



GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY-USED WORDS AND IDEAS

"Language has everything to do with oppression and liberation. When the word 'victory' means conquer vs. harmony and the word 'equality' means homogenization vs. unity in/through diversity, then the liberation of a people from a 'minority' class to 'communal stakeholders' becomes much more difficult. Oppression has deep linguistic roots. We see it in conversations which interchange the idea of struggle with suffering in order to normalize abuse. We are the creators of our language, and our definitions shape the perceptions we have of the world. The first step to ending oppression is finding a better method of communication which is not solely dependent on a language rooted in the ideology of oppressive structures."

— CRISTINA MARRERO

Accountability	<i>Accountability</i> refers to an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. ¹ When we think about accountability in terms of equity, it is to follow through to the amelioration of injustice for those impacted through a solution promised or required, especially when those affected have been marginalized, neglected, or mistreated historically.
Affinity groups	<i>Affinity groups</i> refers to a group of people who choose to meet to explore a shared identity, such as race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation. These groups gather both formally and informally in school, community, and workplace settings. For the purpose of The Equity Lab, groups are designated based on racial affinity, broken first into "dominant culture/white affinity" and "People of Color affinity" groups. These groups can then be further broken down into smaller groups within the two major affinities (e.g., white men, white women, African American men/women, bi-/multi-racial, etc.). ²
Ally/ Co-conspirator	In the context of equity, an <i>ally</i> is a person actively seeking to unite or form a connection for the common purpose of equity through mutual support and resulting in mutual benefit, either within affinity or across difference. A co-conspirator is a person actively working toward a shared goal across difference. A valid argument has been made that an ally across difference cannot have a "common purpose" because of the disparate and personal effects of racism on people of color. This results in a higher cost of participation and a more urgent and substantial benefit, rather than mutual support and mutual benefits.
Ally across difference	An <i>ally across difference</i> is a person not from the same affinity group as you with whom an honest, open, communicative relationship is built, fostering discussions leading toward the goals of equity.
Anti-racist/ Anti-racism	<i>Anti-racist</i> refers to a person involved in anti-racism action. The term <i>anti-racism</i> refers to beliefs, actions, movements, and policies adopted or developed to oppose racism. In general, anti-racism is intended to promote an egalitarian society in which people do not face discrimination on the basis of their race. By its nature, anti-racism tends to promote the view that racism in a particular society is both pernicious and socially pervasive and that particular changes in political, economic, and social life are required to eliminate it.
Bias	<i>Bias</i> is an inclination of temperament or outlook to present or hold a partial perspective, often accompanied by a refusal to even consider the possible merits of alternative points of view. People may be biased toward or against an individual, a race, a religion, a social class, or a political party. <i>Biased</i> means one-sided, lacking a neutral viewpoint, not having an open mind. Bias can come in many forms and is often considered to be synonymous with prejudice or bigotry.
Bridging and breaking	<i>Bridging and breaking</i> refers to a John A. Powell concept that describes how we engage across difference: <i>Tapping into [anxiety about a perceived "other"] can take us in two directions: towards breaking where we turn inward, only to what we know and who we know. This path leads ultimately to a politics of isolation. The other direction is bridging, where we turn outwardly to connect and explicitly work with other groups and seek ways to build common ground. This path ultimately takes us towards belonging and empathy.</i> ³
Code switching	<i>Code switching</i> is a structure of verbal repertoires...that includes a much greater number of alternates, reflecting contextual and social differences in speech. Linguistic interaction...can be most fruitfully viewed as a process of decision making, in which speakers select from a range of possible



expressions. The verbal repertoire then contains all the accepted ways of formulating messages. It provides the weapons of everyday communication. Speakers choose among this arsenal in accordance with the meanings they wish to convey.⁴

Colonialism

Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin — or continue — as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.⁵

**Colorblind/
Colorblindness**

Colorblindness is the racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity.⁶

**Colorblind
racism**

Grounded in the belief that racism is no longer a problem and that we all have equal opportunities, people who subscribe to colorblind explanations claim they do not see the color of people's skin and believe everyone to be equal. Colorblind racism prevents us from seeing the historical causes of racial inequality and how racial inequality persists in our society.

