

## INCLUSIVE TERMINOLOGY

### AAPI or API

“Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders” or “Asian-Pacific Americans”. This label has widespread usage across educational and political contexts and was intended to cast off the derogatory “oriental” term in the 1960s. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders share a number of intersecting histories and issues, though some consider the term too broad or reductionist. By reductionist we mean it reduces the nuanced and complex experiences of an individual to an overly simplistic, broad term.

### Ableism

Discrimination against disabilities and people with disabilities, stemming from the belief that there is an ideal non-disabled body or mind.

### Accessibility

The design, development or state of physical or digital environments, resources and services that are easy to reach, enter, use, see, etc. for all users.

### Affinity bias

The tendency to connect with people who look and seem most like ourselves.

### Affinity groups

A group of people who share the same interest or purpose such as gender, age, religion, race or sexual orientation.

### Affirmative action

The practice / policy of favoring individuals belonging to groups known to have been discriminated against previously.

### Ageism

Stereotyping and discriminating against individuals on the basis of their age.

### Ally

Ally is a term used for people who support a social group other than their own, by acknowledging disadvantage and oppression and taking action on the behalf of others.

### Allyship

Allyship is using your position of privilege to help people from one or more marginalized groups you don't identify with.

### Antiracist

According to Ibram X. Kendi, historian, author and director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University, an antiracist is “a person who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.” It's more than just ‘not being racist’, it's about actively fighting against racism.

### Antisemitism

Hostility, prejudice, or discrimination towards people in a Semitic group (people who identify

as Hebrew, people who are from Israel, or people who are from countries where Amharic, Arabic, or Aramaic are spoken. Most commonly used when referring to the prejudice or discrimination against people who practice Judaism or identify as Jewish.

#### Arab

Refers to people who have ethnic lineage in Arabic majority speaking countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

#### Asexual

Refers to a person who doesn't experience sexual attraction. This can be shortened to Ace, an umbrella term used to describe a variation in levels of romantic and/or sexual attraction, including a lack of attraction.

#### Assimilation

The process by which a minority or marginalized group sacrifices their own culture or belief systems to integrate socially, culturally, and/or politically into the larger, dominant culture and society to be accepted.

#### Atheism

Disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of a god or gods.

#### Attribution error

Using a false assumption to explain someone's behavior.



#### Behavioral diversity

Behavioral diversity relates to personal experiences that help shape our world view to be more open-minded and accepting of others who are different than us.

#### Belonging

A feeling that you are valued for who you are within a group or community.

#### Bigotry

The state of mind of a person (called a bigot) that is intolerant and prejudiced of ideas, races, ethnicities, genders, or religions that are different from their own.

#### Binary gender system

The attitudes, beliefs, practices and laws in a society that assume and reinforce social norms that contend we live in a two-category gender system of (men/women).

#### Bisexual

An attraction towards more than one gender. People may also describe themselves as bi, queer, and other non-monosexual identities. See also Pansexual.

## Bias

Attitudes for or against a person, group or concept especially in a way considered to be unfair.

## Bicultural

Bicultural refers to having a combination of two distinct cultures. See also Multiracial.

## Biphobia

A strong dislike or fear of bisexual people and bisexuality. See also Homophobia and Lesbophobia.

## BIPOC

A term meaning “Black, indigenous, and people of color”. This term emerged in 2020 as an alternative to “People of color” to highlight that Black and indigenous groups have unique experiences of racism. However, BIPOC receives some of the same criticism as People of color for being too broad. See also Black and People of color.

## Black

A broad term for all people with ethnic origins in the African continent. Less commonly this term is used to refer to all people around the world who are not of white European descent. Note that we encourage capitalizing Black (when you’re talking about race) — this is consistent with usage for other ethnic groups like Asian, Arab, Latinx. In the US, the term Black or Black American is typically preferred over African-American for two reasons: it better describes folks who are many generations removed from African ancestors and don’t identify with Africa, and the term African-American has been criticized by some for being an overly politically correct alternative or even a euphemism for Black.

## Black Lives Matter

The global organization and movement that started in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin. BLM’s mission is to eradicate white supremacy and develop local power via community organizing and voting to strengthen the network of people in positions of power (legislators, policy-makers, community members) that will support efforts to intervene in police brutality and violence against Black people.

## BME or BAME

An acronym that stands for Black [and Asian] & minority ethnic. As with People of color (see below), there’s been some pushback to these terms in recent years for being too broad and reductionist. By reductionist we mean it reduces the nuanced and complex experiences of an individual to an overly simplistic, broad term.

