



LEXICON OF SOME  
IMPORTANT TERMS TO  
KNOW ABOUT RACISM

## Table of Contents

Ally .....	1
BIPOC .....	1
Discrimination .....	1
Diversity .....	1
Implicit (or Hidden or Unconscious) Bias .....	1
Institutional Racism.....	1
Interpersonal Racism .....	2
Intersectionality .....	2
Microaggression or Micro-aggression .....	2
Privilege.....	2
Racial Inequity.....	2
Racial Justice .....	2
Racism .....	3
Structural Racism .....	3
Systemic Racism .....	3
Visible Minority.....	3
White Privilege.....	3
White Supremacy.....	4
Whiteness .....	4
Additional Resources .....	5

## Ally

To be an ally is to...

1. Take on the struggle as your own.
2. Stand up, even when you feel scared.
3. Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.
4. Acknowledge that while you, too, feel pain, the conversation is not about you.

To be an ally is to unite oneself with another to promote a common interest. As demonstrated above, people who are allies are not only helpers, but also have a common interest with those they desire to help. In an alliance, both parties stand to benefit from the bond or connection they share.

## BIPOC

The term BIPOC stands for 'Black, Indigenous, People of Color,' it is meant to unite all people of color in the work for liberation while intentionally acknowledging that not all people of color face the same levels of injustice.

By specifically naming Black and Indigenous people we are recognizing that Black and Indigenous people face the worst consequences of systemic white supremacy, classism and settler colonialism.

## Discrimination

Discrimination is an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons such as their race, age or disability. These reasons, also called grounds, are protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

## Diversity

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

## Implicit (or Hidden or Unconscious) Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves.

## Institutional Racism

*(Also see Systemic Racism)*

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

## Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

## Intersectionality

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. A theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, height etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination. Intersectionality identifies injustices that are felt by people due to a combination of factors.

## Microaggression or micro-aggression

A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority. An indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group.

## Privilege

*(Also see White Privilege)*

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 because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

## Racial Inequity

Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing. such as the percentages of each ethnic group in terms of dropout rates, single family home ownership, access to healthcare, etc.

## Racial Justice

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. Racial Justice [is defined] as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

## Racism

Racism is the belief that characteristics and abilities can be attributed to people simply on the basis of their race and that some racial groups are superior to others. Racism and discrimination have been used as powerful weapons encouraging fear or hatred of others in times of conflict and war, and even during economic downturns.

## Structural Racism

The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

## Systemic Racism

*(Also see Institutional Racism)*

Includes the policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary. (Toronto Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations. Race Relations: Myths and Facts)

It manifests itself in two ways:

1. *Institutional Racism*: racial discrimination that derives from individuals carrying out the dictates of others who are prejudiced or of a prejudiced society.
2. *Structural Racism*: inequalities rooted in the system-wide operation of a society that excludes substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in major social institutions. (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 352)

## Visible Minority

In Canada, the Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "people, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The construction of the "visible minority" category for the purposes of employment equity draws upon the historical perceptions of racism and societal disadvantages that ensue. Such a categorization pre-supposes a world where we are divided between the dominant Caucasians and the subordinate non-Caucasians. For the purposes of "race categorization", you are either Caucasian, non-Caucasian or Aboriginal.

## White Privilege

*(Also see Privilege)*

1. Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally, white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

2. The accumulated and interrelated advantages and disadvantages of white privilege that are reflected in racial/ethnic inequities in life-expectancy and other health outcomes, income and wealth and other outcomes, in part through different access to opportunities and resources. These differences are maintained in part by denying that these advantages and disadvantages exist at the structural, institutional, cultural, interpersonal and individual levels and by refusing to redress them or eliminate the systems, policies, practices, cultural norms and other behaviors and assumptions that maintain them.
  - **Structural White Privilege:** A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal. **Interpersonal White Privilege:** Behavior between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.
  - **Cultural White Privilege:** A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonizes other world views.
  - **Institutional White Privilege:** Policies, practices and behaviors of institutions that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white.

## White Supremacy

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. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and "undeserving." Drawing from critical race theory, the term "white supremacy" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

## Whiteness

1. The term white, referring to people, was created by Virginia slave owners and colonial rules in the 17th century. It replaced terms like Christian and Englishman to distinguish European colonists from Africans and indigenous peoples. European colonial powers established whiteness as a legal concept after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite.
2. Whiteness itself refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of color. 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.

## Additional Resources

- <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>
- <https://blackmentalhealth.ca/>
- [Black Youth Helpline: 1-833-294-8650](#)
- [eMentalHealth](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Employee Pride Network](#)
- [Employees with Disabilities Network](#)
- [ESDC Visible Minority Network](#)
  - GD mailbox: [EDSC.Reseau.MV-VM.Network.ESDC@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:EDSC.Reseau.MV-VM.Network.ESDC@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)
- [Federal Black Employee Caucus](#)
- [Indigenous Employee's Circle \(IEC\)](#)
- [LifeSpeak](#) (mental health organization – Corporate ID: Canada)
- [Racial Equality Tools](#)
- [Youth Mandate for Greater INvovlement \(YMAGIN\)](#)

### ***Definition Sources:***

- [BIPOC Project](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service](#)
- <http://www.aclrc.com/forms-of-racism>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/05/health/racial-microaggressions-examples-responses-wellness/index.html>
- <https://www.globalissues.org/article/165/racism>
- <https://iog.ca/about/news/the-visible-minority-construct/>
- <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/ally>
- <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/intersectionality>
- <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/microaggression>
- <https://metro.co.uk/2020/06/04/what-systemic-racism-mean-12806367/>
- <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/bipoc-gnd-crash-course>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#implicit-bias>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#institutional-racism>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#interpersonal-racism>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#privilege>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#racial-inequality>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#racial-justice>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#structural-racism>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#white-privilege>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#white-supremacy>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#whiteness>
- [What does it mean to be an Ally?](#)
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>