

EMBRACE Course Glossary



This glossary is a compilation of key terms and/or contextual support applied throughout the EMBRACE Online course modules. Some are used explicitly in the course while others may have been referenced off hand. While we've certainly put a collective effort into generating this list, it is by no means all-encompassing of language and terms that are useful and relevant to the work of social justice. AND – this language is always evolving, so it may no longer be up to date.

If you find there is a word that would be helpful to add to this collection, OR if you experience our language is out-of-date and no longer the most inclusive terminology....please send an email to melia@meliadunn.com with your suggested updates. We appreciate your input to keep this resource as relevant as possible!

Note: and for fun....we added a little “cheekiness” here and there. Enjoy!

A

- Ableism – a set of beliefs, practices, procedures, and laws that devalue, discriminate against, and oppress people with physical, intellectual, psychiatric, and/or developmental disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or another.
- Abolition/ist – a political vision (or one who practices it) with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment. Abolition is both a practical organizing tool and a long-term goal.
- Abundance – a large quantity of something, especially in overflow. Ideally, also an invitation to collaborate, share, give, and/or invite community.
- Accountability – the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible. To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process. It might be defined as “what kicks in when convenience runs out.” Accountability requires some sense of urgency and becoming a true stakeholder in the outcome. It can be externally imposed (legal or organizational requirements), or internally applied (moral, relational, faith-based, or some combination) from the institutional and organizational level to the individual level. From a relational point of view, accountability is not always doing it right. Sometimes it's really about what happens after it's done wrong.

- Accomplice – someone who acts with another to achieve a common goal, usually a “crime,” either literally or figuratively in going against systems of oppression. *See also: Ally/Allyship, Co-Conspirator*
- Advantage – a condition or circumstance that puts one in a favorable or superior position. This can include greater, easier, and/or deeper access to resources and/or community. *See also: Privilege*
- Ageism – a set of beliefs, practices, procedures, and laws that devalue, discriminate against, and oppress people on the basis of age. Ageism occurs on either end of life: adultism (that oppresses young people) and elder oppression (which oppresses our elders). Adultism and elder oppression have many similarities, but due to both developmental differences and differences in life circumstances, they do not always look and are not always experienced exactly the same way (for example, a young person cannot be hired for a job before a certain age. While elders are often protected from being fired simply for their age, this does not protect them from negative interpersonal interactions where their age is a factor.)
- Ally/Allyship – someone from a dominant group who rejects the dominant ideology and speaks out on behalf of or takes actions that are supportive of someone who is targeted by bias, bullying, or oppression. Allyship is the practice of regularly speaking up and/or making space; examining our own socialization, positionality, and privilege; and learning how to (and working to continuously) leverage our privilege and advantages to support others, allow for and/or establish equity, and/or reduce harm, particularly of a marginalized group. *See also: Accomplice, Co-Conspirator*
- Antisemitism – the marginalization and/or oppression of people who are Jewish or the descendants of Jewish people based on the belief in stereotypes and myths about Jewish people, Judaism, and Israel.
- Asshat – a person who displays judgment of self or others and who shows up without checking their/our privilege and positionality

B

- Belonging – the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group or for the group itself.
- Bias – a tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc., are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly

- Binary – referring to something having two (and only two) options, outcomes, or components. *See also: Either/Or Thinking*