Colorism

Discrimination based on skin color, or colorism, is a form of prejudice or discrimination in which human beings are treated differently based on the social meanings attached to skin color. Colorism, a term coined by Alice Walker in 1982, is not a synonym of racism. "Race" depends on multiple factors (including ancestry); therefore, racial categorization does not solely rely on skin color. Colorism is the dependence of social status on skin color alone. In order for a form of discrimination to be considered colorism, differential treatment must not result from racial categorization, but from the social values associated with skin color.

Colorism can be found specifically in parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, East Asia, India, Latin America, and the United States. The abundance of colorism is a result of the global prevalence of "pigmentocracy," a term recently adopted by social scientists to describe societies in which wealth and social status are determined by skin color. Throughout the numerous pigmentocracies across the world, the lightest-skinned peoples have the highest social status, followed by the brown-skinned, and finally the black-skinned who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This form of prejudice often results in reduced opportunities for those who are discriminated against on the basis of skin color, both across difference and within racial subgroups.⁷

**Cultural
appropriation**

Cultural appropriation refers to the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture.⁸

**Culturally-
and
linguistically-
responsive
pedagogy**

Culturally-responsive pedagogy is the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for, them.⁹

[Culturally-responsive pedagogy] *teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. For the work I do with educators, simply put, CLR is going to where the students are culturally and linguistically for the aim of bringing them where they need to be academically. Metaphorically, CLR is the opposite of the sink and swim approach to teaching and learning. It is jumping in the pool with the learner, guiding her with the appropriate instruction, scaffolding as necessary, and providing the independence when she is ready.*¹⁰



Culture

Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.

*Most social scientists today view culture as consisting primarily of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies. The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them. It is the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or in similar ways.*¹¹

Diversity

Each individual is unique, with individual differences. Difference can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. *Diversity* should be understood to mean “the mix of differences that may make a difference” in an interaction (individual to individual, individual to group/organization, organization to organization).¹²

Discrimination

Discrimination is the prejudicial treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a certain group or category, “in a way that is worse than the way people are usually treated.”¹³ It involves the group’s initial reaction or interaction, influencing the individual’s actual behavior towards the group or the group leader, restricting members of one group from opportunities or privileges that are available to another group, leading to the exclusion of the individual or entities based on logical or irrational decision making. Discriminatory traditions, policies, ideas, practices, and laws exist in many countries and institutions in every part of the world, even in ones where discrimination is generally looked down upon. In some places, controversial attempts such as quotas or affirmative action have been used to benefit those believed to be current or past victims of discrimination — but have sometimes been called reverse discrimination themselves.

Dominant culture (hegemony)

Dominant culture refers to the cultural beliefs, values, and traditions of the colonizer that are centered and dominant in society’s structures and practices. Dominant cultural practices are thought of as “normal” and therefore preferred and right. Indigenous and diverse ways of life are devalued, marginalized, and associated with low cultural capital.

The dominant culture in a society refers to the established language, religion, behavior, values, rituals, and social customs. These traits are often the norm for the society as a whole. The dominant culture is usually, but not always, in the majority and achieves its dominance by controlling social institutions, such as communication, institutions, artistic expression, law, political process, and business. The concept is generally used in academic discourse in fields such as sociology, anthropology and cultural studies. In a multicultural society, various cultures are celebrated and respected equally. Dominant culture can be promoted with deliberation and by the suppression of other cultures or subcultures.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to principles, such as the ability of individuals and groups to act in order to ensure their own well-being or their right to participate in decision-making that concerns them, that have guided research on and social intervention among poor and marginalized populations for several decades in the United States.¹⁴ The very essence of empowerment is to leave the main stakeholders in the field to define the goals and methods of action.¹⁵