## Brave space

An environment that challenges and encourages people from all social identity groups to be brave in their discomfort and equitably participate in challenging conversations that spark learning, sharing and growth

## Butch

Refers to a person with an overtly/stereotypically masculine or masculine-acting woman.

### Bystander effect (Bystander apathy)

The bystander effect is what happens when a person feels discouraged or is less likely to provide help to a person in distress (the victim of a crime or a bullying situation) because of the presence of other people. With the bystander effect, people assume someone else will step in and help and so no one does anything and the people who could have stepped in to help become a bystander.



### Chicano, Chicana, Chicanx, Chicane

Used to describe people of Mexican descent.

### Cisgender or Cis

Refers to a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Often used by cisgender allies who by using this term recognize that trans people exist and matter.

### Cisgender privilege

Cisgender privilege refers to advantages granted to someone solely because their gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

### Classism

The institutional, cultural, and individual belief system that assigns different values to people based on their socioeconomic level in society. This system typically assigns higher value to people from a high-income background and low-value to people from a low-income background.

### Coded language

The tactical use of seemingly neutral words or phrases to disguise alternative meanings (typically used by politicians to indirectly say racist, sexist, or xenophobic things). For example, using “inner city” or “urban” as code for Black people or using “radical Islam” as code for Muslim people. See dog whistle.

### Code-switching

Changing the way you look or act (sometimes unconsciously) to “fit in” with the dominant culture. See also Cover.

### Cognitive diversity

Cognitive diversity refers to differences in our perspective and the way we process information.

### Colorblind

Colorblindness is a form of subtle racism that takes on the belief that we live in a post-racial society and everyone, regardless of skin color, is treated equally and judged by their

character. Colorblindness ignores the reality that people in minority racial groups are treated differently and experience racism and discrimination because of their skin color.

#### Color brave

Being able to have candid conversations about race that can help us better understand each other's perspectives and experiences related to race.

#### Colorism

A form of social prejudice or discrimination that typically occurs within some BIPOC communities that give higher value to people with light skin and lower value to people with dark skin.

#### Confirmation bias

Seeking out or only noticing information that reinforces our existing beliefs.

#### Conscious prejudice

Preconceived, usually negative, feelings towards people because of a group they belong to, like religion, race, ethnicity or age.

#### Corporate social responsibility

A corporate business's responsibility to create a positive impact in its wider community. This includes requirements that are self-imposed and legally mandated.

#### Cover

The act of intentionally downplaying or not revealing something that makes you different from the dominant culture. See also Code-switching.

#### Creative abrasion

The practice and outcome of productively challenging ideas. Through healthy debate, groups can come up with a range of ideas.

#### Criminalization

The process of oppressing vulnerable groups (typically people experiencing poverty and mental health) by turning certain behaviors or activities into crimes. For example, laws that make it illegal to feed homeless people in public parks.

#### Critical Race Theory (CRT)

A framework that states race is a social construct, not a biological factor and was created to marginalize groups of people who are not in the dominant race.

#### Culture add

The diverse opinions, experiences, and specialized skills a person can add to company culture.

#### Cultural appreciation

The honest interest in different cultures that prompts a person to take the time to learn and understand a culture's unique customs and traditions.

### Cultural appropriation

When a person, group, or organization from a dominant culture takes aspects of a minority culture (usually ignoring the cultural significance or meaning) and uses it for exploitative reasons or personal gain.

### Culture fit

Alignment between an individual's attitudes, values, behaviors, and beliefs and an organization's core values and culture. Widely considered problematic in hiring and performance assessment as it favors people who "fit" the dominant culture norms, derailing efforts to diversify.

### Cultural messaging

The social messages in a society that shape our beliefs, attitudes, and opinions of ourselves and others.



### Deadnaming

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name, often associated with trans people who have changed their name. See also Transgender.

### DEI

An acronym that stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Variations can also include B for belonging and J for justice.

### Diaspora

A scattered population that originated from a different geographical area.

### Disability

A broad term that the [World Health Organization](#) describes as, "the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g., cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome and depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g., negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social supports)".

Many often use the word disability to refer to a physical or mental condition only but this fails to acknowledge the many barriers disabled people face that are a result of external factors.

### Discrimination

Discrimination is the behavior or action (usually negative) against a certain individual or group based on their shared characteristics. Discrimination can happen as a result of conscious prejudice or unconscious bias.

