

# Diversity Definitions

1. **Diversity** = being mindful of all dimensions of human differences and defining diversity in the broadest sense to mean the inclusion of all persons regardless of racial and ethnic background, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran status, religious, secular, and spiritual beliefs, ability, age, and socioeconomic status. Diversity embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect, multiple perspectives, and serves as a catalyst for change resulting in equity.
2. **Equality** = involves ensuring that every individual gets the same amount of resources (identical) regardless of the differences between them.
3. **Equity** = aims to understand the needs of each individual and distribute the resources fairly. It involves giving each individual what they need to be successful.
4. **Inclusion** = the active creation and maintenance of culture, policy, and educational and business practices which celebrate diversity and recognize its value to our mission to excel as educators, employers, and community partners.
  1. Through inclusive efforts, we seek to ensure that everyone can achieve their potential regardless of their experiences and circumstances.
  2. Inclusion also requires diverse representation at all levels of the organization.

## Social / Cultural:

5. **Melting pot** = fusion of multi-cultures with a dominant culture.
6. **Americanization** = assimilation of multi-cultures into a dominant culture.
7. **Cultural pluralism** = unity in diversity through coexistence.
8. **Cultural universal** = commonly held concepts and beliefs across different cultural groups.
9. **Cultural relativity** = judging behavior concerning the context of the group in which it occurs.
10. **Values** = thoughts, feelings, and behaviors shown by groups of people or individuals toward important objects of attention.
11. **Cultural standards** = accepted standards of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that a cultural group has developed over time.
12. **Liberal vs. conservative** = trends of sociopolitical beliefs and actions that might prevail in a society.
13. **White supremacy** = virulent expression of white ethnocentrism.
14. **Races** = scientific classification as *Homo sapiens* into four groups of people.
15. **Racism** = beliefs that some races are inherently superior to others.
16. **Individual racism** = thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of superiority by an individual based on racial background concerning others who are viewed as inferior.
17. **Institutional racism** = differences based on racial preconceptions that may perpetuate inequality and have become incorporated into this society's formal organized structure over the years.

18. **Cultural racism** = thoughts, feelings, and behaviors by the members of a cultural group that their accomplishments are superior to that of other groups based on the racial composition of groups.
19. **Racial minority** = groups of people who have become identified through distinctive physical characteristics or presumed inherited traits.
20. **Oppressed minority** = status and freedom of a minority group are denied in comparison to the majority group.
21. **Ethnic minority** = groups of people identified by national origins.
22. **Third World** = people living in, or whose origins can be traced to, emerging (developing) nations as more technical and complex organizations.
23. **Ethnocentrism** = belief that one's own group is the center of everything and all others are rated in reference to it.
24. **Prejudice** = prejudgment that does not take into consideration the actual realities or other aspects of a person, group, or situation.
25. **Discrimination** = treatment based on sex, age, race, religion, physical characteristics, national origins, or other distinguishing characteristics rather than qualifications.
26. **Self-fulfilling prophecy** = making beliefs or thoughts become real.
27. **Time orientation** = influence in the culture on thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards experiencing of past, present, and future events.
28. **Psychodynamic issue** = personal issues that have become internalized within the personality.
29. **Sociodynamic issue** = issues that result from frustration in living in society.
30. **Synergetic** = working together of ideas from a variety of sources.

### Sex:

31. **Female** = a person who is born with a vagina, XX chromosomes, and female internal reproductive organs, who also identifies as female/feminine.
32. **Male** = a person who is born with a penis, XY chromosomes, and male internal reproductive organs, who also identifies as male/masculine.
33. **Intersex** = a person who is born with physical or genetic characteristics what cannot be explicitly defined with a binary sex. Can include variations in hormones, chromosomes, genitalia, gonads, internal sex organs, etc. Being intersex does not define one's gender Identity, although some do identify specifically as intersex. \*Use of this term should only be initiated by the individual who identifies with it.