Equity	Equity involves increasing opportunities for individuals who receive an inequitable share of resources and opportunities as a result of social, psychological, and institutional structures. Equity work serves the purpose of narrowing the gaps between the most- and least-privileged individuals and groups, eliminating the predictability of life outcomes based on identity, and eradicating the disproportionality of which identity groups occupy the highest- and lowest-achieving demographics in society.
Ethnicity	<i>Ethnicity</i> refers to the cultural characteristics that connect a particular group or groups of people to each other. "Ethnicity" is sometimes used as a euphemism for "race," or as a synonym for minority group. While ethnicity and race are related concepts, the concept of ethnicity is rooted in the idea of societal groups, marked especially by shared nationality, tribal affiliation, religious faith, shared language, or cultural and traditional origins and backgrounds, whereas race is rooted in the idea of biological classification of <i>homo sapiens</i> to subspecies according to morphological features such as skin color or facial characteristics. ¹⁶
Implicit bias	Implicit bias occurs when someone consciously rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts but also holds negative associations in his or her mind unconsciously. Scientists have learned that we only have conscious access to 5% of our brains; much of the work our brain does occurs on the unconscious level. Thus, implicit bias does not mean that people are hiding their racial prejudices: They literally do not know they have them. More than 85% of all Americans consider themselves to be unprejudiced, but researchers have concluded that the majority of people in the United States hold some degree of implicit racial bias.
In-group favoritism	<i>In-group favoritism</i> refers to the tendency to respond more positively to people from our in-groups than we do to people from out-groups.
Inclusion	Inclusion involves bringing together and harnessing diverse forces and resources in a way that is beneficial to all. Inclusion puts the concept and practice of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection — where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed to create value. Organizations need diversity, equity, and inclusion to be successful.
Institutional racism	<i>Institutional racism</i> refers to any system of inequality based on race. It can occur in institutions such as public government bodies, private business corporations (such as media outlets), and universities (public and private). The term was introduced by Black Power activists Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in the late 1960s. The definition given by William Macpherson in the report looking into the death of Stephen Lawrence was "the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin."
Internalized racism	Internalized racism occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power. ¹⁷
Intersectionality	<p><i>Intersectionality</i> refers to 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.¹⁸</p> <p>Intersectional theory asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity</p>



markers. Intersectionality recognizes that identity markers (e.g. “female” and “black”) do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others, often creating a complex convergence of oppression.¹⁹

Marginalize

To *marginalize* is to put or keep (someone) in a powerless or unimportant position within a society or group.

Oppression

Oppression refers to the systematic mistreatment of a group of people by the society and/or by another group of people who serve as agents of a society, with the mistreatment encouraged or enforced by society and its culture.

Two phenomena result from oppression that would not exist in a non-oppressive society:

- Internalized oppression: The acting out of oppression on one's self; people believe the messages they receive and, because of the oppression, act harmfully toward themselves.
- Transferred oppression: Prejudicial actions toward someone in one's own group — or, in the case of racism, a person of color in another ethnic group.

Othering and belonging

This concept, defined and developed by John A. Powell, describes the ways in which we function as a society to include or exclude.

[Othering is] a set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities. Dimensions of othering include, but are not limited to, religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), disability, sexual orientation, and skin tone. Although the axes of difference that undergird these expressions of othering vary considerably and are deeply contextual, they contain a similar set of underlying dynamics.