C

- Call in/Call out/Cancel – various ways people and communities address harm and/or attempt to hold others accountable for harm. To “call in” is typically to lead by addressing someone’s capacity to do/say/be better, to hold them with love at the front of our minds, and, sometimes, to engage in a collaborative dialogue about what happened and why. To “call out” is typically to lead by addressing the harm itself, to address why it is harmful, and may or may not include a collaborative dialogue about what happened and why. To “cancel” someone is to dismiss or deplatform that person, group, or institution in response to harmful words, ideas, and/or behaviors.
- Classism – the institutional, cultural, and individual set of practices and beliefs that result in the oppression of people based on a social hierarchy in which people are ranked and assigned value according to socioeconomic status. Also, an economic system that creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet.
- Co-Conspirator – a person who works alongside the communities they support. Co-conspirators show up with the communities they are supporting, not simply for them, and, being conscious of and when appropriate, leveraging their privilege to work alongside communities and their leaders who have already been working for justice. *See also: Ally/Allyship, Accomplice*
- Cognitive Dissonance – the state of discomfort felt when two or more modes of thought contradict each other. The clashing thoughts (i.e. cognitions) may include ideas, beliefs, or the knowledge that one has behaved in a certain way (that is usually in conflict with our values).
- Colonialism – a system resulting from the process of colonization. Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people. The invasion can be military, or it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. The result is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized. Ongoing and legacy colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. For example, white supremacy as a philosophy was developed largely to justify European colonial exploitation of the Global South (including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrining

cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonizing and colonizer nations). *See also: Settler Colonialism*

- Collusion / Complicity - same AND different – thinking and acting in ways that support systems of oppression. When people act to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression. Being involved as an accomplice or participant. While collusion and complicity both mean participating in acts of wrongdoing or harm, collusion implies there is agreed-upon cooperation (spoken or unspoken, conscious or unconscious), while complicity can happen without any prior knowledge or understanding.
- Community – a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties (which may include social identity), share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings. Communities may share a sense of place situated in a given geographical area or in virtual space through digital platforms.
- Comrade – someone with whom you have a set of shared expectations and principles, someone who holds you accountable in the course of your political work, and someone you can come to count on and trust; “a political relation, a set of expectations for action toward a common goal. It highlights the sameness of those on the same side—no matter their differences, comrades stand together.” (Jodi Dean)
- Conditioning – the sociological process of training individuals in a society to act or respond in a manner approved by the society and peer groups within it. The ways we are raised to interact with and respond to society, leading to us knowing how to play the roles expected of us based on our positions, identities, and environments. *See also: Socialization*
- Credentialing – the process of granting a designation or legitimacy by assessing a person’s knowledge, skill, or performance level
- Culture – the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group; the patterns of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by a group of people. These patterns can be seen in language, governing practices, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, relationships, family roles, communication style, clothing, etc.
- Cultural Appropriation – theft of cultural elements—including symbols, art, language, customs, etc.—for one’s own use, commodification, or profit, often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant culture’s right to take other cultural elements.

- Cultural Competence – The capacity to value diversity, conduct self-assessment, manage the dynamics of difference, acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities one serves.
- Cultural Humility – an ongoing process of self-inquiry and reflection to examine how our own backgrounds and those of others are entering into, interacting with, and impacting our spaces and relationships and the people in them.

D

- Deer in Headlights – that startled, frozen feeling you get when first unpacking the truth of social privilege
- Defensiveness – the habit of denying and defending against the ways in which white supremacy, racism, oppression, and/or harms are produced, and our individual or collective participation in that production. *See also: White Supremacy Culture*
- Discrimination – the denial of justice, resources, and fair treatment of individuals and groups (often based on social identity), through employment, education, housing, banking, political rights, etc. Attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that make a distinction in favor of or against a person.
- Diversity – the presence of variety within a group. The uniqueness of all individuals including differences and similarities in personality, values, identities, life experiences, work role, and more. Differences exist among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, health, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical size, education level, job and function, personality traits, and other human differences.
- Dominant Identity – not necessarily the majority, but the group within a society with the power, privilege, and social status to control and define societal resources and social, political, and economic systems and norms. *See also: Privilege*

E

- Either/Or Thinking – a mindset and/or approach that is often lacking nuance and restricting possibilities, in which there can be *either* one choice *or* the other. Reduces the complexity of life and the nuance of our relationships with each other and all living things into either/or, yes or no, right or wrong in ways that reinforce urgency, one right way perfectionist thinking, and abuse of power. *See also: White Supremacy Culture*
- EMBRACE – *this* awesome course full of sparkly humans (including you!); also, a hug.

