

School Social Work Association of America Common DEIBJ Language

Adopted from the College of Applied Social Sciences at Dominican University

Language matters.

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) appreciates the guidance and support with our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB) work as a Board and Association that we have received from Sam Fletcher Executive Director NASW-NYS, Dawn Knight Thomas Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion School of Social Welfare University of Albany New York and Dr. Leticia Villarreal Sosa Associate Dean College of Applied Social Sciences Professor School of Social Work Dominican University.

A piece of that support included the provision of a document of Common Language that was compiled by the Dominican University College of Applied Social Sciences (CASS):

The CASS website states

"The College of Applied Social Sciences is committed to anti-racism and that includes supporting research and conversations that disrupt structures in higher education that normalize and facilitate oppression, that enable and activate equity-minded practice, and that helps us all develop in our critical consciousness around social justice."

The document compiled by the folks at the CASS also notes that:

"Language is crucial for building a shared understanding. This glossary is meant to unite and sustain our anti-racism efforts in the field of school social work. These definitions are not presented as an authoritative, definitive document, but as a 'living text.' This list is not meant to be comprehensive, but a snapshot of terms that will inform our conversations and practice."

*Words and their multiple uses reflect the remarkable diversity that characterizes our society; diversity that is to be celebrated and cherished, both by the words we use, and **the actions** to which those words lead."*

SSWAA has chosen to adopt this Common DEIJ Language Document and Glossary of Terms because of the ethical principle of challenging social injustice. The NASW Code of Ethics calls us to "pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people."



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In alignment with the revised NASW Code of Ethics 2021 which has updated language in section 1.05 specific to cultural competence, SSWAA's Common DEIBJ Language was developed to support and elevate not only school social work practice but to also foster our own lifelong learning.

1.05 Cultural Competence

- (a) Social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should demonstrate knowledge that guides practice with clients of various cultures and be able to demonstrate skills in the provision of culturally informed services that empower marginalized individuals and groups. Social workers must take action against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege.
- (c) Social workers should demonstrate awareness and cultural humility by engaging in critical self-reflection (understanding their own bias and engaging in self-correction), recognizing clients as experts of their own culture, committing to lifelong learning, and holding institutions accountable for advancing cultural humility.
- (d) Social workers should obtain education about and demonstrate understanding of the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- (e) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients' use of and access to electronic technology and seek to prevent such potential barriers. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

As we move forward as a national association of School Social Workers who advocate and affect policy on behalf of children and families; champion equitable resources for students, families, schools, and communities; and engage in activism in communities to give voice to marginalized populations, it is important that we share a common definition for the language in which our work is grounded to describe our values and beliefs.

We invite you to continue your anti-racist journey by learning these terms as words to be both listened to and taken to heart.



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Key Terms

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Diversity	The wide variety of shared and different personal and group characteristics among human beings. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. We consider issues of power, and impact of those diverse identities in our institution. We understand that both sociohistorical and current context shapes the meaning and impact of those identities.	University of Pittsburgh, Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary”: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/education/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-glossary Chun, E., & Evans, A. (2019) Conducting an Institutional Diversity Audit in Higher Education: A Practitioner’s Guide to Systemic Diversity Transformation, Sterling, VA: Stylus.
Equity	The proportional distribution of desirable outcomes across groups. Sometimes confused with equality, equity refers to outcomes while equality connotes equal treatment. More directly, equity is when an individual’s race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc. do not determine their educational, economic, social, or political opportunities.	University of Pittsburgh, Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary”: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/education/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-glossary
Inclusion	Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. Inclusion promotes broad engagement, shared participation, and advances authentic sense of belonging through safe, affirming, and nurturing environments. Inclusion is key to eliminating systemic inequality.	University of Pittsburgh, Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary”: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/education/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-glossary



Social Justice	is the belief that all people should have equal rights and opportunities. How these rights and opportunities are made accessible and equal may not look or be the same for everyone. The differences in how equality is achieved for everyone is equity at work.	National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (2021): https://tinyurl.com/NADOHEDU
Anti-Racism	is the active process of identifying, challenging, and confronting racism. This active process requires confronting systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, behaviors, and attitudes. This active process should seek to redistribute power in an effort to foster equitable outcomes. "Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do." - Dr. Ibram X Kedi, How to Be Anti-Racist, 2018	National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (2021): https://tinyurl.com/NADOHEDU
Additional Terms		
A Racist Idea	is any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas are part of what maintains systemic racism and oppression such as mass incarceration, slavery, genocide, and educational inequities.	National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (2021): https://tinyurl.com/NADOHEDU
Ally	is an action, not an identity. Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups to dismantle systems of oppression(s) from whom they derive power, privilege, and acceptance. 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. It means taking intentional, overt, and consistent responsibility for the changes we know are needed in our society, and often ignore or leave for others to deal with; it does so in a way that facilitates the empowerment of persons targeted by oppression.	Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary



Anti-Black Racism	is any behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that Black people (those of African descent) are inferior to other racial groups. Anti-Black Racism is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of racism and is a function of the culture of White supremacy.	National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (2021): https://tinyurl.com/NADOHEDU
Anti-Racism Framework	Requires an understanding that the impact of racial oppression cannot be directly confronted without transparency and the <i>full scrutiny of systems</i> , including introspection and review at all levels. It requires the insight that all forms of oppression are complex and intertwined and recognize that racial analysis or review must be central to this work. Lastly, it requires understanding the historical role of the colonization and genocide of Native and Indigenous people and the enslavement of those of African descent.	National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (2021): https://tinyurl.com/NADOHEDU
Collusion	When people act consciously and unconsciously to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression. Thinking and acting in ways that support dominant systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Both privileged and oppressed groups can collude with oppression. Example: Able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense.	Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary https://routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/readingsfordiversity/teaching.php