*Belongingness entails an unwavering commitment to not simply tolerating and respecting difference but to ensuring that all people are welcome and feel that they belong in the society.*²⁰

Person of color/ Person of the global majority

Person of color (plural: *people of color*; *persons of color*) is a term used primarily in the United States to describe any person who is not white. The term is meant to be inclusive among non-white groups, emphasizing common experiences of racism. *People of color* was introduced as a preferable replacement to both *non-white* and *minority*, which are also inclusive, because it frames the subject positively; *non-white* defines people in terms of what they are not (white), and *minority* frequently carries a subordinate connotation. Style guides for writing from American Heritage, the Stanford Graduate School of Business, and Mount Holyoke College recommend the term over these alternatives. It may also be used with other collective categories of people, such as *students of color*, *men of color*, and *women of color*. *People of color* typically refers to people of African, Asian, Hispanic and/or Latino, and Native American heritage. It may also be used to refer to mixed-race people.

Although the term *citizens of color* was used by Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1963, and other uses date to as early as 1793, *people of color* did not gain prominence for many years. Influenced by radical theorists like Frantz Fanon, racial justice activists in the US began to use the term *people of color* in the late 1970s and early 1980s. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was in wide circulation. Both anti-racist activists and academics sought to move understandings of race beyond the black-white binary then prevalent.



Possessive investment in whiteness

George Lipsitz identifies in his book, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, that above and beyond personal feelings and acts of individual prejudice, whiteness is a structured advantage that has produced unfair gains and unearned rewards for whites while imposing impediments to asset accumulation, employment, housing, and health care for members of aggrieved racial groups, reaching beyond the black/white binary.

This book argues that both public policy and private prejudice have created a “possessive investment in whiteness” that is responsible for the racialized hierarchies of our society. I use the term “possessive investment” both literally and figuratively. Whiteness has a cash value: it accounts for advantages that come to individuals through profits made from housing secured in discriminatory markets, through the unequal educations allocated to children of different races, through insider networks that channel employment opportunities to the relatives and friends of those who have profited most from present and past racial discrimination, and especially through intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth that pass on the spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations. I argue that white Americans are encouraged to invest in whiteness, to remain true to an identity that provides them with resources, power, and opportunity. This whiteness is, of course, a delusion, a scientific and cultural fiction that like all racial identities has no valid foundation in biology or anthropology. Whiteness is, however, a social fact, an identity created and continued with all-too-real consequences for the distribution of wealth, prestige, and opportunity.

The term “investment” denotes time spent on a given end, and this book also attempts to explore how social and cultural forces encourage white people to expend time and energy on the creation and re-creation of whiteness. Despite intense and frequent disavowal that whiteness means anything at all to those so designated, recent surveys have shown repeatedly that nearly every social choice that white people make about where they live, what schools their children attend, what careers they pursue, and what policies they endorse is shaped by considerations involving race.’ I use the adjective “possessive” to stress the relationship between whiteness and asset accumulation in our society, to connect attitudes to interests, to demonstrate that white supremacy is usually less a matter of direct, referential, and snarling contempt than a system for protecting the privileges of whites by denying communities of color opportunities for asset accumulation and upward mobility. Whiteness is invested in, like property, but it is also a means of accumulating property and keeping it from others. While one can possess one’s investments, one can also be possessed by them. I contend that the artificial construction of whiteness almost always comes to possess white people themselves unless they develop anti-racist identities, unless they disinvest and divest themselves of their investment in white supremacy.

I hope it is clear that opposing whiteness is not the same as opposing white people. White supremacy is an equal opportunity employer; non-white people can become active agents of white supremacy as well as passive participants in its hierarchies and rewards. One way of becoming an insider is by participating in the exclusion of other outsiders. An individual might even secure a seat on the Supreme Court on this basis. On the other hand, if not every white supremacist is white, it follows that not all white people have to become complicit with white supremacy, that there is an element of choice in all of this. White people always have the option of becoming anti-racist, although not enough have done so. We do not choose our color, but we do choose our commitments. We do not choose our parents, but we do choose our politics. Yet we do not make these decisions in a vacuum; they occur within a social structure that gives value to whiteness and offers rewards for racism.