- Emergent Strategy – a strategy that arises from unplanned actions and initiatives from within an organization; in the case of the book and associated philosophy by adrienne maree brown, influenced by author Octavia Butler, “an examination of where our movements have been and an offering of a framework for resistance that is rooted in the miracles of nature, decentralized, collective leadership, and personal, relational, organizational, and movement-wide transformation.” (Andrea J. Ritchie)
- Equity – everyone getting what they need in order to have access, opportunities, and a fair chance to succeed. It recognizes that the same for everyone (equality) doesn’t truly address needs and, therefore, specific solutions and remedies, which may be different, are necessary.

F

- Fatphobia – a set of beliefs, practices, procedures, and laws that devalue, discriminate against, and oppress people on the basis of weight and/or body size. The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are larger than the socially-constructed norm for body size. *See also: Sizeism, Weightism*
- Fear of Open Conflict – the fear and inability especially of those in dominant groups to tolerate and engage in conflict. Open conflict is ignored, avoided, dismissed, and minimized by those in power, particularly when it raises feelings of discomfort. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Right to Comfort*
- Fragility – a range of defensive (and centering) emotions and behaviors that people in dominant groups exhibit when confronted with uncomfortable truths about oppression. This 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 existing systems of oppression.
- Fucked Up – when you made a mistake, especially one that creates harm colluding with, perpetuating, and/or compounding the effects of oppression

G

- Gender – the socially-defined “rules” and roles for men and women in a society. The attitudes, customs, and values associated with gender are socially constructed; however, individuals develop their gender identities both through an innate sense of their own identity and as well as through their life experiences and interactions with others. Dominant western society generally defines gender as a binary system—men and women—but many cultures define gender as more fluid and existing along a continuum.

- “Good One” - (noun) a misinformed desire for validation, rooted in ego and self as opposed to liberatory practice for all; (proper noun) title of Jason's future memoir/documentary of his allyship journey; (adjective/expression) acknowledgement of someone's choice or action, may be complementary OR sarcastic.

H

- Humility – freedom from pride or arrogance. In a social justice context, when one maintains an interpersonal stance that is open to people and communities of varying cultures, in relation to aspects of the cultural identity most important to the person. Cultural humility can include a life-long commitment to self-critique about differences in culture and a commitment to be aware of and actively mitigate power imbalances between cultures.
- Humanity – the human race, which includes everyone on Earth; the qualities that make us human, such as the ability to love and have compassion, be creative, and not be a robot or alien; the feelings of kindness or kinship humans can have for each other.
- Heterosexism – the individual, institutional, and societal/cultural beliefs and practices based on the belief that heterosexuality is the only normal and acceptable sexual orientation.
- Homophobia – the fear, hatred, anger, resentment, discomfort, and/or intolerance of queer people. Homophobia can be focused both externally and internally.

I

- “I statements” – a statement that focuses on the feelings, experiences, or beliefs of the speaker as a way to avoid universalizing and generalizing our experiences, especially when speaking from a privileged position. Using “I” instead of “we,” as none of us can assume our individual experience is like that of others.
- Identity – our understanding of ourselves and what makes us who we are. This can refer to how we identify as individuals based on our personal experiences, likes, dislikes, boundaries, etc., and also to our social identities (examples of social identities are age, ability/disability, gender, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, social class, size, etc.). *See also: Social Identity*
- Ideological Oppression – any oppressive system has at its core the idea that one group is somehow better than another and has the right to control the other group. “Better” can mean a lot of things, including more intelligent, harder working, stronger, more capable, more noble, more deserving, more advanced, chosen, normal, superior, etc. The dominant group holds this idea about itself, and the opposite qualities are attributed to the other

group—stupid, lazy, weak, incompetent, worthless, less deserving, backward, abnormal, inferior, and so on.

