Race, Equity & Inclusion Glossary

(updated 2/1/23)

The following terms and definitions were recently updated as part of our continued effort to create communities of respect, tolerance and inclusion within the human services sector and the communities in which we live and work.

This glossary suggests language helpful for communicating, and engaging effectively with staff, clients, organizational leaders, and others towards embracing diversity of all races, ethnicities, genders, faiths, nationalities, and other identities. Additionally, this glossary is meant to serve as a starting point for communication and learning and is in no way all-encompassing or comprehensive. This is an iterative process for the Race, Diversity & Inclusion (RDI) Committee with the understanding that language is fluid, lexicon is evolving, and that this is a live document that will need to be continually updated and revised.

− A −

Aggression
A behavior, physical or verbal, intended to harm an individual or group of people who do not wish to be harmed. There are various forms of aggression, including emotional/impulsive aggression (aggression that occurs with a small or no amount of forethought), cognitive aggression (intentional and planned aggression), physical aggression (harming another physically), verbal aggression (harming another through name calling, screaming, swearing, etc.), microaggression (everyday verbal, physical, and symbolic insults and slights, whether intentional or unintentional), relational/social aggression (harming another person's social relationships) and racial stereotyping.

Allyship
Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.

Antiracism
Anti-racism is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. Anti-racism is rooted in action. It is about taking steps to eliminate racism at the individual, institutional, and structural levels.

− B −

Belonging
A sense of being secure, recognized, affirmed, and accepted equally such that full participation is possible. Belonging means that everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community, and can thrive. Belonging is a feeling that your insights and contributions are valued.

Bias
Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. Unconscious or implicit bias refers to biases that we carry without awareness.

BIPOC
Black, Indigenous, People of Color. Term commonly used to describe individuals who are not considered white.

– C –

Critical Mass
In reference to representation of people of color within an organization or at a certain level of leadership. This figure is dependent on, and reflective of, the specific demographics of the communities in which an organization serves or operates.

Culture
Sum total of ways of living, including values, beliefs, aesthetic standards, linguistic expression, patterns of thinking, behavioral norms, and styles of communication. We are socialized through "cultural conditioning" to adopt ways of thinking related to social grouping.

– D –

Diversity
Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. For example, race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used – but also age, national origin, religion, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

– E –

Equality
Quality or state of being equal. Treats all people the same regardless of their level of need.

Equity
To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harm other social groups/communities. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response.

Ethnicity/Ethnic group
A group that has shared cultural heritage. Commonalities between the people in an ethic group may include religion, language, nation of origin, etc.

– F –
– G –
– H –
– I –

Inclusion
The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and numerical representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging. See belonging.

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.

Inherent Dignity
All people are born holding value simply because they are members of humanity. Humanity is not tied to class, race, gender, religion, abilities, or any other factor other than being human. No human has a higher value than another, and all are afforded the same human rights. Inherent dignity is upheld when our identity is accepted; when we are acknowledged and treated fairly; when we feel we are included and safe; when we are heard and seen, free from domination, understood, and given the benefit of the doubt.

Intersectionality
A theory or lens that allows us to see the intersecting and interconnected nature of different social identities and their related systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination.

"ISMs"
A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), youth (adultism), religion (ex. anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobism), etc.

– J –
– K –
– L –

Liberation
The creation of relationships, societies, communities, organizations, and collective spaces characterized by equity, fairness, and the implementation of systems for the allocation of goods, services, benefits, and rewards that support the full participation of each human and the promotion of their full humanness.

– M –

Microaggression
The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

– N –
– O –

Oppression
The systematic mistreatment of the powerless by the powerful, resulting in the targeting of certain groups within the society for less of its benefits – involves a devaluing or non-acceptance of the powerless group – may be economic, political, social, and /or psychological. Oppression also includes the belief of superiority or "righteousness" of the group in power.

– P –

Privilege
An unearned, sustained advantage afforded to some over others based on group identities related to race, gender, sexuality, ability, socioeconomic status, age and/or other identities. Through the lens of race, privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that some people receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their

skin color. There are unearned entitlements—things that all people should have—such as feeling safe in public spaces, free speech, the ability to work in a place where we feel we can do our best work and being valued for what we can contribute.

− Q −
− R −

Race
Used to categorize or divide people who share biological traits such as distinct physical appearance that a society deems important.

Race Equity
The condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. Race equity is one part of race justice and includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race. A racially equitable culture is focused on proactive counteraction of social and race inequities inside and outside of an organization.
The process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing programs, looking for solutions, and defining success is referred to as a "race equity lens". Application of a race equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause.

Racism
The systematic oppression of people of color; occurs at the individual, internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and/or cultural levels; may be overt or covert, intentional or unintentional.

- **Internalized Racism:** the personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of the dominant society's racist views, stereotypes and biases of one's ethnic group. It gives rise to patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that result in discriminating, minimizing, criticizing, finding fault, invalidating, and hating oneself while simultaneously valuing the dominant culture. This internalized racism has its own systemic reality and its own negative consequences in the lives and communities of people of color.

- **Interpersonal Racism:** actions that perpetuate inequalities on the basis of race. Such behaviors may be intentional or unintentional; unintentional acts may be racist in their consequence. These behaviors can include what are sometimes called "micro-agressions", which have are additive and oppressive impact.

- **Institutional Racism:** laws, customs, traditions and practices that systematically result in racial inequalities in a society. This is the institutionalization of systemic oppression.

- **Internalized Racism/Oppression:** the internalization of conscious or unconscious attitudes regarding inferiority or differences by the victims of systemic oppression.