### Gender:

34. **Cisgender** = a person who identifies with the gender assigned to them at birth.
35. **Transgender** = a person who identifies with a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth.
36. **Trans\*** = a short hand meaning transgender. It can be followed by an asterisk (\*) or not; both ways are inclusive of all non-binary persons.
37. **Genderqueer** = an umbrella term covering all non-binary gender identities; also, an identity of its own.
38. **Gender non- conforming (GNC)** = someone who does not conform to traditional gender norms.
39. **Genderfluid** = having a gender identity that changes or is flexible.

40. **Androgynous** = describes a gender presentation or expression that is ambiguous, neutral, or mixed.
41. **Agender** = someone who has no gender at all.
42. **Bigender** = someone who is two genders or non-genders, either at the same time or switches between.
43. **Intergender** = having a gender identity between male and female
44. **Pangender** = someone who is all genders and non-genders, either at the same time or switches between them.
45. **Polygender** = a gender identity where one experiences multiple genders or combinations of genders, simultaneously or at different times.
46. **Demiboy** = a person who identifies slightly or partially as male or with male identities.
47. **Demigirl** = a person who identifies slightly or partially as female or with female identities.
48. **Masculine-of-center (MOC)** = recognizes the breadth and depth of identity for lesbian/queer womyn who tilt toward the masculine side of the gender scale and includes a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboi, trans-masculine.
49. **Feminine-of-center (FOC)** = an umbrella term that includes gender identities that lean towards female.
50. **FTM** = identifies as male, assigned female at birth.
51. **MTF** = identifies as female, assigned male at birth.
52. **Two-Spirit** = a term traditionally used by Native American and First Nation communities to describe someone with both male and female spirit.
53. **Non-binary** = an umbrella term for gender identities (or lack of a gender identity) that are not explicitly male or explicitly female.

### **Sexual /Affectional Attraction:**

54. **Lesbian** = a term used to describe a woman who is attracted to women.
55. **Gay** = a term used to describe a man who is attracted to men, but often used and embraced by women to describe their same-sex relationships as well.
56. **Bisexual** = a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to people of their own gender as well as another gender.
57. **Asexual** = someone who is not sexually attracted to people; may or may not experience affectional attraction toward others.
58. **Omnisexual / Pansexual** = someone who experiences sexual attraction, romantic love, or emotional attraction toward people of any sex or gender identity; attraction is not determined by gender.
59. **Androsexual** = someone attracted to masculinity.
60. **Gynesexual** = someone attracted to femininity.
61. **Demisexual** = experiences sexual attraction only after forming a strong emotional connection.
62. **Queer** = the umbrella term for non-heteronormative identities. It is a reclaimed slur. Do not take initiative in using this term.
63. **Questioning** = when one is unsure of where one fits on the queer spectrum or considering that one might fit on the queer spectrum.

**\*\* Social Justice Counseling** = a role, a mutually collaborative process, and an ideal that counselors strive to achieve. Counselors can play a role in either maintaining or dismantling oppression. Those who seek a more just world actively work to ensure that high-quality resources such as education, health care, and employment are equitable and accessible to everyone. Such counselors strive to ensure that all people are able to live with dignity and respect so they may become participatory members of society. Social justice counseling necessitates that counselors embrace a certain role. Moyer, McAllister, Finley, and Soifer (2001) identified four different roles social activists play: (a) citizen (social activists must be perceived by others as responsible members of society who seek the common good), (b) rebel (social activists know when to speak up when injustices violate core societal values), (c) change agent (social activists actively collaborate with others to educate and change institutional barriers), and (d) reformer (social activists work to get multicultural and social justice ideas and concepts institutionalized into policy and laws). Each of these roles is equally important at varying points of social change.

### **Allyship**

An active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group. Allyship is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. Allyship is not self-defined—our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with. It is important to be intentional in how we frame the work we do.

Source: <https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>; <https://guidetoallyship.com/>

### **Anti-Racist**

One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.