Power

Power refers to the possession of control, authority, or influence over others; a controlling group or establishment.²²

Power can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual and financial resources exercised by different sections of society. The control of these resources becomes a source of



individual and social power. Power is dynamic and relational, rather than absolute - it is exercised in the social, economic and political relations between individuals and groups. It is also unequally distributed - some individuals and groups having greater control over the sources of power and others having little or no control. The extent of power of an individual or group is correlated to how many different kinds of resources they can access and control.

Different degrees of power are sustained and perpetuated through social divisions such as gender, age, caste, class, ethnicity, race, north-south; and through institutions such as the family, religion, education, media, the law, etc. Our understanding of power would be incomplete, unless we recognize its partner, ideology. Ideology is a complex structure of beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of perceiving and analyzing social reality. Ideologies are widely disseminated and enforced through social, economic, political and religious institutions and structures such as the family, education system, religion, the media, the economy, and the state, with its administrative, legislative, and military wings. The economic, political, legal, and judicial institutions and structures set up and mediated by the state tend to reinforce the dominant ideology and the power of the dominant groups within it, even though their stated objectives and policies may be superficially egalitarian. While ideology does a far more effective job of sustaining an unequal power structure than crude, overt coercion and domination, we should not forget that it is always being reinforced by the threat of force, should anyone seek to rebel against the dominant system.

But neither power, ideology, nor the state are static or monolithic. There is a continuous process of resistance and challenge by the less powerful and marginalized sections of society, resulting in various degrees of change in the structure of power.

When these challenges become strong and extensive enough, they can result in the total transformation of a power structure.²³

Prejudice

*Prejudice (or foredeeming) refers to the act of making a judgment or assumption about someone or something before having enough knowledge to be able to do so with guaranteed accuracy, or "judging a book by its cover." The word *prejudice* is most often used to refer to preconceived judgments toward people or a person because of race, gender, social class, ethnicity, age, disability, body type, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics. *Prejudice* also refers to beliefs without knowledge of the facts and may include any unreasonable attitude that is unusually resistant to rational influence.*

Privilege

Privilege refers to a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group.²⁴

Race

Race refers to a distinct population of humans distinguished in some way from other humans. The most widely observed races are those based on skin color, facial features, ancestry, genetics, and national origin. Conceptions of race, as well as specific racial groupings, are the result of social construction and are often controversial due to their political and sociological uses and implications.²⁵

Racial micro-aggressions

Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.²⁶

Racism

Racism is the conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group against another individual or group perceived to have lower racial status.²⁷



**Racism,
institutional**

Institutional racism refers to environments in which assumptions about race are structured into social and economic institutions. Institutional racism occurs when organizations, businesses, or institutions like schools and police departments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly against certain groups of people to limit their rights. This type of racism reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group.²⁸

**Racism,
internalized**

In a society where one group is politically, socially and economically dominant, *internalized racism* occurs when members of stigmatized groups who are bombarded with negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth may internalize those negative messages. Internalized racism holds people back from achieving their fullest potential and reinforces the negative messages — which, in turn, reinforces the oppressive systems.²⁹

**Racism,
interpersonal**

This refers to prejudices and discriminatory behaviors where one group makes assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of other groups based on race. This set of prejudices leads to cruel intentional or unintentional actions towards other groups.³⁰

**Racism,
structural**

Structural racism refers to the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics — historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal — that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of white domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism — all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.³¹

**Re: Racism:
Excerpts from
“Defining
Racism” by Dr.
Beverly Tatum**

Many people use the terms prejudice and racism interchangeably. I do not, and I think it is important to make a distinction. In his book Portraits of White Racism, David Wellman argues convincingly that limiting our understanding of racism to prejudice does not offer a sufficient explanation for the persistence of racism. He defines racism as a “system of advantage based on race.” In illustrating this definition, he provides example after example of how Whites defend their racial advantage — access to better schools, housing, jobs — even when they do not embrace overtly prejudicial thinking. Racism cannot be fully explained as an expression of prejudice alone.