- **Personal Racism:** individual attitudes regarding the inferiority of one group and the superiority of another that have been learned or internalized either directly (i.e. negative experiences) or indirectly (i.e. imitation and modeling of significant others' reactions, affective responses to the media); these attitudes may be conscious or unconscious.

- **Structural Racism/Racialization:** the word "racism" is commonly understood to refer to instances in which one individual intentionally or unintentionally targets others for negative treatment because of their skin color or other group-based physical characteristics. This individualistic conceptualization is too limited. Racialized outcomes do not require racist actors. Structural racism/racialization refers to a system of social structures that produces cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities. It is also a method of analysis that is used to examine how

historical legacies, individuals, structures, and institutions work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages along racial lines.

- **Systemic Racism:** Complex interactions of culture, policy, and institutions that create and maintain racial inequality in nearly every facet of life for people of color.

– S –

Social Justice

A concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of power, wealth, education, healthcare, and other opportunities for personal activity and social privileges.

– T –
– U –
– V –
– W –

White Fragility

The discomfort and defensiveness that a white person may experience when confronted with information regarding racial injustice. Symptoms: anger, fear, guilt, tears, self-victimization, justification and tone policing.

White Privilege

The power and advantages benefiting perceived white people, derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other non-white groups.

White Supremacy

The existence of racial power that denotes a system of structural or societal racism which privileges white people over others, regardless of the presence or the absence of racial hatred. White racial advantages occur at both a collective and an individual level, and both people of color and white people can perpetuate white dominant culture, resulting in the overall disenfranchisement of people of color in many aspects of society.

White Supremacy Culture

Characteristics of white supremacy that manifest in organizational culture and are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the full group. The characteristics are damaging to both people of color and white people in that they elevate the values, preferences, and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by people of color or have a majority of people of color can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture.

– X –
– Y –
– Z –

ACTIVITY: Below is an image commonly used to discuss equality, equity, and liberation – ask yourself, what should be in the 4th box?
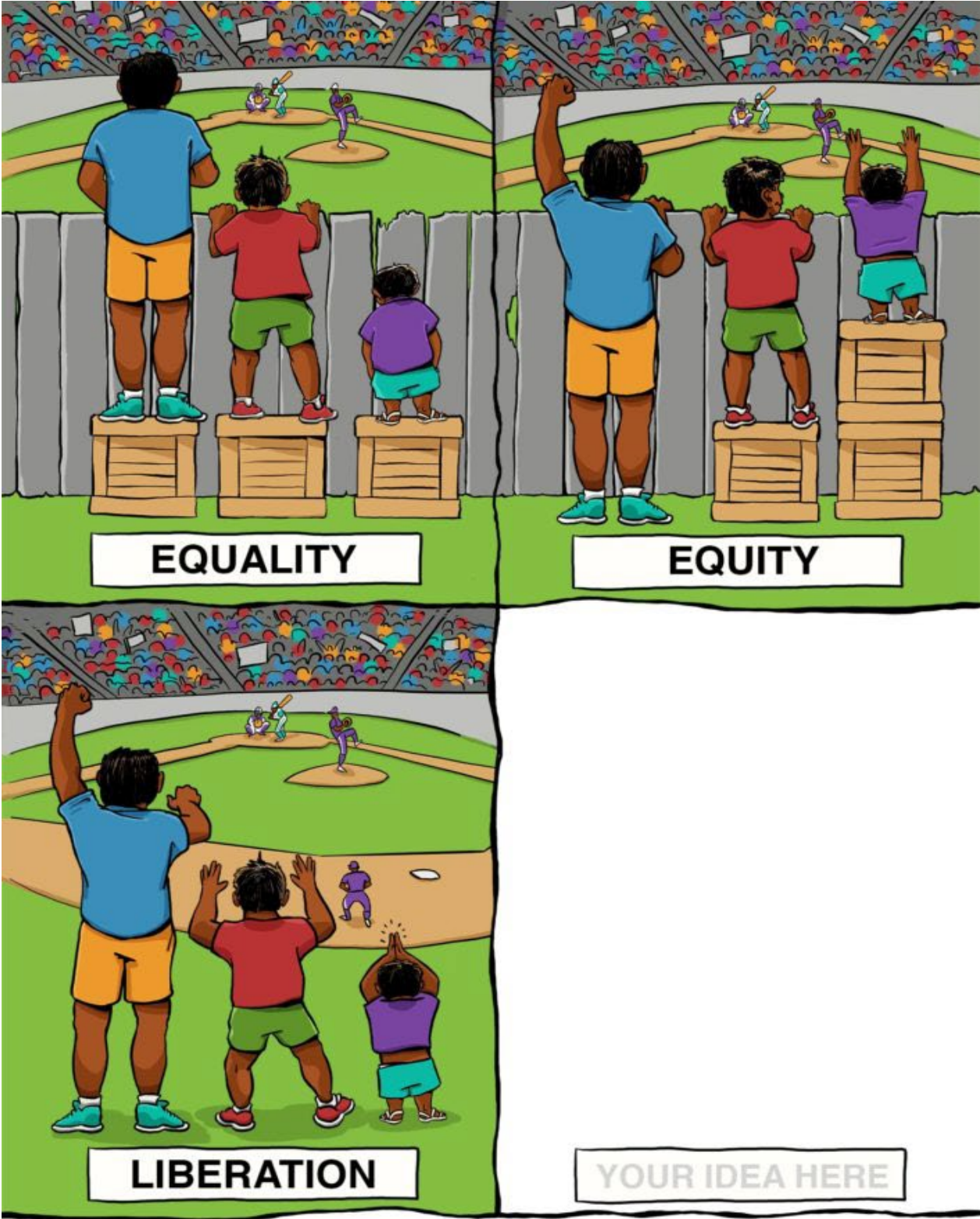
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