



Foundation for a
Healthy St. Petersburg

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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This glossary of terms was developed to create common understanding in the planning and execution of efforts toward race equity and health equity. It includes terms that are critical to understanding and achieving race equity, systems change and movement building.



Additional terms and definitions may be added to this glossary as needed to broaden and deepen understanding.



ACCOUNTABILITY

In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals, communities and organizations hold themselves to their goals and actions and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible. Accountability includes creating processes and systems that are designed to help individuals and groups to be held in check for their decisions and actions and for whether the work being done reflects and embodies racial justice principles. Accountability in racial equity work involves checking the work against a set of questions:

1. How is the issue being defined?
2. Who is defining it?
3. Who is this work going to benefit if it succeeds?
4. Who will it benefit if the work does not succeed?
5. How are risks distributed among the stakeholders?
6. How will a group know if its plan has accounted for risks and unintended consequences for different racial and ethnic groups?
7. What happens if people pull out before the goals are met?
8. Who anointed the people and groups being relied on for answers to these questions? *PAUSE: Shouldn't all work toward equity and be accountable? If so that belies the question who anointed the people... We expect all to do this work and be accountable.*
9. Who else can answer these questions to guide the work?

AFFINITY GROUP

A space for people of the same racial group to meet to discuss and work explicitly and intentionally on understanding institutional racism, oppression and privilege, and to increase one's critical analysis around these concepts. Affinity groups may also be intersectional (e.g., white women affinity groups) for greater common ground. Affinity groups function to promote anti-racist practice, advance organizational change, and support the personal and professional growth of the group members. In the case of White affinity groups, the onus is placed on White people to teach each other about these ideas, rather than relying on people of color to teach them (as often occurs in integrated spaces). For people of color, an affinity group is a place to work with their peers on their experiences of internalized racism, for healing and to work on liberation.

ALLY

A person who makes the commitment and effort to recognize and eliminate 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.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that Black people are inferior to another racial group. Anti-Black racism is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of racism and is a function of White supremacy.

ANTI-RACISM

The consistent practice of identifying and challenging racist (system of advantage based on race) actions and ideas. This work is accomplished by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, and by redistributing power in an racially equitable manner.

ANTI-RACIST

Someone who is supporting a policy that seeks to dismantle advantage based on race through their actions or expressing ideas against such system. This includes the expression that racial groups are equals and support of a policy that reduces racial inequity.

ASSIMILATIONIST

A person who believes that non-white racial groups are culturally or behaviorally inferior and believes the group should become more like Whites to be accepted.

ASSIMILATIONISM

The idea that people of color need to conform culturally and behaviorally to white culture and behavior to be accepted. This belief may be applied in social, educational and occupational settings. An example of assimilationism is the encouragement by some Americans for those who come to the United States to dress in a similar fashion as Americans.

BIPOC

(Pronounced “by pock”). Acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that is more specific than the term “people of color”. It is used to emphasize that experiences of discrimination and prejudice vary among people of color. The term BIPOC enables a shift from terms such as “marginalized” and “minority” which denote inferiority. The term has been used since the early 2010s but gained popularity on social media during the 2020s as awareness was raised about long-standing police brutality and the need for social change. Although the term highlights Black and Indigenous peoples, it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate, i.e., one would not use the term ‘BIPOC’ if solely referring to Black people.

COLORISM

A form of discrimination by which those with lighter skin are treated more favorably than those with darker skin. This practice is a product of racism in the U.S., in that it upholds the white standards of beauty.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT)

A school of thought that examines the role of race in one’s social standing. It began as a response by legal scholars to the idea that the United States had become a color-blind society in which racial discrimination no longer exists, and that one’s racial identity no longer influenced one’s social or economic status. The five basic tenets of CRT are: 1) Race is a social construct with no biological basis; 2) Racism is the “normal”, or the usual way that society operates, the everyday experience of people of color; 3) Interest convergence or “material determinism”, the idea that because racism advances the interests of both whites and the working class, large segments of society have very little interest in eradicating it. It also follows that whites will allow and support racial progress as long as it benefits them; 4) The idea that whites have benefited from civil rights legislation, e.g., de jure, or legalized, segregation of schools by neighborhoods; 5) Storytelling and counter-storytelling, the powerful ability to use stories to unlearn narratives that are commonly held to be true.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture without permission. This can include unauthorized use of another culture's dance, dress, music, language, folklore, cuisine, traditional medicine, religious symbols, etc. It is most likely to be harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive, e.g., sacred objects.