People of color are not racist because they do not systematically benefit from racism. And equally important, there is no systematic cultural and institutional support or sanction for the racial bigotry of people of color. In my view, reserving the term racist only for behaviors committed by Whites in the context of a White-dominated society is a way of acknowledging the ever present power differential afforded Whites by the culture and institutions that make up the system of advantage and continue to reinforce notions of White superiority. (Using the same logic, I reserve the word sexist for men. Though women can and do have gender-based prejudices, only men systematically benefit from sexism.)

Passive racism is more subtle and can be seen in the collusion of laughing when a racist joke is told, of letting exclusionary hiring practices go unchallenged, of accepting as appropriate the omissions of people of color from the curriculum, and of avoiding difficult race-related issues. Because racism is so ingrained in the fabric of American institutions, it is easily self-perpetuating. All that is required to maintain it is business as usual.

I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in active racist



behavior has identified with the ideology of White supremacy and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around, unwilling to go to the same destination as the White supremacists. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt — unless they are actively anti-racist — they will find themselves carried along with the others.³²

Stereotype

Stereotype refers to an oversimplified generalization about an identifiable group (can result in the phenomena of *stereotype threat*).

Stereotype threat

Stereotype threat refers to the fear that one's behavior will confirm an existing stereotype of a group with which one identifies; this fear may lead to an impairment of performance.

Structural racialization

While most of the legally-based forms of racial discrimination have been outlawed, many of the racial disparities originating in various institutions and practices continue and accumulate as major forces in economic and political structures and cultural traditions. *Structural racialization* refers to the ways in which social structures and institutions, over time, perpetuate and produce cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities.

“The skin I’m in”

“The skin I’m in” refers to the identification of the self based on race and gender and how that shapes one’s personal experiences in any given situation. It also encompasses how others see or view an individual automatically, regardless of other personal influences (recognizing that personal experience is also shaped by class, sexuality, religion, etc. — none of which can be automatically visibly ascertained).

Transforming white consciousness

Tools for transforming white consciousness can include:

- Read: Inform yourself. Don’t make people of color educate you. Watch out for your resistance to new learning. Take the initiative to learn with others. Read novels of people of color. Study sociological/political/ historical works that take racism seriously.
- Listen: Talk with people of color about racism. Expect their hesitation and mistrust for they are likely to suspect you want to affirm your own view of reality. Allow your world view to be disrupted by different perspectives. Ask questions and really listen for the answer.
- Be humble: Be open to the possibility that much of what you take for granted as building blocks of your world view are likely to be shattered. Try to get used to being in situations where you feel oddly and unexpectedly ignorant, exposed, vulnerable, and just plain uncomfortable.³³

White allies

White allies refers to white people who are aware of their privilege and where they are in their personal journey to become white anti-racists, and who work at acknowledging the experiences of people of color every day and their pivotal role in dismantling institutional racism.

Being a white ally can include:

- Processing ego/injury: Moving past being stuck in “guilt” to actively engaging in your personal journey (how to not let raised consciousness paralyze action)



- Speaking out: Building tools to confront and interrupt racism in real time in thoughtful, respectful, empowering ways; avoiding “shutting down” other white people while also confronting issues/situations as they occur
- “Sitting in the fire”: Doing the work on self that is necessary to keep mindful, present, and attached by heart and head in the work toward equity; not checking out when things get tough or uncomfortable³⁴

White detours

Detours often manifest themselves in common patterns of guilt, denial, and defensiveness, which appear regularly in our interactions with people of color and other white people. Most of the obstacles and detours encountered by white people on the journey of re-education are about habitual behaviors. Behaviors will vary with each white person, having learned racism in unique and personal ways from different teachers and at different times.³⁵

White fragility

White fragility refers to the idea that white people in the United States often grow up without having to talk or think about race and fail to build up the tolerance needed for discussions of any depth on the topic. When confronted with this understandable weakness, they often lash out or withdraw.