- Implicit Bias – beliefs and/or attitudes that affect our understanding, decisions, and actions, and that exist without our conscious awareness.
- Inclusion – a state of belonging, when people of different backgrounds and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers and collaborators. Inclusion involves people being given the opportunity to grow and feel/know they belong. Diversity efforts alone do not create inclusive environments. Inclusion involves a sense of coming as you are and being accepted, rather than feeling the need to assimilate.
- Indigenous – indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited a territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when those of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement, or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition. (Examples: Maori in territory now defined as New Zealand; Mexicans in territory now defined as Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma; Native American tribes in territory now defined as the United States.)
- Individualism – our cultural story that we make it on our own, without help, while pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps. A toxic denial of our essential interdependence and the reality that we are all in this, literally, together. *See also: White Supremacy Culture*
- Interpersonal Oppression – the oppression that occurs between individuals. It is when someone consciously or unconsciously employs or acts upon oppressive thoughts in ways that perpetuate stereotypes and create and/or collude with harm and oppression. The idea that one group is better than another and has the right to control the other, which gets structured into institutions and gives permission and reinforcement for individual members of dominant groups to personally disrespect or mistreat individuals in oppressed groups.
- Intersectionality – coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, this term refers to the overlap of social identities such as race and ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, and class which exist in an individual or group that can contribute to discrimination, disadvantage, and/or oppression. Intersectionality is a theory that describes the multiplicative effects of oppression on a person with multiple targeted social identities. This means, for example, women of color experience not only sexism and racism, but also racialized sexism and sexualized racism. Also refers to the view that overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and inequality can more effectively be addressed together.

- Internalization – the process of making attitudes or behavior part of our nature and worldview by learning or unconscious assimilation.
- Internalized Oppression– when people in advantaged and/or targeted groups internalize oppressive beliefs about their own groups and those of others. Internalized oppression includes both internalized dominance and internalized subordination. Internalized dominance (or domination) is when members of the advantaged group accept their group's socially superior status as normal and deserved. Internalized oppression (or subordination) is when members of targeted groups have adopted dominant social messages/narratives of inferiority about their group and accept their targeted status as deserved, natural, and inevitable.
- Institutional Oppression – the network of institutional structures, policies, and practices that create advantages and benefits for members of the dominant group(s) while keeping those advantages and benefits systematically unavailable to members of targeted groups in ways that result in their discrimination, disadvantage, and oppression while also ensuring their continued targeted group status. The ways in which systems of oppression are written down, codified, supported, and maintained by institutions (such as banks, schools, organizations, corporations, religious institutions, government, media, etc.) and the ways they work to create and maintain inequality and oppression. *See also: Systemic/Structural Oppression*
- Islamophobia – prejudice and/or discrimination against people who are or who are perceived to be Muslim, and a fear or dislike of Islamic culture. The fear and hatred of Islam and its adherents that becomes individual, ideological, and systemic forms of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression of Muslims and those thought to be Muslims.

J

- Justice/Social Justice – a process, not an outcome, which seeks fair (re)distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities; challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action.

K

- KAC – Kick Ass Consultants – a group of consultants dedicated applying a racial equity lens to their areas of work. (Sharifa, Jasmine and Melia are part of KAC)

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, and the process by which we bring this about.
- Lived Experience – the events, circumstances, choices, and experiences of a person, and the knowledge, understanding, and perspective they gained from these experiences
- Love – encompasses a range of strong and positive emotional and mental states, from the most sublime virtue or good habit, the deepest interpersonal affection, to the simplest pleasure; a deep and tender feeling of affection for or attachment or devotion to a person or persons; to feel and act lovingly, with high regard and care. “Love is a word, another kind of open.” (Audre Lorde)