Source: Ibram X Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*, Random House, 2019/

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/june/ibram-x-kendi-definition-of-antiracist.html>

Being antiracist is fighting against racism to create an equal society, we must commit to making unbiased choices and being antiracist in all aspects of our lives. Racism takes several forms and works most often in tandem with at least one other form to reinforce racist ideas, behavior, and policy. Types of racism are:

- **Individual racism (additional definition)** refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways. The U.S. cultural narrative about racism typically focuses on individual racism and fails to recognize systemic racism.  
*Examples include believing in the superiority of white people, not hiring a person of color because “something doesn’t feel right,” or telling a racist joke.*
- **Interpersonal racism** occurs between individuals. These are public expressions of racism, often involving slurs, biases, or hateful words or actions.
- **Institutional racism (additional definition)** occurs in an organization. These are discriminatory treatments, unfair policies, or biased practices based on race that result in inequitable outcomes for whites over people of color and extend considerably beyond prejudice. These institutional policies often never mention any racial group, but the intent is to create advantages.

*Example: A school system where students of color are more frequently distributed into the most crowded classrooms and underfunded schools and out of the higher-resourced schools.*

- **Structural racism** is the overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society. These systems give privileges to white people resulting in disadvantages to people of color.

*Example: Stereotypes of people of color as criminals in mainstream movies and media.*

Source: [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture](#)

## **BIPOC**

**B**lack, **I**ndigenous, **P**eople of **C**olor- the term is used to highlight the unique relationship to whiteness that Indigenous and Black (African Americans) people have, which shapes the experiences of and relationship to white supremacy for all people of color within a U.S. context.

Source: [The BIPOC Movement](#); <https://www.thebipocproject.org/>

## **Cultural Appropriation**

Theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification, or profit — including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. — often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant (i.e. white) culture's right to take other cultural elements.

Source: ["Colors of Resistance Archive"](#), Accessed June 28 2013.

## **Culture**

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

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/idr.pdf>

## **Discrimination (additional definition)**

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

Source <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/idr.pdf>

## **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (additional Definition)**

**Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. NOTE: At FSU the definition of diversity includes race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veterans' status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other legally protected group status as stated in the university's [EEO Statement](#)

**Equity** is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

### **Racial Equity**

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Source: [Center for Assessment and Policy Development](#)

**Inclusion (additional definition)** is 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. It's important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn't always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or 'implicit bias's helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.

Source: [Independent Sector, FSU Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Office](#)

### **Emotional tax**

"Emotional tax" refers to the unseen mental work that people from marginalized backgrounds have to do every day to feel included, respected, and safe. The research firm [Catalyst defines it as](#) "the combination of being on guard to protect against bias, feeling different at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity, and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work."

### **Ethnicity**

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

- *Examples* of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (white).

Source: Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

### **Implicit Bias**

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

Source: [State of the Science Implicit Bias Review 2013](#), Cheryl Staats, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.



## **Imposter Syndrome**

Impostor syndrome (IS) refers to an internal experience of believing that you are not as competent as others perceive you to be. While this definition is usually narrowly applied to intelligence and achievement, it has links to perfectionism and the social context.

To put it simply, imposter syndrome is the experience of feeling like a phony—you feel as though at any moment you are going to be found out as a fraud—like you don't belong where you are, and you only got there through dumb luck. It can affect anyone no matter their social status, work background, skill level, or degree of expertise.

The term was first used by psychologists Suzanna Imes and Pauline Rose Clance in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> When the concept of IS was introduced, it was originally thought to apply mostly to high-achieving women. Since then, it has been recognized as more widely experienced.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/01/17/578386796/racial-impostor-syndrome-here-are-your-stories>

## **Indigenous**

Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, by conquest, settlement or other means and reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a state structure which incorporates mainly national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant. (Example: Maori in territory now defined as New Zealand; Mexicans in territory now defined as Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma; Native American tribes in territory now defined as the United States).

Source: [United Nations Working Group for Indigenous Peoples](#)

## **Institutional Racism (additional definition)**

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Source: [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#). Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005.

## **Intersectionality**

A framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.