CULTURAL HUMILITY

“Humility,” is commonly defined as “freedom from pride or arrogance.” Cultural humility is defined as a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture but starts with an examination of her/his own beliefs and cultural identities with reflection. A person must also be aware of and sensitive to historic realities like legacies of violence and oppression against certain groups of people.

CULTURE

The integrated patterns of human behavior that include the thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious and social groups. These include the norms shared by a group, the ways of a group being passed down from generation to generation, and how people experience the world around them.

DIRECT SERVICE

Assistance provided to individuals to navigate a current crisis situation. This is the most immediate response to a social injustice. Direct services may also be used as part of a comprehensive approach to power building and change, such as skill or capacity development opportunities that are longer term such as leadership development or enhance vocational skills.

DISCRIMINATION

The unequal, disadvantaging treatment of members or those perceived to be members of various groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, citizenship status, a combination of these, and/or other categories.

DIVERSITY

Differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, physical, or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity. Diversity is not a synonym for inclusion or equity.

EQUALITY

The effort to treat everyone the same or to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities. However, only working to achieve equality ignores historical and structural factors that benefit some social groups and disadvantages other social groups in ways that create different starting points.

EQUITY

Fairness and justice in policy, practice and opportunity recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. Involves conscious design of a robust system to provide appropriate, and perhaps greater, levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Working to achieve equity acknowledges unequal starting places and the need to correct the imbalance.

EXPLICIT BIAS

Prejudice that is consciously accepted in favor of, or against one group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

HEALTH EQUITY

Everyone can attain their highest level of health, free from avoidable and unfair differences and barriers such as racial discrimination.

IMPLICIT BIAS

A belief or attitude that impacts our understanding, decisions, and actions, and that exists without our conscious awareness. People are often unaware of their bias, and the concept of implicit bias helps describe racist acts that may not be overt or intentional. Implicit bias is just as harmful, so it is important to talk about race explicitly and to take steps to address it. Institutions are composed of individuals whose biases are replicated, and then produce systemic inequities. It is possible to interrupt implicit bias by adding steps to decision-making processes that thoughtfully consider and address racial impacts.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is fostering an environment in which people of all identities are welcome, valued, and supported. An inclusive organization pays special attention to power dynamics (racial, gender, generational, etc.) and authentically includes all perspectives, identities, and/or groups in processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

INTERNALIZED RACISM

A process people of color go through of believing, accepting, and internalizing inferior and subordinate images of themselves and their people, resulting in fear, anxiety, and uncertainty about challenging the institutions that have disempowered them.

INTERPERSONAL RACISM

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm. Examples: public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias and bigotry between individuals

INTERSECTIONALITY

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. It is also considered a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by multiple discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face and the impact of those overlapping identities.

JUSTICE

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. This includes dismantling the root causes of racism (institutional and structural policies and practices).

MOVEMENT BUILDING

The effort of social change agents to engage power holders and the broader society in addressing a systemic problem or injustice while promoting an alternative vision or solution. Movement building requires a range of intersecting approaches through a set of distinct stages over a long period of time.

OTHERING

The perception or placing of a person or a group outside and/or in opposition to what is considered to be the norm. It is also a set of common processes that marginalizes groups of people and perpetuates inequality across any of the full range of human differences because they are not a part of what is considered the norm.

PATRIARCHY

The institutionalization of men and/or masculinity as dominant over women and/or femininity in both the private and public spheres, such as the home, political, sports, religious and social institutions, etc. Patriarchy shapes and is shaped by white supremacy and capitalism.

PEOPLE OF COLOR

Collective term for referring to non-White racial groups, rather than “minorities.” Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of color” (not to be confused with the pejorative “colored people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While “people of color” can be a politically useful term and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, eg: “non-White”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate. The term includes, but is not synonymous with, Black people.

POLICY

Laws and regulations that govern systems, including health, education, criminal justice, education, etc. Individuals are directly affected by unequal application of policies and laws by race/ethnicity, and by unequal consequences by race/ethnicity. This spiral of difference—in application, enforcement and consequences—is one way of understanding structural racism and internalized advantage and disadvantage within a system.

POPULATION HEALTH

The health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group.

POWER

The ability to define, set, or change situations. Power is the ability to influence others to believe, behave, or adopt values as those in power desire. It is also the ability to access resources and decision makers, and the ability to influence others via this access.

