

Word (part of speech) - Definition(s) and working example(s)

SOURCE:

CONTEXT: Historical and/or cultural context

Absolution (n) – formal release from guilt, obligation, or punishment.

Accomplice (n) – a person who goes beyond reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of others, strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression, and may even experience loss and/or risk alongside people who are oppressed. Combining or uniting a resource, understanding, or commodity with another for mutual benefit.

Accountability (n) – the fact or condition of being accountable for both past and present actions; responsibility.

In the context of equity work, accountability refers to 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.

Ally (n) – someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and works 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. (*see Accomplice, Anti-racist*)

SOURCE: 1. OpenSource Leadership Strategies, [The Dynamic System of Power, Privilege, and Oppression](#) (2008). 2. [Center for Assessment and Policy Development](#)

Anti-Blackness (n) – the devaluing of Black people, bodies, and culture as a racial group, while also marginalizing Black people and their issues. Anti-Blackness presents as overt racism, as well as covert structural and systemic racism, which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Black people. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies.

SOURCE: The Movement for Black Lives, Council for Democratizing Education

Anti-racism (n) – the work of actively disrupting racism by developing, implementing and/or advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life.

SOURCE: Race Forward, "[Race Reporting Guide](#)" (2015)

Anti-racist (n) – someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

SOURCE: Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019

Assimilation (n) – the process of taking in and fully understanding information or ideas often by erasing a group or individual’s own culture. This is seen when one assumes the values, behaviors, and beliefs of another group, often in service of survival, and in particular within communities of color.

Caucus (affinity group) (n) – an identity-based group of people.

A caucus is an intentionally created space for those who share an identity to convene for learning, support, and connections. Caucuses based on racial identity are often comprised, respectively, of people of color, white people, people who hold multiracial identities, or people who share specific racial or ethnic identities.

SOURCE: RacialEquityTools.org, [ACT / Strategies / Caucus and Affinity Groups](#)

Code-switching (v) – the practice of alternating between two or more cultures, languages, etc. in a conversation, often in service of survival.

Collaboration (n) – the action of working with someone or a group to accomplish or produce something together.

Collaborative Action Network (CAN) (n) – partners and stakeholders convened around a specific outcome to collectively take aligned action on a common agenda; includes the development, implementation and measurement of adaptive solutions.

Collectivism (n) – the practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it, the cultural norm of identifying as a collective versus as an individual.

Colonization (v) – some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion 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.

Colorblind (adj) – a lack of awareness of the impacts of racism or any other forms of prejudice related to racial, cultural or national origin.

Colorism (n) – prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark or darker skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.

Community Engagement (v) – the act of being in relationship with people within an identified boundary; typically, people who do not traditionally have authority or influence within an organization or system.

Community Engagement Spectrum (n) – a tool for identifying the type of relationship being held with the community and the context of the work being done technical versus adaptive; includes inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower. (*see Community, Community Engagement*)

SOURCE: adapted from the International Association for Public Participation and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Community Impact Manager (n) – backbone staff member charged with facilitation, project management, communications, strategy development, implementation and coaching at a program level (CANs, taskforces, councils, forums, etc.) as well as partnership development and community/partner engagement at the systems level (onboarding, trainings, retention, etc.)

Community Members (n) – individuals who are within our network and partnership and are most impacted by decisions made.

Community Partners – individuals who represent their community or neighborhood and get their informal authority from their spheres of influence such as neighborhoods and informal associations.

Cultural Appropriation (v) – 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.

SOURCE: Colors of Resistance Archive, “[Cultural Appropriation](#)” (accessed 28 June 2013)

Culture (n) – the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.

A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

SOURCE: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, [A Community Builder's Tool Kit](#), Appendix I (2000)

Dimensions of Diversity (n) – include gender, religious beliefs, race, marital status, ethnicity, parental status, age, education, physical and mental ability, income, sexual orientation, occupation, language, geographic location, and many more components.

Disparity (n) – a gap that signifies a difference or inequality between two things or groups.

Domain (n) – a single broad area containing related and fundamental elements of a structure, mission or vision of a program, organization, or entity.

Equality (n) – equal distribution of resources and/or access.

Equity (n) – shared ownership; distribution of resources or actions taken responsive to the traits, lived experience, and values of individuals or groups.