In other words, intersectional theory asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers. Intersectionality recognizes that identity markers (e.g. "woman" and "black") do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others, often creating a complex convergence of oppression. For instance, a black man and a white woman make \$0.74 and \$0.78 to a white man's dollar,

respectively. Black women, faced with multiple forms of oppression, only make \$0.64. Understanding intersectionality is essential to combatting the interwoven prejudices people face in their daily lives. *Source:* Kimberlé Crenshaw, law professor and social theorist, first coined the term intersectionality in her 1989 paper "[Demarginalizing The Intersection Of Race And Sex: A Black Feminist Critique Of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory And Antiracist Politics.](https://aapf.org/kimberle-crenshaw)" <https://aapf.org/kimberle-crenshaw>; <https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/>

### **Microaggression**

Brief, commonplace, subtle, or blatant daily verbal, behavior, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.

*Source:* [University of Washington Racial Equity Glossary](#)

### **Oppression**

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness.

- Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society.
- Oppression denotes structural and material constraints that significantly shape a person's life chances and sense of possibility.
- Oppression also signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.
- Oppression resides not only in external social institutions and norms but also within the human psyche as well.

Eradicating oppression ultimately requires struggle against all its forms, and that building coalitions among diverse people offers the most promising strategies for challenging oppression systematically.

*Source:* Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

### **Race (additional definition)**

A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.

*Source:* Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

### **Racial and Ethnic Identity**

An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization and personal experience.

*Source:* Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.



## **Structural Racism**

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.

Source: [Structural Racism for the Race and Public Policy Conference](#), Keith Lawrence, Aspen Institute on Community Change and Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center. [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#). Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005.

## **Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Minority(UREM)**

UREM can be defined as a group whose percentage of the population in a given group is lower than their percentage of the population in the country. In higher Education UREMs are generally considered to include: Hispanic/Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and those of two or more races, when one or more are from the preceding racial and ethnic categories in this list.

## **Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Minority(UREM) STEM**

The representation of certain groups of people in science and engineering (S&E) education and employment differs from their representation in the U.S. population. Women, persons with disabilities, and three racial and ethnic groups—blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians or Alaska Natives—are underrepresented in S&E. While women have reached parity with men among S&E degree recipients overall, they constitute disproportionately smaller percentages of employed scientists and engineers than they do of the U.S. population. Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians or Alaska Natives have gradually increased their share of S&E degrees, but they remain underrepresented in educational attainment and the S&E workforce. By contrast, Asians are overrepresented among S&E degree recipients and employed scientists and engineers. [National Science Foundation](#)

## **White Privilege**

Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. The accumulated and interrelated advantages and disadvantages of white privilege that are reflected in racial/ethnic inequities in life-expectancy and other health outcomes, income and wealth and other outcomes, in part through different access to opportunities and resources. These differences are maintained in part by denying that these advantages and disadvantages exist at the structural, institutional, cultural, interpersonal and individual levels and by refusing to redress them or eliminate the systems, policies, practices, cultural norms and other behaviors and assumptions that maintain them.

- **Structural White Privilege:** A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal.

The system includes powerful incentives for maintaining white privilege and its consequences, and powerful negative consequences for trying to interrupt white privilege or reduce its consequences in meaningful ways. The system includes internal and external manifestations at the individual, interpersonal, cultural and institutional levels.

- **Interpersonal White Privilege:** Behavior between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.
- **Cultural White Privilege:** A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonizes other world views.
- **Institutional White Privilege:** Policies, practices and behaviors of institutions -- such as schools, banks, non-profits or the Supreme Court -- that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white. The ability of institutions to survive and thrive even when their policies, practices and behaviors maintain, expand or fail to redress accumulated disadvantages and/or inequitable outcomes for people of color.

Source: [White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies](#). Peggy McIntosh. 1988., [Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity](#), CAPD, MP Associates, World Trust Educational Services, 2012.

### Additional Resources

Chapter 1: Influences in and Understanding of Cross-Cultural Experiences. Activity 1: Assessing Your Baseline on Multicultural Awareness.

Farmer, L. B. (2016). "Supporting Gender Diverse Youth." VCA Spring Workshop: Lynchburg College.

Moyer, B., McAllister, J., Finley, M. L., and Soifer, S. (2001). *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements*. New Society Publishers.