### Diversity

Diversity refers to the variation between people. This includes parts of our identity that are considered 'innate' (like race, age, nationality, etc.), and aspects that are 'acquired' like cultural fluency and languages spoken, according to global think tank [Coqual](#).

### Dog whistle

The subtle use of coded or suggestive language in political messages (often discriminatory or prejudiced in nature) that appear neutral to the general public but are intended to convey a secondary message to a targeted audience. See coded language.

### Dominant culture

The most common cultural practice where multiple cultures also exist. This might be a language in a country, a tradition in a geographic region or a set of social norms in a workplace.



### Emotional labor

The work we put into managing personal emotions at work. Originally coined by sociologist Arlie Hochschild to describe the need for people to manage emotions in specific professions, the term is now used more broadly. It's commonly associated with the emotional effort marginalized people have to put in at work to educate others or protect themselves against bias. See also Emotional tax.

### Emotional tax

The combination of being on guard to protect against bias, feeling different at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity, and the associated effects on health, wellbeing, and ability to thrive at work.

### Empathy fatigue

Happens when a person is emotionally or mentally triggered by the circumstances, traumas, and pain of others, a person feels less capable of being able to offer support due to the mental and emotional overload of empathizing with the experiences of others.

### Employee Resource Group (ERG)

A largely voluntary, employee-led group that promotes a diverse and inclusive workplace aligned with organizational goals and objectives. Also sometimes referred to as Business Resource Groups (BRGs) or Associate Resource Groups (ARGs).

### Environmental racism

The disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on communities with predominate people of color. Such as the Dakota Access Pipelines or disproportionately zoning warehouses or power plants to be built in communities of color.

### Equality

The state in which everyone is treated the same way, typically working with the assumption that everyone starts out on equal footing with equal opportunities.

### Equity

Working toward fair outcomes for people or groups by addressing their unique barriers.



### Ethnic groups

The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a shared cultural tradition.

### Ethnocentrism

The tendency to believe that your own ethnic group is centrally important and measure all others using the standards and customs of your own.



### First Nations

Refers to the Indigenous people who are not Métis or Inuit. Most commonly used in Canada but also used in North America and Australia.

### Femme

Femme is a term used in LGBTQIA+ community to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically feminine way.



### Gay

Describes someone who is attracted to people of the same sex as them. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality – it is typically associated with men but some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Note that homosexual is sometimes used but has medical connotations and a history of being used pejoratively.

### Gaslighting

A form of abusive manipulation that causes the victim to question their own reality.

### Gender

Gender is a social and cultural construct. Society has historically divided people into two categories: “female” and “male” — though people who identify as a gender beyond the female-male binary have been traced across different cultures and throughout history as seen in Hijra communities in India. Today, there are over 50 genders that are recognized and used in the English language.

### Gender dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is the discomfort felt by people who don’t identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender dysphoria is usually associated with transgender or genderqueer people.

### Gender expression

How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender.



### Gender identity

Gender identity is personal: it's our personal sense of our own gender.

### Gender non-conforming

Refers to the appearance or behavior of a person who does not conform to cultural or social norms relative to the social gender of their assigned sex.

### Gender privilege

Gender privilege usually refers to male privilege, meaning a set of unearned advantages granted to men on the basis of their gender.

### Gender reassignment

See Transitioning.

### Genderqueer

Someone whose gender identity does not fit the gender binary of "male" and "female". This can mean identifying as neither or both "male" and "female", or a combination of genders. See Non-binary.

### Gentrification

When people of a dominant group from mid-high socioeconomic backgrounds shift the economics or demographics of low-income, marginalized communities and develop homes, businesses, etc. that exclude and displace the people living in those communities.

### Global majority

A term used to describe the racial minority groups of people (BIPOC) who collectively make up 80% of the world population.

### Groupthink

The practice of thinking or making decisions as a group in a way that discourages creativity or individual responsibility.

### GSD

Acronym for Gender and Sexual Diversity.



### Hepeating

Publicized by astronomer Dr. Nicole Gugliucci, hepeating is a combination of the words "he" and "repeating". Hepeating is a situation where a man repeats a woman's comments or ideas and then is praised for them as if they were his own. See also Mansplain.

### Heteronormativity

The social and institutional systems that favor heterosexuality, based on the assumption that everyone is or should be straight.

### Heterosexual privilege

Heterosexual or 'straight' privilege refers to advantages granted to someone solely because of their heterosexual orientation.

### Heterosexism

Discrimination or prejudice against non-heterosexual people based on the belief that heterosexuality is normal and non-heterosexuality is not.

### Heterosexual

A person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex. Also referred to as straight.