Colonization	<p>can be defined as 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, <u>who are consequently treated with inequality</u>. 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 nation.</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary Emma LaRocque, PhD, “Colonization and Racism,” (Aboriginal Perspectives). Also see Racism and Colonialism, edited by Robert Ross (1982), and Andrea Smith, “Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy” (Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century, 2012).</p>
Critical Race Theory	<p>The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step by step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional law.</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, NYU Press, 2001 (2nd ed. 2012, 3rd ed. 2017). Kimberlé Crenshaw, A Lesson on Critical Race Theory.</p>



Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Facilitates and supports the achievement of all students. In a culturally responsive classroom, reflective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centered context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement.	University of Pittsburgh, Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary”: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/education/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-glossary
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Intersectionality	the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups to produce and sustain complex inequities. Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the theory of intersectionality in a paper for the University of Chicago Legal Forum (Crenshaw, 1989), the idea that when it comes to thinking about how inequalities persist, categories like gender, race, and class are best understood as overlapping and mutually constitutive rather than isolated and distinct. Example: How white women experience the world vs. How women of color experience the world	Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary Crenshaw, K. (1990). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. Stan. L. Rev., 43, 1241.
Inclusive Pedagogy	is an explicit intellectual and affective inclusion of all students into our fields and disciplines, through course content, assessment, and/or pedagogy.	The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, “Definitions of Inclusive Teaching”: https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/definitions

Racial Equity	<p>is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or that fail to eliminate them. “A mindset and method for solving problems that have endured for generations, seem intractable, harm people and communities of color most acutely, and ultimately affect people of all races. This will require seeing differently, thinking differently, and doing the work differently. Racial equity is about results that make a difference and last.”</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary</p>
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Racialization	<p>Racialization is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular “race” and on that basis subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. Put simply, “racialization [is] the process of manufacturing and utilizing the notion of race in any capacity” (Dalal, 2002, p. 27). While white people are also racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still maintain the authority to name and racialize “others.” Immigrant policies may be seemingly race neutral only making references to “illegal aliens,” yet utilize these policies to uphold existing racial hierarchies and use these concepts, code words, or “dog whistles” to refer to racial themes without directly stating making those connections for example between Latinos and “illegality” (Haney-López 2014).</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, “Racialization” (2018) / Calgary Anti-Racism Education, “CARED Glossary” (2020).</p>
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Whiteness	<p>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. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin color and continental origin. The creation of ‘whiteness’ meant giving privileges to some, while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority. Whiteness itself refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of color. This definition counters the dominant representation of racism in mainstream education as isolated in discrete behaviors that some individuals may or may not demonstrate, and goes beyond naming specific privileges (McIntosh, 1988). Whites are theorized as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialization and the individual and collective consciousness formed within it ... Whiteness is thus 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.</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary PBS, “Race: The Power of an Illusion” (2018–2019 relaunch of 2003 series). Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility” (International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 2011).</p>
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White Supremacy Culture	<p>White Supremacy Culture refers to the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States. These standards may be seen as mainstream, dominant cultural practices; they have evolved from the United States’ history of white supremacy. Because it is so normalized it can be hard to see, which only adds to its powerful hold. In many ways, it is indistinguishable from what we might call U.S. culture or norms – a focus on individuals over groups, for example, or an emphasis on the written word as a form of professional communication. But it operates in even more subtle ways, by actually defining what “normal” is – and likewise, what “professional,” “effective,” or even “good” is. In turn, white culture also defines what is not good, “at risk,” or “unsustainable.” White culture values some ways of thinking, behaving, deciding, and knowing – ways that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, western tradition – while devaluing or rendering invisible other ways. And it does this without ever having to explicitly say so...An artificial, historically constructed culture which expresses, justifies, and binds together the United States white supremacy system. It is the glue that binds together white-controlled institutions into systems and white-controlled systems into the global white supremacy system.</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary Gita Gulati-Partee and Maggie Potapchuk, “Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege: A Missing Link to Advancing Racial Equity” (The Foundation Review vol. 6: issue 1, 2014). Sharon Martinas and the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, 4th revision (1995).</p>
White Supremacy	<p>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.</p>	<p>Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary “What Is Racism?” – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) web workbook.</p>

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.	Racial Equity Tools Glossary (2022): https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary Lee Cokorinos, “The Racist Roots of the Anti-Immigration Movement,” The Black Agenda Report (2007).
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Additional Resources:

[Boston University’s Living Language Guide](#) with language resources that include Fundamental Concepts, Ability and Neurodiversity, Culture and Ideologies, Gender and Sexuality, Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism, Religion and Spirituality, Social Justice, and Socio-Economic Status.

[Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#) is part of the extended toolkit and resources provided in the Racial Equity Tools website to support those working for racial justice in systems, organizations, and communities. Providing a common language is the first step in planning for action.

[A Framework for Advancing Anti-Racism Strategy on Campus by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education](#) provides a framework for addressing ten priority areas where anti-racism strategies would significantly improve conditions for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, faculty, and staff.