M

- Marginalization – the process that occurs when members of a dominant group relegate a particular group(s) to the edge of society by not allowing them an active voice, identity, place, or resources for the purpose of maintaining power. *See also: Othering*
- Microaggression – a comment or action that unconsciously or unintentionally expresses or reveals a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group. These include insults, slights, stereotyping, undermining, devaluing, delegitimizing, overlooking, or excluding someone. Over time, microaggressions can isolate and alienate those on the receiving end and affect their health and wellbeing. Microaggressions are expressions of oppression.
- Minoritized Identity – a term used in place of minority to highlight the social oppression that minoritizes individuals. Their status as a minority is a systemic function within a racialized hierarchy that advantages and disadvantages groups differently. Thus, the term minoritized uses active voice to reveal the system of social oppression that is often rendered unseen through the use of passive voice within the term minority. *See also: Marginalization, Targeted Identity*
- Misogyny – hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women. It is a form of sexism that is used to keep women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the social roles of patriarchy. *See also: Patriarchy, Sexism*

N

- Nope – a way of responding to bullshit. And a major motion picture by Jordan Peele

O

- Objectivity – the quality of being able to make a decision or judgment in a way that is not influenced by personal feelings or beliefs; the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or “neutral;” the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process; assigning value to the “rational” while invalidating and/or shaming the “emotional;” requiring people to think in a linear fashion and ignoring or invalidating/shaming those who think in other ways. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, One Right Way, Paternalism, Perfectionism, Qualified*
- One Right Way – the belief there is one right way to do things. Connected to the belief in an objective “perfect” that is both attainable and desirable for everyone. Connected to the belief that I am qualified to know what the perfect right way is for myself and others. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Objectivity, Perfectionism, Paternalism, Qualified*
- Oppression – a systematic social phenomenon based on the perceived and real differences among social groups. This system involves the ideological domination, institutional control, and the promulgation of the ideology, logic system, and culture of the group in power. The result is the exploitation of one social group (a targeted/subordinated/minoritized/marginalized group) by another (an advantaged/dominant/privileged group). A shorthand way of understanding oppression: prejudice + social power/privilege = oppression. There are 4 interlocking aspects of oppression, all of which are occurring simultaneously: ideological oppression, institutional oppression, interpersonal oppression, and internalized oppression. *See also: Dominant Identity, Ideological oppression, Institutional Oppression, Internalized Oppression, Interpersonal Oppression, Targeted Identity*
- Othering – the perception or placing of a person or a group outside and/or in opposition to what is considered to be the norm. Othering is based on a conscious or unconscious assumption that a certain targeted group poses a threat to the favored or dominant group. *See also: Marginalization*

P

- Paternalism – when those holding power assume they are qualified to (and entitled to) define standards and the one right way, control the information and who has access to it,

and make decisions for and in the interests of those without power. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Objectivity, One Right Way, Perfectionism, Qualified*

- Patriarchy – a social system in which positions of dominance and privilege are primarily held by men, in which men have social privileges over others causing exploitation or oppression, such as through male dominance of moral authority and control of property. *See also: Misogyny, Sexism*
- Perfectionism – the tendency to demand of others or of oneself an extremely high or even flawless level of performance, in excess of what is required by the situation. Linked to the white supremacy culture characteristic of one right way, where the demand for perfection assumes that we know what perfection is while others are doing it wrong or falling short. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Objectivity, One Right Way, Paternalism, Qualified*
- Performative activism – activism done to increase one's social capital rather than because of one's devotion to a cause; when someone does or says something to increase their social capital (e.g., posts something held as a popular belief or slogan for likes and follows) without actually doing anything (or sometimes even knowing anything) about what they are saying.
- Power Hoarding – the concentration of power in a few hands, especially in the hands of members of dominant groups, in a social justice context. Power is seen as limited, with only so much to go around, and there is little, if any, value around sharing power.
- Prejudice (conscious and unconscious) – a set of (usually negative) personal beliefs, feelings, preconceived opinions, and/or prejudgments about a social group. Prejudice is often based on stereotypes, can be conscious (prejudice we are aware of) or unconscious (that which we are not), and can lead to actions that result in discrimination or oppression.
- Privilege – unearned access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that dominant groups receive, implicitly or explicitly, by virtue of their position in an oppressive society. This ability to shape the norms and values of society means that members of dominant groups are more likely to experience a sense of belonging in society and in most places they go and move within mainstream society. *See also: Advantage, Belonging, Dominant*
- Progress = Bigger/More – the cultural assumption that the goal is always to be/do/get more and be/do/get bigger. This leads to an emphasis on what we can "objectively" measure—how well we are doing at being/doing/getting more—as more valuable than the quality of our relationships to all living beings. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Quantity over Quality*
- Pronouns – words a person chooses to describe themselves and that we use to refer to and describe other people.