### Hispanic

Refers to people in the Americas who speak Spanish as a first language or who have ancestral roots or lineage to Spanish-speaking countries. Hispanic people can be any race or ethnicity. See Latino and Latinx.

### Homophobia

A strong dislike or fear of homosexual people. See also Biphobia and Lesbophobia.

### Homosexual

Refers to a person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex. Note that the term can be considered offensive by some because of its history of being used pejoratively. Also see Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual.



### Identity-first language (IFL)

IFL is the use of language that recognizes that disability is an identifier that plays a role in who a person is. IFL is preferred by some self-advocates in the autistic, deaf, and blind communities. Examples of IFL include autistic person, blind person or disabled people.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is the practice of including people in a way that is fair for all, values everyone, and empowers each person to be themselves.

### Inclusive leader

A leader who intentionally welcomes and values contributions of all, encouraging team members to be candid, be themselves and dissent, resulting in a higher-performing team.

### Indigenous (First peoples, Native peoples)

Any group of people who are historically and ancestrally native to a specific region.

### Individual racism

Verbal or physical expressions of racism from person to person.

### In-group bias

The tendency to respond more positively to people from our in-groups than we do to people from our outgroups.

### Innate diversity

Innate diversity, also sometimes called inherent diversity, is the range of differences in people related to our identity that might shape our experience, including age, race, sexual orientation and nationality, according to global think tank [Coqual](#).

### Intergenerational

The interaction, involving of or relating to people of different age categories or generations.

### Intersectionality

Coined by scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, the term intersectionality refers to having multiple identities that intersect like gender, race, and sexual orientation, which sometimes can offer advantages in some ways, but disadvantages in other ways.

### Internalized racism

The feelings and beliefs we have about ourselves and others that are based on outside race-related experiences, societal norms and cultural messages.

### Internalized sexism

Explains how we think and feel about ourselves and others based on the gender role-related experiences, societal norms and cultural messages we see and experience in our society.

### Intersex

The term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological characteristics do not fit within traditional societal assumptions about what it means to be male or female.

### Institutional racism

Rules, policies, and treatment within an institution (school, hospital, courthouse, etc.) that discriminate.

### Institutional violence

The use of power to cause harm (ie. violation of human rights) and to enforce and uphold systemic oppression.

### Invisible disability (Hidden disability)

An umbrella term that refers to a physical, mental, or neurological disability a person can have that is not visible from the outside.

### Imposter syndrome

A psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their contribution to their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear that they will be exposed as a “fraud”.

### Islamophobia

The fear or hatred of Muslims and Islam.

## -Isms

Describes the attitudes, actions, or institutional structures that oppress a person or group because of their connection to a marginalized group such as race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), country (ethnocentrism), etc.



## Latino

A broad pan-ethnicity term that refers to people who are from or who have Latin American lineage. Many different races and ethnicities are Latino. Latino refers to people who are from or who have geographical lineage to South America, Central America and some countries in the Caribbean. See Latinx and Hispanic.

## Latinx

Pronounced “Latin ex”, Latinx is a gender-neutral term to refer to people of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity in the United States. In English, Latinx is sometimes preferred as Latino can sound less inclusive because of its grammatically masculine root. In Spanish, Latino can also refer to a group of different genders. Note that Latinx is still a new term and not everyone agrees with its use, with some preferring to be called Latino or Hispanic. See Latino and Hispanic.

## Lesbian

Refers to a woman who is attracted to women. Note that some women define themselves as gay or queer rather than lesbian.

## Lesbophobia

The fear or dislike of someone because they are or are perceived to be a lesbian. See also Biphobia and Homophobia.

## LGBTQ+/LGBTQI/LGBTQIA

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or allied + other gender variants. This is the most inclusive, all-encompassing term for the gay community, including those with non-cis gender identities.



## Mansplain

Mansplain is a combination of two words – “man” and “explain”. Mansplaining refers to a man explaining something to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing. See also Hepeating.

### Marginalized

The social (and sometimes physical) process of isolating or excluding a person or group of people from the dominant culture that limits a person or group's access to economic and social power and resources.

### MENA

The acronym for Middle East and North Africa, typically used to refer to the region. This broad term is often used to refer to culturally similar groups in the region and can be more inclusive than Arab, which excludes groups who do not speak Arabic.

### Mentor

A mentor supports and guides you in your professional world either within or outside your organization. See also Sponsor.