White privilege

White privilege refers to a set of perceived advantages enjoyed by white people beyond those commonly experienced by non-white people in the same social, political, and economic spaces. Elements of white privilege may include, but are not limited to:

- To be socialized into a world of white supremacy
- To inherit and benefit from a world of white privilege
- To knowingly or unknowingly have a stake in the perpetuation of white racism
- To deny the reality of people of color and to define their experience from a white perspective
- To be oblivious to your own biases and prejudices
- To be right
- To possess the luxury of not exploring yourself as a racial/cultural being
- To be able to equate a “human being” with being white
- To be in the position to be an oppressor with the power to force your will upon persons of color

More importantly, being a white American means living in a world of self-deception, “colorblind” in the sense that you do not see that in this world your skin color is an asset while all other colors are a liability.

White supremacy culture

White supremacy culture refers to the idea (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 vs. whiteness

- Race is scientifically insignificant.
- Race is a socially constructed category that powerfully attaches meaning to perceptions of skin color, inequitable social/economic relations are structured and reproduced (including the meanings attached to skin color) through notions of race, class, gender, and nation.



- *Whiteness* is a set of normative privileges granted to white-skinned individuals and groups; it is normalized in its production/maintenance for those of that group such that its operations are “invisible” to those privileged by it (but not to those oppressed/disadvantaged by it); it has a long history in European imperialism and epistemologies ;for those who are of mixed ancestry and “pass” as white, this normativity...would not occur).
- Distinct but not separate from ideologies and material manifestations of ideologies of class, nation, gender, sexuality, and ability.
- The meaning of *whiteness* is historical and has shifted over time (e.g., Irish, southern European peoples [Italian, Spanish, Greek] have at times been “raced” as non-white).³⁶

Whiteness: Key features

Whiteness:

- Is multidimensional, complex, systemic and systematic
- Is socially and politically constructed and is therefore a learned behavior
- Does not just refer to skin color; instead, whiteness is an ideology based on beliefs, values behaviors, habits and attitudes that result in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin color³⁷
- Represents a position of power where the power holder defines the categories, which means that the power holder decides who is white and who is not³⁸
- Is relational: “White” only exists in relation/opposition to other categories/locations in the racial hierarchy produced by whiteness. In defining “others,” whiteness defines itself
- Is fluid — who is considered white changes over time³⁹
- Is a state of unconsciousness: Whiteness is often invisible to white people, and this perpetuates a lack of knowledge or understanding of difference which is a root cause of oppression⁴⁰
- It shapes how white people view themselves and others, and places white people in a place of structural advantage where white cultural norms and practices go unnamed and unquestioned.⁴¹ Cultural racism is founded in the belief that “whiteness is considered to be the universal . . . and allows one to think and speak as if whiteness described and defined the world.”⁴²

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the fear of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Xenophobia can manifest itself in many ways involving the relations and perceptions of an in-group toward an out-group, including a fear of losing identity, suspicion of its activities, aggression, and desire to eliminate its presence to secure a presumed purity.

WE MUST DARE,

in the full sense of the word, to speak of love without fear of being called ridiculous, mawkish, or unscientific, if not antiscientific. We must dare in order to say scientifically, and not as mere blah-blah-blah, that we study, we learn, we teach, we know with our entire body. We do all of these things with feeling, with emotion, with wishes, with fear, with doubts, with passion, and also critical reasoning. However, we never study, learn, teach, or know with the last only. We must dare so as never to dichotomize cognition and emotion.”

— PAULO FRIERE

ENDNOTES

This glossary is a living document, compiled across years of work in the race and equity space. We have cited sources to the best of our ability, but we realize that some may have been misplaced or unrecorded along the way. Any omission is purely unintentional, and we welcome corrections or additions from our colleagues in this work.

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