Q

- Qualified – a belief those of dominant groups can internalize in which they assume their own inherent qualifications to "improve" whatever is in front of them that is "broken," also without acknowledging or seeing their role in breaking it. This internalized assumption becomes an unnamed way of being, a conditioned impulse to "help" others out of a what feels like a benign sense that they know (and themselves define and embody) the right or best way with little or no understanding of how limited they really are. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Objectivity, One Right Way, Paternalism, Perfectionism*
- Quantity over Quality – the belief that things that can be counted are more highly valued than things that cannot, with little or no value attached to process; the internalized belief that if it can't be measured, it has no value. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Progress = Bigger/More*
- Queer – an umbrella identity term used by people who do not conform to heterosexual and/or gender binary norms. A reclaimed derogatory slur taken as a political term to unite people who are marginalized because of their non-conformity to dominant gender identities and/or heterosexuality.

R

- Racism – a system of advantage based on race and supported by institutional structures, policies, and practices that create and sustain advantages for the dominant white group while systematically subordinating members of targeted groups. This relative advantage for white people and subordination for people of color is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms, and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.
- Reverse -isms – a false equivalence claiming that discrimination against those who are privileged is equivalent to oppression (it is not, which means reverse -isms do not exist).
- Religious Intolerance – the inability of an adherent of a particular religion to acknowledge, accommodate, and accept the right of others to live by another faith different from their own, justified by and colluding with the perceived superiority of one religion over the others. Involves acts denying the right of people of another religious faith to practice and express their beliefs freely.
- Right to Comfort – the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing 'logic' over emotion); the internalization that I or we have a right to comfort means we cannot tolerate conflict, particularly open conflict. *See also: White Supremacy Culture, Fear of Open Conflict*

- Reparations – a process of repairing, healing and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families. Those groups that have been injured have the right to obtain from the government, corporation, institution or family responsible for the injuries that which they need to repair and heal themselves. In addition to being a demand for justice, it is a principle of international human rights law.
- Restorative Justice – an approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of crime, violence, or other harm. Restorative justice is rooted in indigenous and Native American practices of communal restitution and mediation as a means of addressing conflict. Originally, a significant part of its function was to return a balance of power to the impacted parties. *See also: Transformative Justice*

S

- Saviorism – a tendency of people, typically with social privilege, to work from the assumption that those of marginalized or oppressed communities need to be helped or saved. Furthermore, their involvement to that end rarely involves input from those they are attempting to help, as such has little impact on the actual systems of oppression at hand.
- Scarcity – a concept in which the demand for something (e.g., resources, attention, love, power) is greater than the availability of that thing; deals with how people satisfy unlimited wants and needs with limited resources (or resources that are perceived to be limited) and can limit the choices available to the people of society often based on their social identity group
- Settler Colonialism – refers to colonization in which colonizing powers create permanent or long-term settlement on land owned and/or occupied by other peoples, often by force. This contrasts with colonialism where colonizers focus only on extracting resources back to their countries of origin. Settler Colonialism typically includes oppressive governance, dismantling of indigenous cultural forms, and enforcement of codes of superiority (such as white supremacy). Examples include white European occupations of land in what is now the United States, Spain’s settlements throughout Latin America, and the Apartheid government established by White Europeans in South Africa. Per Dina Gillio-Whitaker, “Settler Colonialism may be said to be a structure, not an historic event, whose endgame is always the elimination of the Natives in order to acquire their land, which it does in countless seen and unseen ways. These techniques are woven throughout the US’s national discourse at all levels of society. Manifest Destiny—that is, the US’s divinely sanctioned inevitability—is like a computer program always operating unnoticeably in the