PRIVILEGE

Advantages and benefits systemically provided, often by default, to a person or group. Privilege is best understood intersectionally because skin color, gender, documentation status, economic class and education, for example, can all provide distinct advantage within and between racial and ethnic groups. For example, White people are racially privileged, even if they are economically underprivileged. People can be disadvantaged by one identity and privileged by another.

RACE

A social and political construct—with no genetic or biological basis—used to arbitrarily categorize and divide individuals into groups based on physical appearance (particularly skin color), ancestry, culture, and ethnicity. The concept has been, and still is, used to justify the domination, exploitation, and violence against people who are racialized as non-White. How people are racialized (and experience life as a result) is a major determinant of socioeconomic status, life opportunities, and health outcomes.

RACE EQUITY

Racial equity holds society to a higher standard to create conditions where outcomes display no differences by race. Race equity is fairness and justice actualized in the lived experiences and outcomes of people of color, including, but not limited to health, justice, education, income, wealth, and environment. Racial equity will be a reality in which a person is no more or less likely to experience society's benefits or burdens because of the color of his/her skin. This is in contrast to the current state of affairs in which Black and Brown people are more likely than Whites to live in poverty, be imprisoned, drop out of high school, be unemployed and experience poor health outcomes like diabetes, heart disease, depression and other potentially fatal diseases.

RACIALIZATION

The very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular “race” and subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. While white people are also racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still maintain the authority to name and racialize “others”.

RACISM

Historically-rooted system of power hierarchies based on race—infused in our institutions, policies and culture—that benefit White people and hurt people of color. Racism isn’t limited to individual acts of prejudice, either deliberate or accidental. Rather, the most damaging racism is built into systems and institutions that shape our lives. Most coverage of race and racism focuses on racism at the level of individuals’ speech or actions, individual-level racism, dismisses systemic racism, or refers to racism in the past tense. Because of its historical roots, racism can be internalized, interpersonal and systemic/institutional.

REPARATIONS

Measures provided which seek to address the harms caused by systematic human rights violations in cases where the state caused the violations or did not seriously try to prevent them. They can take the form of compensating for the losses suffered, which helps overcome some of the consequences of abuse. They can also be future oriented—providing rehabilitation and a better life to victims—and help to change the underlying causes of abuse. Reparations publicly affirm that victims are rights-holders entitled to redress.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Restorative Practice works on relationships. It creates a common language and approach to building relationships and dealing with conflict. When conflict does arise, restorative approaches provide those who have been harmed with a voice, an opportunity to express the effect the harm has had on them, as well as the opportunity to express what needs to happen to repair the harm. People who cause harm are often unaware of the full impact of their actions. The chance to have a voice themselves, to hear the impact their actions have had on others and to actively make amends rather than passively enduring a punishment leads to more positive feelings about their community and helps to break the cycle of wrongdoing and misbehavior.

SYSTEMIC/INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Refers to policies and practices that generate different outcomes for persons of different racial groups. These laws, policies, and practices are not necessarily explicit in mentioning any racial group but work to create advantages for White persons and disadvantages for people of color.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

An effort to bring about lasting change by altering underlying structures and supporting mechanisms (root causes) which make the system operate in a particular way. These can include policies, routines, relationships, resources, power structures and values.

SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

The ways in which history, culture, ideology, public policies, institutional practices, and personal behaviors and beliefs interact to maintain a hierarchy—based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and/or other group identities—that allows the privileges associated with the dominant group and the disadvantages associated with the targeted group to endure and adapt over time.

TARGETED UNIVERSALISM

Setting universal goals and using processes targeted to different groups to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed so that the universal goal is achieved.

THOUGHT PARTNER

The practice of partnering and sharing ideas and experiences to help navigate complex challenges towards a shared goal. When you partner with people who think like you do, you resonate—becoming a sounding board for each others' best ideas. When you partner with people who think differently than you do, you complement—stretching each others' views of a situation to find and sort useful new approaches to a problem.

WHITE FRAGILITY

A range of defensive (and centering) emotions and behaviors that White people exhibit when confronted with uncomfortable truths about race. These may include outward displays of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate White racial equilibrium.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

The unearned power and advantages that benefit people just because they are White or are perceived as White. Peggy Macintosh describes White privilege as “an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in every day, but about which I was meant to remain oblivious.” (Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack).

WHITE SUPREMACY

A institutionally perpetuated, historical and ever-evolving system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color that consolidates and maintains power and resources among White people. This system promotes the ideology of Whiteness as the standard and the belief that White people are superior to other races.



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