

Common Language & Terms

Word/Term	Definition
Ideology	A system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory or policy. (How one believes the world should run.)
Social and Institutional Power	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Access to resources2. The ability to influence others3. Access to decision-makers to get what you want done4. The ability to define reality for yourself and others
System	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A set of things that together make a whole2. An established way of doing something, such that things get done that way regularly and are assumed to be the 'normal' way things get done3. Runs by itself; does not require planning or initiative by a person or group
Race	<p>“A specious classification of human beings created by Europeans during a period of worldwide colonial expansion, using themselves as the model for humanity, for the purpose of assigning and maintaining white skin access to power and privilege.” (Dr. Maulana Karenga)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Race is not biologically real - it is socially and politically constructed via law, public policy and social practices.2. While it is a dynamic phenomena rooted in political struggle, it is commonly observed as a fixed characteristic; while it does not exist in terms of human biology, people routinely look to the human body for evidence about racial identity. <p>e.g. A person who could be categorized as black in the United States might be considered white in Brazil or colored in South Africa.</p>
Ethnicity	<p>Socially defined category of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience.</p> <p>e.g. Italian, Jewish</p>

Word/Term	Definition
Culture	<p>A way of life of a group of people — the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.</p> <p>e.g. I grew up in a small mid-western farm town where hunting is a right of passage.</p>
Nationality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A group of people who share the same history, traditions, and language, and who usually live together in a particular country 2. The fact or status of being a member or citizen of a particular nation <p>e.g. American, South African</p>
Diverse/Diversity	<p>The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.</p>
Multi-ethnic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involving or including people of several different ethnic groups 2. A multi-ethnic person has parents who come from different ethnic groups
Multi-cultural	<p>Involving or including people or ideas from many different countries, races, or religions</p>
Anti-racism	<p>The policy or practice of opposing racism</p>
Color-blind	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A term used to sound non-racist 2. The idea of treating people from different races equally and fairly 3. Suppresses public discourse on race and masks discrepancies in decision-making.

Word/Term	Definition
<p>Racism</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the major institutions of society. 2. social and institutional power + race prejudice 3. system of advantage based on race 4. system of oppression based on race 5. a white supremacy system supported by an all-class collaboration called "white" created to end cross-racial labor solidarity <p>Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism is a system.</p> <p><i>Categories & Levels:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systemic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional - social institutions, e.g. government, courts of law, banks, schools. • Structural - public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work to perpetuate racial group inequity. 2. Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal - occurs between individuals • Internalized - racist attitudes towards members of their own ethnic group, including themselves
<p>Colorism</p>	<p>prejudice or discrimination against dark skin tones, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.</p> <p>e.g. 'light skinned girls are prettier than dark skinned girls'</p>
<p>Prejudice</p>	<p>An attitude based on limited information, often on stereotypes. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative. Positive and negative prejudices alike are damaging because they deny the individuality of the person. No one is free of prejudice.</p> <p>e.g Women are emotional. Asians are good at math.</p>

Word/Term	Definition
Oppressed/ Oppression	<p>The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others, 2. the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them), 3. genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and, 4. members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.
White Supremacy	<p>The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of White people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.</p>
White Privilege	<p>White privilege (or white skin privilege) is a term for societal privileges that benefit white people in western countries beyond what is commonly experienced by non-white people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.</p>
Microaggression	<p>A subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minority or other non-dominant group that is often unintentional or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype</p> <p>e.g. "I don't see you as black."</p>
Melanin	<p>The dark brown pigment that gives human skin, hair, and eyes their color. Dark-skinned people have more melanin in their skin than light-skinned people have. Melanin is produced by cells called melanocytes. Melanin protects the body by absorbing ultraviolet radiation from the sun and is also responsible for tanning.</p>
Genotype	<p>The set of genes in our DNA which is responsible for a particular trait.</p> <p>e.g. genes responsible for a person's height</p>

Word/Term	Definition
Phenotype	The physical expression or characteristics of a trait. Influenced both by its genotype and by the environment. e.g. <i>skin color</i>
Brownicity	(pronounced like 'ethnicity') A combination of the words <i>brown</i> and <i>ethnicity</i> . The word <i>brown</i> represents <i>melanin</i> , the pigment we all have. <i>Ethnicity</i> means that which we have in common. <i>We all are hues of brown.</i>
Representations	cultural images that exhibit and sustain institutional structures; they are not neutral
Frame	An unconscious lens through which we view an issue or problem. Related to social cognition processes encoded in our brains, frames help us quickly make sense of complex information and then make individual and collective decisions on that basis. These processes generate deeply embedded perspectives that are easily activated in the subconscious, especially through devices like images, stories, stereotypes and slogans. e.g. 'Hard work yields prosperity.'
Narratives	Specific stories (whether real, exaggerated, or fictionalized) used to convey or reinforce a given frame. e.g. 'Those who have less are not hard workers, are lazy and are looking for a hand out.'
Messages	The takeaway from frames and narratives that invoke specific action. e.g. 'Poor people want a hand-out. Don't help poor people.'
Implicit/ Unconscious Racial Bias	the thoughts that pop into our minds, the quick random gut reactions when we think about a particular group. They affect our behaviors in areas that maintain or exacerbate inequalities
Inequality	an unfair situation in which some people have measurably more rights or better opportunities than other people.
Inequity	lack of fairness or justice; an unfair circumstance

Word/Term	Definition
Disparity	may result in the inability to access quality care, resources, services or opportunities to thrive.
Disproportionality	caused by disparities, some in society at large, and some in public institutions.

These definitions are informed by the numerous resources referenced in *What LIES Between Us: Fostering First Steps Toward Racial Healing*, listed at brownicity.com and Racial Equity Institute's *Racial Equity Workshop Phase 1: Foundations in Historical and Institutional Racism*.