

21-DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

SHARED DEFINITIONS

EQUITY

Equity is the intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation and other identities are dismantled and no longer determine socioeconomic, education and health outcomes.

INCLUSION¹

A value and practice of ensuring that people feel they belong and that their input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, system, etc.), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives.

DIVERSITY

Each individual is unique and groups of individuals reflect multiple dimensions of difference, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs and cognitive styles.

RACE²

A socially constructed way of grouping people based on skin color and other apparent physical differences, which has no genetic or scientific basis. The concept was created and used by white people to justify the social and economic oppression of Blacks and other people of color. (See racism definition below for more details.) The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.³

RACISM

A system of oppression based on the socially constructed concept of race exercised by the dominant racial group (whites) over nondominant racial groups (Black, Indigenous and other people of color); a system of oppression created to justify social, political and economic hierarchy. The hierarchy was initially constructed with white people at the top and Black and Indigenous people at the bottom, with other people of color groups slotted in between. Racism can be understood as what happens at the intersection of race, prejudice and power.⁴

INTERNALIZED RACISM

The set of private beliefs, prejudices and ideas about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized oppression. Among white people, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.

INTERPERSONAL RACISM

The expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact and their private beliefs affect their interactions.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, all based on race, that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.

STRUCTURAL RACISM

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial group inequality. It is racial bias among institutions and across society. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of societal factors including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Describes how racism specifically targets and places Black people at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. While racism affects people of color from all backgrounds, it has a particular impact on Black people. It's important to understand these nuances so we don't replicate them in our efforts to combat racism and build solidarity among different people of color groups.

¹ Adapted from The Equity and Inclusion Campaign.

² Adapted from Race: The Power of an Illusion. San Francisco: California Newsreel, 2003.

³ Omi, M. & Winant, H. (1994) Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s. New York and London: Routledge as quoted in Seven Steps to Embrace Race Equity, Annie E. Casey Foundation

⁴ Adapted from multiple sources, including: Race Forward, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.

CLASS

Relative social status based on income, wealth, race, power, position, occupation and education.⁵

DOMINANT CULTURE

Refers to the established language, religion, values, rituals and social customs on which society was built. It has the most power and is widespread and influential within a social entity, such as an organization, in which multiple cultures are present. An organization's dominant culture is heavily influenced by the leadership, management standards and preferences of those at the top of the hierarchy. In this toolkit, dominant culture refers specifically to the American context in which organizational culture is predominantly defined by white men and white women in positional power.

EQUITY-MINDEDNESS

A willingness and ability to:

- Call attention to patterns of inequitable outcomes.
- Take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of program participants (e.g., members, students, constituents).
- Critically reassess practices.
- Demonstrate race-consciousness.
- Understand the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in their field/area of work.⁶

INTERSECTIONALITY⁷

An analysis of the connections between systems of oppression (e.g., racism and classism, racism and sexism) and how individuals experience those intersecting or compounding systems of oppression. It's not a theory of diversity or multi-dimensional identity.

MARGINALIZED GROUP

A social identity group that is disenfranchised and exploited.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults toward Black, Indigenous and other people of color.

PRIVILEGED GROUP

A social identity group that holds unearned privileged in society.

RACIAL JUSTICE

The systemic, fair treatment of people of all races resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity or the community in which they live. A racial justice framework can move us from a reactive posture to a more powerful, proactive and even preventative approach.

RACIAL OPPRESSION⁸

Race-based disadvantages, discrimination and exploitation based on skin color.

RACIAL PRIVILEGE⁹

Race-based advantages and preferential treatment based on skin color (often experienced without any conscious effort or awareness).

STEREOTYPE

A standardized mental picture that is held in common about members of a group that represents an oversimplified opinion, attitude or unexamined judgment, without regard to individual difference.

SYSTEMIC EQUITY

A complex combination of interrelated elements consciously designed to create, support and sustain social justice. It is a robust system and dynamic process that reinforces and replicates equitable ideas, power, resources, strategies, conditions, habits and outcomes.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS/IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION

The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. They are activated involuntarily, without conscious awareness or intentional control. They can be positive or negative. Everyone is susceptible.¹⁰

WHITE SUPREMACY

The existence of racial power that denotes a system of structural or societal racism that privileges white people over others, regardless of the presence or absence of racial hatred. White racial advantages occur at the collective and individual levels. Both people of color and white people can perpetuate white dominant culture, resulting in the overall disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous and other people of color in many aspects of society.¹¹

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 Black, Indigenous and other people of color and white people because they elevate the values, preferences and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by Black, Indigenous and other people of color, or where a majority of staff are Black, Indigenous and other people of color, can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture.

⁵ Source: Classmatters.org, which contains materials from Betsy Leonard-Wright's "Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists"

⁶ Adapted from "What Is Equity-Mindedness?", Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California, cue.usc.edu/equity/equity-mindedness

⁷ Adapted from writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw.

⁸ "Seven Steps to Embrace Race Equity," Annie E. Casey Foundation; parenthetical statements added.

⁹ "Seven Steps to Embrace Race Equity," Annie E. Casey Foundation; parenthetical statements added.

¹⁰ "Implicit Bias Review: Race and Ethnicity-Views from Inside the Unconscious Mind," Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.

¹¹ Conor Friedersdorf, "Too Much Stigma, Not Enough Persuasion," *The Atlantic*, November 30, 2016, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/the-scourge-of-the-left-too-much-stigma-not-enough-persuasion/508961, quoted in "Awake to Woke to Work," Equity in the Center.