

Terms: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Identities

This is an evolving resource compiled by [John Bennett](#).

The list that follows is not intended to be all inclusive, and terms may have different meaning and context among various groups. Comments, suggestions, and/or additional terms are welcome.

| Term | Definition |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Allyship | The act of working to end oppression through support of, and as an advocate with and for, a group other than one's own. (Center for Advancement of Teaching). |
| Access | The ability, right, or permission to approach, enter, speak with, or use. |
| Antiracist | "One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea" (Kendi, 2019, 13). |
| Assumption | Leaps of meaning-making based on bits of observable data, or on no data whatsoever. |
| Assimilationist | "One who is expressing the racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviorally inferior and is supporting culture or behavioral enrichment programs to develop that racial group" (Kendi, 2019, 24). |
| Barriers: Attitudinal | Attitudinal barriers reflect society's low expectations, prejudices, biases, and negative projections and stereotypes toward members of a culturally subordinated social identity group. |
| Barriers: Environmental | Environmental barriers are physical barriers (e.g., highways cut through neighborhoods, hiring practices, or labeling restrooms) that impose restrictions on freedom, equity, or fairness. By their nature, they support biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. |
| Big Eight | Social identities in western culture that present socially constructed differences between what are dominant and subordinated identities: Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality, Gender Identity, Ability, and Class. |
| Bias | A preconceived or irrational tendency, trend, inclination, feeling or opinion. Inculcated by the socialization practices one is exposed to. |
| BIPOC | Black, Indigenous and People of Color |