Equity Pledge (n) – a document co-developed by the EP POC Only CAN and the taskforce of leaders representing all the of the EP stakeholder groups outlining the shared understanding, vision and commitment to taking continuous action towards reducing harm and increasing equity, specifically as it relates to racism and its impacts.

Ethnicity (n) – a social group that has a common national or cultural identity, or tradition.

Gracious Space (n) – a spirit and a setting where we learn in public and acknowledge the feeling, person, idea, demographic that is not currently present in a room or setting.

Inclusion (n) – the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

SOURCE: [OpenSource Leadership Strategies](#)

Individualism (n) – a social theory favoring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control.

Institutional (adj) – established as a convention or norm in an organization or culture; things that occur without saying across organizations, sectors, groups etc.

Integration (n) – the intermixing of people or groups previously segregated without losing their norms, values, language, etc.

Internalized Racial Superiority (n) – cultural conditioning and mental models that make people believe themselves to be right, normal, good, and hyper-responsible.

Internalized Racism (n) – the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group’s power.

It involves four essential and interconnected elements:

1. Decision-making
2. Resources
3. Standards
4. Naming the problem

SOURCE: Donna Bivens, [Internalized Racism: A Definition](#) (Women’s Theological Center, 1995)

Interpersonal (adj) – relating to relationships or communication between people.

Intersectionality (n) – a prism to see the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment. It looks at the way that race, many times, interacts with other dimensions of diversity, for example gender, sexual orientation, class, xenophobia — seeing that the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually create specific kinds of challenges.

SOURCE: Intergroup Resources, [Intersectionality](#) (2012), Otamere Guobadia, [Kimberlé Crenshaw and Lady Phyll Talk Intersectionality, Solidarity, and Self-Care](#) (2018)

Learnings (n) – the ways in which things expand, contract and/or adapt; consciousness. (*see Equity Pledge*)

Levers (n) – elements, conditions, patterns of behavior and structures that can be adapted to change current outcomes. (*see Equity Pledge , Factors*)

Measurement (v) – the action of tracking something, particularly how we are working together and the lagging indicators – outcomes for kids; tracking the intended and unintended consequences of activity and inactivity. (*see Indicator, Lever, Performance Measure*)

Mental Models (n) – someone’s thought process about how something works in the world. Mental models help shape our behavior and define our approach to solving problems and carrying out tasks.

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey, Results Based Facilitation

Microaggression (n) – the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

SOURCE: Derald Wing Sue, PhD, [Microaggressions: More than Just Race](#) (Psychology Today, 17 November 2010). [APA Sycnet](#)

CONTEXT: Often leading to or resulting in trauma. [APA Sycnet](#)

Mindset (n) – attitude, values, assumptions, methods or notions held by someone.

Model Minority (n) – a term created by sociologist William Peterson to describe the Japanese community and now applied to people labeled Asian; rooted in colorism and anti-Blackness.

SOURCE: [Asian American Activism: The Continuing Struggle, Glossary](#) (2016)

Moving the Needle (v) – a term used to describe progress being made on an outcome.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities – actions taken by stakeholders that are both differentiated and coordinated through a plan of action.

Negative Feedback Loops (n) – elements designed to hold a system to some equilibrium, its purpose is to keep the system state called “room temperature” fairly constant at a desired level. Any negative feedback loop needs a goal (the thermostat setting), a monitoring and signaling device to detect excursions from the goal (the thermostat), and a response mechanism (the furnace and/or air conditioner, fans, heat pipes, fuel, etc.).

SOURCE: [Leverage Points Place to Intervene in a System](#), Donella Meadows

Neutral Facilitator (n) – a person skilled in working with groups, who helps the group address specific needs, gives the work back to the group, and does not use his/her/their authority to pursue a personal agenda.

SOURCE: Anne E. Casey, Results Based Facilitation

North Star (n) – a beacon of inspiration and hope; landmark that helps those who follow it determine direction as it glows brightly to guide and lead toward a purposeful destination.

Opportunity Gap (n) – disparity of inputs and resources available between two demographically distinct groups of students. (i.e. zip code, wealth, home stability, educational choice).

CONTEXT: This term more accurately describes the conditions students and youth face in their academic careers and beyond.

Oppression (n) – 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.