background. In this program, genocide and land dispossession are continually both justified and denied." *See also: Colonialism*

- Sexism – the cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women and gender-expansive people, and denigrate values and practices associated with women and femininity. *See also: Misogyny, Patriarchy*
- Sizeism – a set of beliefs, practices, procedures, and laws that devalue, discriminate against, and oppress people on the basis of weight and/or body size. The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are larger than the socially-constructed norm for body size. *See also: Fatphobia, Weightism*
- Social Construct – the patterns of human interaction (often deemed to be normal, natural or universal) that are humanly-produced and constructed by social expectation and coercion but are presented as “objective.” For example, the erroneous assumption of women being better at housework is not at all connected to their female anatomy, but to social expectations and pressures imposed on women.
- Social Identities – group memberships that are assigned to us, often at birth, based on appearance, genetics, place/country of birth, family characteristics, etc. These identities are used to group, label, and make generalized assumptions about our behavior, interests, personality, intelligence, etc. Examples of social identities are age, ability/disability, gender, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, social class, size, etc. *See also: Identity*
- Socialization – the process through which we become accustomed to societal norms, i.e. rules about appropriate or acceptable social identities, beliefs, and behaviors. We are bombarded by these messages even before we are born. These messages are offered by a widening social network (interpersonal, institutional, structural). Through socialization, we learn about social identity categories, such as socioeconomic status, race, assigned sex, gender, religion, health status, sexual orientation, many other social identity categories, as well as the boundaries of human worth and value.
- Sovereignty – the defining authority within individual consciousness, social construct, or territory. Sovereignty describes the authority who is setting the norms, making the rules, writing the laws and practices, defining the borders, etc. of a person, group of people, institution, and/or state.
- Status Quo – the existing state of affairs, particularly with regard to social, political, religious or military issues. In the sociological sense, the status quo refers to the current state of social structure and values.
- Stereotype – a widely-held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person that involves a judgment of habits, traits, abilities, or expectations. A stereotype is

assigned as a characteristic to all members of a group regardless of individual differences, personalities, and behavior and with no attention to the relationship between the stereotype and the social context in which it arises.

- Supremacy – the state or condition of being superior to all others in authority, power, or status; an ideology or collection of ideas that encourages us to value certain (dominant) groups and their culture, characteristics, and ideology more highly and above other (targeted) groups and their cultures.
- Systemic/Structural Oppression – the network of institutional structures, policies, and practices that create advantages and benefits for members of the dominant group(s) while keeping those advantages and benefits systematically unavailable to members of targeted groups in ways that result in their discrimination, disadvantage, and oppression while also ensuring their continued targeted group status. The ways in which systems of oppression are written down, codified, supported, and maintained by institutions (such as banks, schools, organizations, corporations, religious institutions, government, media, etc.) and the ways they work to create and maintain inequality and oppression. *See also: Institutional Oppression*