| | |
|--|---|
| Capital | “...the social value people hold in a particular field; how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others in terms of their power or status.” (Diangelo, 2018, 102) |
| Class | A social stratum-sharing basic economic, political, or cultural characteristics and having the same social position. |
| Color | The natural appearance of the skin; complexion of a particular people or ethnic group, especially when seen or identified as other than white. |
| Cultural Dominance or Dominant Social Identity | Supremacy on a given dimension of diversity. Cultural dominance equals rule, control, power, authority. The condition of being culturally dominant. |
| Culturally Subordinated or Subordinated Social Identity | A status imposed by a culturally dominant social identity group onto another social identity group that it deems to be inferior to itself. Subordination is done to a group. No group voluntarily subordinates itself. |
| Diversity | The de-facto state of differences among human beings in social space. |
| Equity | Fairness, impartiality, absence of favoritism. |
| Ethnic Racism | “A powerful collection of racist policies that lead to inequity between realized ethnic groups and are substantiated by racist ideas about racialized ethnic groups” (Kendi, 2019, 56). |
| Ethnicity | An ethnic-social group that shares a distinctive culture, values, religion, language, etc. |
| Habitus | “...the result of socialization, the repetitive practices of actors and their interactions with each other and with the rest of their social environment. Because it is repetitive, our socialization produces and reproduces thoughts, perceptions, expressions, and actions.... a person’s familiar ways of perceiving, interpreting, and responding to social cues.... Habitus will depend on the power position the person occupies in the social structure.” (Diangelo, 2018, 101-102) |
| Heterosexism | “The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people.” (Center for Advancement of Teaching) |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Heterosexuality | A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own." (Center for Advancement of Teaching) |
| Implicit Bias | Having prejudice and stereotypes without intending to do so, and acting based on the bias. |
| Inclusiveness | Behaviors and attitudes that foster valuing and inclusion of the various dimensions of diversity present in any social space are welcomed and valued, such that persons feel that they belong. |
| Intersectionality | A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. The notion that no one can be identified by only one dimension of diversity and social group identity. Rather, each of us has multiple social group identities and lives from a nexus where all of our identities intersect. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities. |
| -ism | A system of advantages based on race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, etc. in which the dominate social identity group has the advantage over the subordinated social identity group(s). |
| JEDI | Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion |
| Levels of System | Individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup, organization, and social. |
| LGBTQIA+ | "Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. An umbrella term that is often used to refer to the community as a whole. The Q can also stand for questioning. The plus (+) sign is meant to include those who identify differently from these letters. Note that you may see shorter or longer acronyms as there has been debate within the community about how segmented the community is represented." (Center for Advancement of Teaching) |
| Marginalize | To push someone out to the margins of social space or activity because of stereotypical assumptions about that person's intelligence, competence, capability, or overall desirability. |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Microaggressions | Subtle but offensive comments or actions directed at a culturally subordinated group. Often unintentional or unconscious, they insult, invalidate, or exclude marginalized groups and reinforce stereotypes. |
| Misgendering | “Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language (e.g., “Hello ladies!” “Hey guys”), or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify (e.g., “Well, since we’re all women in this room, we understand...”).” (Center for Advancement of Teaching) |
| Oppression | The systemic exercise of authority or social power in an oppressive, burdensome, cruel, unjust manner. |
| Prejudice | A preconceived—literally pre-judged—unfavorable opinion or feeling about someone based on their appearance, formed without knowledge, thought, or reason. It is a “pre-judgement about another person based on the social groups to which that person belongs. Prejudice consists of thoughts and feelings, including stereotypes, attitudes, and generalizations that are based on little or no experience and then are projected onto everyone from that group. Our prejudices tend to be shared because we swim in the same cultural water and absorb the same messages.” (Diangelo, 2018, 19) |
| Queer Racism | “A powerful collection of racist policies that lead to inequity between race-sexualities and are substantiated by racist ideas about race-sexualities (Kendi, 2019, 194). |
| Projection | The tendency to ascribe to another person certain thoughts, feelings, or attitudes present in oneself that one does not want to own as one’s own in order to relieve the ego of guilt or other intolerable emotion. |
| Race | A taxonomy of differentiated races within humanity was created in the mid-1700’s by the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus . A German anthropologist, Johann Blumenbach , took Linnaeus’s taxonomy and turned it into a hierarchy, putting “Caucasian” at the top and “Negroid” at the bottom. Scientifically speaking, there is only one race: the human race. “Race” as currently understood is a social construction. |
| Racial Inequity | “...is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing.” (Kendi, 2019, 18). |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Racism | “...a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities” (Kendi, 2019, 18). It is institutional, structural, and systemic. |
| Racist | “One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea” (Kendi, 2019, 13). |
| Racist Idea | “...any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas argue that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain inequities in society.” (Kendi, 2019, 20) |
| Segregationist | “One who is expressing the racist idea that a permanently inferior racial group can never be developed and is supporting policy that segregates away that racial group” (Kendi, 2019, 24). |
| Social Identity | The portion of an individual’s self-concept derived from membership in a social group. |
| Social Construction | Human beings make sense of our experience by creating agreements and models for understanding the world through social interaction. |
| Socialization | The process of learning how to behave in a way that is acceptable to society. It mostly happens in the context of family and home of origin. |
| Social Stratification | The layered, hierarchical arrangement of classification of human beings into different groups. Wealth and related icons are its primary symbols. |
| Stereotype | A widely-held but fixed, oversimplified, and to some extent erroneous image or ideas of a person or group. Based in very little data. Related to assumptions and implicit bias. |
| Structural Inequality | “...combination of privilege, exclusion, power, and oppression that is present in all levels, facets, and functions of cultures, societies, systems, and organizations. These factors when exercised create preferred favor, privilege, or benefit for one group (dominant) over another or other groups. Structural inequality is supported through visible and hidden policies, programs, rules, norms, assumptions, and attitudes. It is the behavior that creates, supports, and contributes to the existence and continuation of bias, discrimination, and dominance in all areas of a society, culture, or system.” (Royal, 2010, 27) |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| System of Oppression | A social system organized around culturally dominant and culturally subordinated groups on a given dimension of diversity. |
|-----------------------------|--|

Sources and Resources Include:

Center for Advancement of Teaching, [A Guide to LGBTQIA+ Terminology](#). Temple University.

Diangelo, R. (2018). [White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism](#). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Human Rights Campaign, [Glossary of Terms](#).

Kendi, I. X. (2019). [How to be an antiracist](#). New York, NY: One World.

[Moore, Rianna](#)

Royal, C. (2010). Quadrant behavior theory: Edging the center (The potential for change and inclusion). [OD Practitioner](#), 42(2), 25-30.02/04/21

02/08/21