority in the United States.. Underrepresented Groups is inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals as well as veterans and People with Disabilities.
(IGI Global)

Underserved

Used to describe people who have limited or no access to acceptable and affordable resources or services, including disaster behavioral health services. The term should be used carefully and, where possible, specifics should be provided (e.g., people who are medically underserved, people living in Health Professional Shortage Areas).
(SAMHSA)

Undocumented

A foreign-born person living in a country without legal citizenship status.

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.

Universal Designed Environment

The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.
(Centre for Excellence in Universal Design)

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Veteran

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a veteran as "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable."
(VA)

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White

The top classification of the socially constructed and structurally reinforced racial categories. Those both perceived and categorized as White are granted social, cultural, institutional, psychological, and material resources. Most often White people are of European descent.
(Whiteness at Work)

White Centering

Putting one's feelings as a White person above the POC causes one is supposed to be helping. White centering can manifest as anything ranging from tone policing and White fragility to White exceptionalism and outright violence.
(NPR)

White Fragility

Coined by Robin DiAngelo, it is used to describe the privilege that accrues to White people living in a society that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. DiAngelo argues that this builds an expectation of always feeling comfortable and safe, which in turn lowers the ability to tolerate racial stress and triggers a range of defensive reactions.
(Robin DiAngelo)

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.
(McIntosh)

White Supremacy

The idea (or ideology) that White people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of White people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White supremacy is ever present in institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the White group while casting People and communities of Color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, inhuman, and "undeserving."
(NACo)

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Xenophobia

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and White supremacy. (NACo)

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Youngism

Ageism that is primarily generationally focused on contemporaneous generations of young adults rather than young adults in general; ageism that is focused on Millennials and Generation Z.
(Journal of Experimental Psychology: General)

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