T

- Targeted Identity – an identity or social group that is negatively valued, considered to be inferior, deviant, or dependent, and has limited access to social power and resources. *See also: Minoritized Identity*
- Transphobia – the fear, intolerance, or hatred of atypical gender expression or identity, or of people embodying or expressing an atypical gender identity.
- Tone Policing – a conversational tactic that dismisses the ideas being communicated when they are perceived to be delivered in an angry, frustrated, sad, fearful or otherwise emotionally charged manner. Tone policing is often a display of fragility used to avoid accountability and repair.
- Transformative Justice – a political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence and/or engaging in harm reduction to lessen the violence. TJ can be thought of as a way of “making things right,” getting in “right relation,” or creating justice together. Transformative justice responses and interventions 1) do not rely on the state (e.g. police, prisons, the criminal legal system, I.C.E., foster care system (though some TJ responses do rely on or incorporate social services like counseling); 2) do not reinforce or perpetuate violence such as oppressive norms or vigilantism; and most importantly, 3) actively cultivate the things we know prevent violence such as healing, accountability, resilience,

and safety for all involved. Transformative justice emerged in the late 1990's as an adaptation of restorative justice that sought to address the social inequities and environmental factors that allowed the harm to be done in the first place. *See also: Restorative Justice*

- Triggers – in psychology, sensory reminders that cause traumatic memories or certain symptoms to resurface. In this context, anything that activates the nervous system (or our fight-or-flight response), making us feel uncomfortable, ashamed, or any number of (usually) negative emotions. Triggers are also known as hot buttons or activators, named for that feeling you get when you find one.

U

- Urgency – applying the urgency of racial and social justice to our everyday lives in ways that perpetuate power imbalance and disregard for our need to breathe and pause and reflect. The irony is that this imposed sense of urgency serves to erase the actual urgency of tackling racial and social injustice. *See also: White Supremacy Culture*

V

- Vulnerability – uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. That unstable feeling we get when we step out of our comfort zone or do something that forces us to loosen control.

W

- Weaponization – the act of making something ready to use in order to deliberately inflict harm on people; the act of making something into or using it as a weapon or a potential weapon
- Weightism – a set of beliefs, practices, procedures, and laws that devalue, discriminate against, and oppress people on the basis of weight and/or body size. The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are larger than the socially-constructed norm for body size. *See also: Fatphobia, Sizeism*
- White Supremacy Culture – the widespread ideology baked into the beliefs, values, norms, and standards of our groups (many if not most of them), our communities, our towns, our states, our nation, teaching us both overtly and covertly that whiteness holds value, whiteness is value. It teaches us that Blackness is not only valueless but also dangerous and threatening. It teaches us that Indigenous people and communities no longer exist, or if they do, they are to be exoticized and romanticized or culturally appropriated as we continue to violate treaties, land rights, and humanity. It teaches us that people south of the border are "illegal." It teaches us that Arabs are Muslim and that Muslim is "terrorist." It

teaches us that people of Chinese and Japanese descent are both indistinguishable and threatening as the reason for Covid. It pits other races and racial groups against each other while always defining them as inferior to the white group. The characteristics of white supremacy culture include *fear, one right way, either/or & the binary, denial & defensiveness, right to comfort & fear of conflict, individualism, progress is more & quantity over quality, worship of the written word, and urgency.*

- White Tears – a reaction (typically an overreaction) from white people who get upset at things and people they think threaten their white privilege
- Worship of the Written Word – honoring only what is written and even then only what is written to a narrow standard, even when what is written is full of misinformation and lies. An erasure of the wide range of ways we communicate with each other and all living things. *See also: White Supremacy Culture*

X

- Xenophobia – any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and is a function of White supremacy.


Y

- Y'all – the traditionally southern contraction for “you all” which works as an inclusive greeting or acknowledgement as opposed to a binary of “Ladies and Gentlemen.” etc. Other inclusive greetings to consider, “folks”, “friends”, “esteemed guests” among others
- Yinz – the Pittsburgh PA and surrounding area’s version of “y’all” perhaps once a contraction of “you ones.” No one really knows. (which is likely not accurate, but Melia, who was born and raised in Pittsburgh doesn’t know, and hasn’t taken the time to seek out the history of the dialect. Would you consider that lazy? Or perhaps distracted by the work of social change?)

Z

No entries for Z.... Yet!

Sources as of 4.17.2023



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