### Microaffirmations

Microaffirmations are small and often subtle actions of inclusion that give the receiver a feeling of being valued and a sense of belonging. These can be as small as making eye contact or acknowledging an accomplishment.

### Microaggression

Microaggressions are seemingly harmless but impactful everyday slights and exclusions directed to members of marginalized groups that negatively highlight their otherness. These can be verbal (jokes, quips or "banter") or non-verbal (staring, facial expressions like eyerolls).

### Middle Eastern

Describes people from the geographical region of the Middle East (Western Asia and Northern Africa). Geographically refers to people from the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Ethnically refers to the following groups: Arabs, Turks, Assyrians, Maronites, Turkomans, Persians, Kurds, Armenians, Druze, Somalis, Circassians, Copts, Azeris and Jewish. Many minority ethnicities and tribes within the mentioned regions are also considered Middle Eastern.

### Misogyny

Hatred, contempt, and prejudice against women.

### Model minority

A term created by sociologist William Peterson to describe the level of success Japanese Americans managed to reach despite being oppressed in internment camps and marginalized in American society. The model minority is also referred to as the model minority myth because it views Asian Americans as a monolith and disregards racism in America because of the success of a few.

## Multi-cultural competency

The ability to learn about and understand different cultures that broaden a person's ability to participate in a multicultural society.

Multiracial, mixed heritage, dual heritage, mixed-race, mixed-ethnicity – or simply “mixed” Terms describing a person who has parentage or ancestors from more than one ethnic and/or racial group. Note that some people can get confused between interracial and biracial. An *individual* can be described as biracial if their heritage is mixed; interracial, on the other hand, is used to describe *relationships or interactions* between individuals from different racial groups.



## Neurodiverse

A term coined by Australian sociologist Judy Singer to refer to the variation in our cognitive function. The word neurodiversity treats conditions that are classified as a developmental disability like autism or long-term mental health issues like bipolar disorder as part of human neurodiversity rather than a deficiency.

## Non-binary

Refers to a person who doesn't identify as only male or only female, or who identifies as both. See Genderqueer.



## Oppression

Being unjustly treated either at an individual or systematic level.

## Othering

Treating a person or group of people as different and usually inferior because they don't fit in the dominant culture. Othering creates an us-versus-them dynamic that excludes someone who is different.

## Outing

The act of revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to an individual or group without the person's consent or approval.

## Outgroup bias

The tendency to view people from outside our own group as less similar and, as a result, have negative biases against them.



### Pansexual or Pan

Refers to a person who is attracted to all genders or is attracted to others, regardless of their gender. The key difference between bisexual and pansexual is that bisexual means attraction to more than one gender, but not necessarily all. 'Pan' is Greek for all.

### People of color (POC)

An all-encompassing term for any group that isn't white. See also BIPOC.

### People-first language (PFL)

PFL focuses on using language that reflects that a person is not a disability, instead, a person has a disability. Instead of saying, "disabled person" when we use PFL we'd say "person with a disability," or "individuals with disabilities". See also Identity-first language (IFL).

### Performative allyship

Happens when someone from a non-marginalized group (white, able-bodied, straight, etc.) shows surface-level support and solidarity with a marginalized group in a way that either isn't helpful or that actively harms that group.

### Post-traumatic slave syndrome

A condition that exists in African Americans as a result of the multigenerational trauma of chattel slavery and the continued experience of oppression and institutionalized racism today.

### Prejudice

Refers to the (conscious or unconscious, positive or negative) attitudes and feelings a person has towards an individual or group of individuals based on certain traits.

### Privilege

One or a set of unearned benefits someone has solely because of their membership in a specific group. These groups are identity based and include race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and religion, as well as privilege related to wealth and class.

### Pronoun

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation – for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender-neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir. Note that most see their pronouns as just that, not their "preferred" pronouns.

### Psychological safety

Psychological safety, a term coined and defined by Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, is interpersonal trust that makes individuals feel they won't experience negative repercussions for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.





### Queer

A term to refer to people who don't identify with traditional categories of gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Note that it may be viewed to be derogatory by some, though it has gone through a recent phase of reclamation.

### QPOC/OTIPOC

QPOC is an acronym for Queer People of Color. Sometimes this extends to QTIPOC which stands for Queer, Transgender, and Intersex People of Color. Both are typically used in the UK and Canada.

### Questioning

Refers to anyone who is questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



### Racial profiling

The act of suspecting, targeting, and discriminating against a person based on their race or ethnicity and using negative racial stereotypes to justify the suspicion that a person has or is likely to commit a crime.

