

Unlearning Racism: Tools for Action
Terminology Definitions
Session #1



Access – The ability, right, or permission to approach, enter, speak with, or use. In relationship to race: the access racial identity gives some but not others to positions of authority, higher education, financial resources, and even social standing.

Anti-Racist – Ibram X. Kendi states - an antiracist expresses an antiracist idea or supporting an antiracist policy with their actions. An antiracist idea is any idea that says racial groups are equal.

Discrimination – Denial of justice and fair treatment for a person or group based on their social identity (race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin).

Intersectionality – Wikipedia defines it as the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Kimberle Crenshaw indicates intersectionality operates as both the observance and analysis of power imbalances and the tool by which those power imbalances can be eliminated altogether.

Oppression – A system of structured inequality where goods, services, rewards, and benefits are available to individuals on the basis of their social identity group.

Power – The ability to name or define or decide; to set or change a rule, standard or policy. In analyzing race issues, it is important to think about who has the power in the situation – personal, institutional or structural power.

Prejudice – A negative preconceived opinion formed without knowledge or reason. Prejudice is often based on stereotypes about a group of people which can lead to discrimination.

Privilege - A benefit received by a person or group beyond the advantages of most. Activist Peggy McIntosh says, “white privilege is an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to stay oblivious.”

Racial justice - Analyzing norms, policies and structures within organizations and businesses that perpetuate racism in order to strengthen practices and attitudes that produce equitable opportunities and treatment for all.

Racial equity – All people have full participation and access to the benefits and institutions of society free from discrimination. These include health care, education, safe and affordable neighborhoods, sustainable employment, and the right to vote. Equity differs from equality by taking into consideration differences in circumstance and advantage to better ensure fair access to opportunities.

Racism – Race-based prejudice + skin-color privilege + power to discriminate or oppress.

Stereotype - A formulaic and oversimplified notion. Stereotypes make people conform to a set image or type.

White supremacy – The belief that white people are superior to all other races and should therefore have society structured around their preferences; an attitude of superiority that can be subconsciously internalized without ever actively advocating a white supremacist state.