SOURCE: [What Is Racism?](#) – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) [web workbook](#)

Othering (v) – viewing or treating (a person or group of people) as intrinsically different from and alien to or less than oneself.

Participant (n) – individual contributing to the work of the Partnership, subset of the stakeholder group.

Partner (n) – individuals or entities who have formally agreed to exchange resources (time, treasure, talent).

Partnership (n) – a pair or group contributing to and/or engaged together in the same activity.

Performance Measure (n) – a statement or set of statements describing a desired task or outcome in order to increase transparency and accountability for an individual, group or organization. These sets of statements can capture the progress made toward an ultimate goal.

Person – Role – System Framework (n) – a practice designed to identify a person’s individual preferences and style and personal and professional experiences as well as the role he or she plays in formal and informal systems.

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation

Positive Feedback Loops (n) – enhance or amplify changes, tends to move a system away from its equilibrium state, sources of growth, explosion, erosion, and collapse in systems. For example, “success to the successful” loops.

SOURCE: [Leverage Points Place to Intervene in a System](#), Donella Meadows

Power Hoarding (n) – concentrating power into one or a few people.

Privilege (n) – unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

SOURCE: Colours of Resistance Archive, "[Privilege](#)" (accessed 28 June 2013)

Professional Development (n) – the practice of educating and equipping staff with the skills and behaviors leading to productive and supportive interactions with students and youth.

Program Quality (n) – the intentional practice of aligning a program to the needs and requirements of the participants.

Programmatic (adj) – action that is situational or implemented within a set timeframe, not perpetual.

Qualitative (adj) – non-numerical data obtained through description, observation, lived experience.

Quality Scale (n) – measure of a program's current state based on a specific indicator.

Quantitative (adj) – numerical data in the form of counts and numbers providing information on how much, how many, when.

Race (n) – a category of people who share a distinctive physical trait. A human-invented social construct; classification system used as a tool for oppression and violence.

Racial Healing (v) – restoring to health or soundness; repairing or setting right; to restore to spiritual wholeness

SOURCE: Michael R. Wenger, [Racial Equity Resource Guide](#) (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2012)

Results at the Center (n) – a visual process allowing individuals to list contributions that partners and stakeholders make in moving toward the result of any particular strategy. This chart is often represented as a series of co-centric circles allowing the viewer to see what sectors are missing or over-represented in the work.

SOURCE: [Putting Results at the Center Worksheet](#) – Jolie Bain Pillsbury – [Theory of Aligned Contributions](#)

Results (n) – a consequence, effect, or outcome of something.

Sector (n) – groupings that share the same or related services/products; and which are distinct from each other; subset of the community. Can also be thought of as an industry or market.

SOURCE: [Investopedia](#). Example: Faith-based, private, education, healthcare, etc.

Shared Accountability (n) – the recognition and commitment of every stakeholder that is related to the results to hold themselves in intentional aligned action toward better outcomes.

Shared Measurement (n/v) – collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants to ensure activities remain aligned, decisions are data-driven and participants hold each other accountable.

Shared power (n) – the distribution of authority, power, and/or influence, helps reduce conflicts between groups.

Situational (adj) – element that is person, place and/or time dependent.

Small Test of Change (n) – implementation of an intervention (strategy, solution, tactic, etc.) for a short duration of time within an area or population of focus.

Structural (adj) – element that is woven into and/or a part of a complex whole.

Systemic (adj) – element that is spread throughout the system and occurs without being prompted.

Trauma (n) – damage to a person's mind because of one or more events that cause overwhelming amounts of stress that exceed the person's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved, eventually leading to serious, long-term negative consequences; also passed along generation to generation.

Validation (v) – the act of centering people, for whom changes are being made, in gaining clarity and measurement.

Values (n) – a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life; often internalized norms from social groups or familial origins.

White Supremacy (n) – the belief and construction of norms that centers White people as a superior race that should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, particularly Black people.

Whiteness (n) – refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of color. Whites are theorized as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialization and the individual and collective consciousness formed within it; conceptualized as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e., skin color alone). Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people.

SOURCE: PBS, [Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) (2018–2019 relaunch of [2003 series](#)), Robin DiAngelo, [White Fragility](#) (International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 2011)

Zero-sum Mindset (n) – thinking perceives situations as zero-sum games, where one person's gain would be another's loss.