### Racism

Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior. Racism can be further defined as systemic or institutional, acknowledging that policies and structures can lead to racist outcomes.

### Reclamation (language)

The act of taking control of words and phrases and its associations by a social group who historically have experienced the same language used against them pejoratively. Reclaiming language is also known as linguistic reappropriation.

### Reparations

Recognize that governments have a legal duty to acknowledge and address widespread historical human rights violations caused by the government. Reparations are a form of compensation for the harm caused to people or the descendants of people who have experienced documented generational human rights violations.



### Safe space

An environment that provides the physical and emotional safety needed for people (often

those from marginalized groups) to come together to communicate, express themselves and fully participate without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.

### Sex

Sex is the biological category (female, male or intersex) given at birth based on physical characteristics, i.e. chromosomes and genitalia.

### Silencing

When people from a dominant social group dominate discussions or spaces that silence or overpower the voices of minority social groups.

### Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is interpersonal and is based on who we are or aren't romantically, emotionally, and/or physically attracted to. Note that a person's romantic orientation can also be different from their sexual orientation.

### Socioeconomic privilege

One or a set of advantages held by a person or group because of their experience and their individual or family's social and economic status.

### Sponsor

A sponsor is a powerful internal advocate who looks after your interests, helps connects you to leaders and special projects, and amplifies your amazing work to other senior people in your business. The difference between sponsors and mentors is that mentors give guidance and advice but don't necessarily have the same influence to effect change that sponsors do.

### Stereotypes

A stereotype is an overgeneralized belief or preconception about a group of people.

### Stereotype threat

Fear caused by the perceived risk of conforming to a stereotype about the social group you belong to.

### Straight

Also known as heterosexual, straight refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to someone of the opposite sex.

### Systemic racism

Historical and ongoing regulations, policies, practices, and cultural norms across institutions and society that uphold racism and disenfranchise minorities.



### Tokenism

Refers to the symbolic or performative practice of demographic diversity in spaces where people from marginalized communities aren't truly welcome or invited to fully participate. Their presence only serves to prevent criticism or give the illusion of diversity.

### Tone policing

A tactic used in debate or conversation that dismisses, invalidates or changes the subject of the message behind what a person is saying to direct attention to the “way” a person said it such as sounding angry, frustrated, or emotionally charged.

### Trans or transgender

Refers to a person whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may also describe themselves as gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, two-spirit, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois. Note that some people use the term transsexual, which is old medical terminology but trans or transgender is typically preferred.

### Transitioning

The steps a trans person takes to live in the gender with which they identify. For some, it could involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. This is also called gender affirmation.

### Transphobia

The fear or dislike of people or an individual based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.

### Two-spirit

Traditionally in some Indigenous cultures, two-spirit refers to people who embody the male and female gender. In recent years two-spirit refers to Indigenous people who are also a part of the LGBTQIA+ community.



### Unconscious bias

Deep-seated assumptions we make about people who are different than us without even realizing it. Also called implicit bias.

### Underrepresented groups

Refers to a group whose members are disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group, and who may regard themselves as recipients of collective discrimination.

### Universal design

The process of designing products and environments that are usable by all people (inclusive of abilities, disabilities, and different characteristics or the needs different people may have) to the greatest extent possible.

### URM

An acronym used to describe a US citizen from an underrepresented racial minority group.



### White

Refers to the racial classification of people who have white skin. According to the [US census](#), white demographically refers to people of European, Middle Eastern and North African origin. Socially white refers to people of European (more specifically western European) origin.

### White fragility

A term coined by author Robin DiAngelo that refers to the discomfort and defensiveness some white people may experience when confronted with information that highlights racial inequity and injustice in our society.

### Whiteness

The social, political and cultural ideology that benefits, prefers and privileges white people over non-white people in societal hierarchy.

### White privilege

The unquestioned and unearned set of advantages and benefits bestowed on people solely because they are white. Often people with this privilege can be unaware of it as these privileges are perpetuated systemically across institutions including in the law, work, medicine, and more.

### White supremacy

White supremacy or white supremacism is the racist belief that white people are superior to people of other races and therefore should be dominant over them.

### Workplace inclusion

An atmosphere or culture where all employees are valued, feel a sense of belonging, can contribute and can thrive. It requires deliberate and intentional action.



### Xenophobia

Dislike of or prejudice against people from a different country than your own.



### Zero sum game

The idea that if one person gains something, another person loses something. When doing DEI work, sometimes dominant groups believe that if their organization helps make underrepresented groups feel more included, they'll lose power, influence, and clout.

## References

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