

Below is list of definitions related to racism and anti-racism. Many of these terms have multiple definitions and understandings, hence we encourage you to do further research. For more information, you can refer to the references highlighted after each definition. This is by no means an exhaustive list. We encourage you to keep learning.

Accountability

To take responsibility for harmful words, actions or biases aimed at a person or marginalized group (in terms of racial identity, gender, faith identity, sexual orientation, etc.). To be held accountable is to acknowledge harm done to others and then work to make things right.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#accountability>

Ally

A person who supports a marginalized group in their pursuit of freedom from oppression. An ally takes supportive action on their behalf, and also seeks to reduce the ways that they themselves have been complicit in their oppression. Ally-ship is not self-defined or a personal identity, it is support that actively uplifts (and is endorsed by) marginalized peoples.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Anti-Blackness

Anti-Blackness is negative attitudes and discrimination directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of slavery and colonization. Anti-Blackness is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the point that it becomes part of our systems.

Source: <https://www.centennialcollege.ca/centres-institutes/centre-for-global-citizenship-education-and-inclusion/social-action-cards/anti-black-racism/>

Anti-racism

Anti-racism is active opposition to racism through advocating for change in society on a political, economic and social level.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#anti-racism>

Decolonization

Decolonization can be defined as the active resistance against colonial powers. It is dismantling systems of oppression, and shifting power towards the political and cultural independence of Indigenous peoples of the colonized nation.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#decolonization>

Discrimination

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

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Indigenization

Indigenization is bringing Indigenous elements into our systems and practices in a way that values Indigenous ways of knowing and doing as equal to Western ways of knowing and doing.

Source: <https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/teaching-support/decolonizing-and-indigenizing/what-decolonizationindigenization>

Individual Racism

The attitudes and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. It can occur on a conscious or unconscious level and be active or passive.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. Unspoken advantages are created for whites and oppression and disadvantages for people from groups classified as non-white.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is a situation that occurs when an oppressed racial group supports the supremacy of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes and social structures that create the dominating group's power.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interactions with others, racism is not in the personal realm alone.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#interpersonal-racism>

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that explains how the “intersections” of a person’s social and political identities (race, gender, sexuality, religion etc.) might combine to create unique manifestations of discrimination and privilege.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#intersectionality>

Microaggression

Everyday verbal or behavioural interactions (whether intentional or unintentional) that negatively impact or insult people from a marginalized group. For people who experience these small interactions every day, they can have a big impact.

Source: <https://www.centennialcollege.ca/centres-institutes/centre-for-global-citizenship-education-and-inclusion/social-action-cards/microaggressions/>

Model Minority

A minority group whose members are perceived to achieve a higher degree of socio-economic success than the other minority groups, or even the population average. For example, Asian Canadians are perceived as high achievers in terms of education and acquiring wealth. This may sound complimentary but it keeps Asian Canadians as one homogenous mass who are still “other” from the dominant group. This model minority myth can also be used to pit people of colour against each other, instead of being united in their different struggles against racism and white supremacy.

Source: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/what-is-the-model-minority-myth>

Oppression

Social inequality that is woven throughout our social and political institutions, as well as embedded in the human psyche. Oppression creates hierarchical relationships in which privileged groups benefit from the disempowerment of targeted groups.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Prejudice

A pre-judgement or usually negative attitude directed toward an individual or from one group towards another group. Such judgements are typically based on stereotypes that prevent a person from being recognized as a unique individual with authentic characteristics.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Privilege

To have privilege is to have increased access to freedoms, power, and resources due to your social group and its position in a social hierarchy. Such privilege is unearned. Privilege exists not only between groups but also within groups.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Race

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

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Racialization

Racialization is the process through which people are categorized as being part of a particular “race” and are subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment that impact their social, political and economic life.

Source: <http://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-racism-and-racial-discrimination/part-1-%E2%80%93-setting-context-understanding-race-racism-and-racial-discrimination#fnB42>

Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer affected one’s access to power, resources and social standing. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce different outcomes by race.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Racial Justice

The systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equal opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice is not the absence of discrimination, but the presence of deliberate systems and supports that achieve and sustain racial equity.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#racial-justice>

Racism

A system of beliefs and behaviours that are grounded in the presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviours are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism.

Source: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Reconciliation

Reconciliation includes a recognition of the systemic and institutional levels of racism and its multiple impacts on minority communities. It is a process of truth-telling and relationship building with local communities within which parties have equal power, and must include the delivery of justice that is restorative rather than retributive in nature.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#racial-reconciliation>

Structural Racism

The normalization and legitimization of an interplay of historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal dynamics that advantage Whites and lead to chronic adverse outcomes for people of colour. Multiple institutions and past and present cultural norms have reinforcing effects that continually reproduce old forms of racism and also produce new forms. For example, the lower life expectancy for Black and Indigenous men compared to white men due to ongoing lower access to and quality of health care, higher exposure to dangerous jobs, environmental toxins and other factors.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#structural-racism>

Structural Violence

The phenomenon where social structures cause harm that is preventable by perpetuating inequity. This is the root cause of the discrepancy between people's potential and actual reality. For example, the potential life expectancy of the general population may be much longer than the actual life expectancy for disadvantaged groups.

Source: <https://www.thoughtco.com/structural-violence-4174956>

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism refers to racism that formed the foundations of current society, and is therefore embedded in all aspects of society. Institutions, policies, practices, ideas and behaviours all intersect and overlap to create an unjust amount of resources, rights and power for white people while denying these to people of colour. Systemic racism includes all other forms of racism.

Source: <https://www.thoughtco.com/systemic-racism-3026565>

White Fragility

White fragility refers to the stress, anger, guilt and defensiveness that can occur when white people are confronted with the topic of race. This fragility can often result in argumentation, silence or a lack of necessary discussion and subsequent change.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#white-fragility>

White Supremacy Culture

White supremacy culture refers to the dominant, unquestioned standards of behaviour that are defined as "normal", "professional" or even "good". They are a continuation of the attitudes that were in place when countries like Canada and the USA were created as settler states for white bodies. White supremacy culture is the invisible behavioural norms that are in allegiance with white bodies, and "other" and devalue different ways of being or knowing.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#white-supremacy-culture>

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The Centre for Diversity and Innovation is dedicated to creating an equitable and inclusive North Shore community through customized diversity workshops for adults and youth, innovative community engagement initiatives, and resource development.