

Glossary and Resources from the FCNCL Antiracism Working Group

This glossary is a living document provided to you by the Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation’s Antiracism Working Group. It was compiled to help foster understanding of some terms related to concepts and actions surrounding antiracism. It will be updated at least annually. The list is non-exhaustive, and we hope these definitions will prompt us to read and reflect further. Becoming antiracist is a continuous learning process and feeling that we are still in that process ought not deter us from actively engaging in antiracist work. Please see [our Minute on Racial Justice and Antiracism](#) for more information.

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Glossary	
Word	Definition
Allyship	Committing to the lifelong process of recognizing one’s own privilege and bias while seeking to learn from and build relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people to end all forms of oppression. ^{1,2}
Antiracism	Individualized and collectivized efforts to actively oppose racism through making consistent, equitable choices and advocating for political, social, and economic changes through policy change, cultural change, and other manifestations of social and institutional power. ^{3,4}
BIPOC	Acronym standing for “Black, Indigenous, and People of Color” used to emphasize the unique relationship of Indigenous and Black Americans to whiteness. ⁵ <i>Note: be intentional about using the word you mean. For example, if talking about something that specifically affects Black people, don’t be afraid to say “Black people” instead of BIPOC.</i>
(Racial) Color Blindness	An approach in which one professes not to “see” race. This approach was endorsed more strongly after the election of President Barack Obama and is often used by white folks to say we no longer have problems based on race. The phrase comes from a misunderstood piece of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Many sociologists see the widespread use and endorsement of a “color-blind” approach as one of the biggest hurdles to racial inequities in the 21st century. ⁶
Colorism	“A powerful collection of historic and present racist policies that lead to inequities of outcomes” between light- and dark-skinned people. It also manifests between individuals and groups of color as internalized racial inferiority (see internalized racism). ⁷ <i>Example: During the time of legalized African American slavery, slave masters often placed their lighter skinned enslaved persons in the house, while darker skinned enslaved persons were in the fields. Present day cultural practices include representation of lighter skinned women of color in media at higher rates than their darker skinned counterparts.</i>

(Social) Construct	<p>“Social constructionism is the theory that people develop knowledge of the world in a social context, and that much of what we perceive as reality depends on shared assumptions.”⁸ Constructs have no objective truth but exist in our language and have real socioeconomic and political consequences.</p> <p><i>Example: Money is a social construct. We collectively assign value to the coins, pieces of paper, etc. that we trade for necessary goods.</i></p>
Critical Race Theory	<p>A school of thought that emphasizes that all U.S. “legal institutions and the law are inherently racist,” recognizing race as a social construct through legal means that advantage those who have become white and disadvantage People of Color. While it started out in the late 1980’s named as critical race theory, it has roots much deeper with W. E. B. Du Bois, Fannie Lou Hamer, Pauli Murray, and others. As of late, the context of the purview of critical race theory expands beyond the specific role of our legal institutions and the law.⁹</p>
Cultural Racism	<p>Where the cultural preferences of Europeans that came to be known as white have been embedded across all US systems. The ways our systems and institutions operate at a cultural level that manifest “white” culture in policies, practices, spoken and unspoken reflect structural racism. Where the norms, values, or standards of the dominant culture define reality to advantage white people and oppress BIPOC people.¹⁰</p>
Implicit Bias	<p>“Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative [or positive] 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. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals’ stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.”¹¹</p>
Institutional Racism	<p>“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... disadvantage[s] for people from groups classified as people of color.”</p> <p><i>“Examples: Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as ‘red-lining’).” [The same policies promoted white Americans to purchase homes in neighborhoods through the FHA insuring bank mortgage loans (known as ‘green-lining’) and thus tax dollars and investment flowed into the new suburbs across the nation.]</i></p> <p><i>“City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.”¹²</i></p>
Internalized Racism	<p>A form of systemic oppression in which the oppressed racial group unconsciously supports the dominating structure through internalizing implicitly racist messages about decision-making, resources, and standards within the system.¹³ For BIPOC, this internalized oppression manifests as racial inferiority; for white people, internalized privilege shows up as racial superiority.¹⁴</p>

Intersectionality	<p>Term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, a lens to see the way various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. Started in response to law separating inequality based on race, from gender, from class, from sexuality, etc., it is an approach of both/and rather than either/or.¹⁵ The term is used more broadly now to talk about intersecting oppressions in an “additive form”; however, this is a subtle but important difference from the way Crenshaw originally coined it.¹⁶</p> <p><i>Example: Black women, for instance, often get caught in a legal challenge of operating under “minority” or “women” but not the “intersection” of both.</i></p>
(Racial) Justice	<p>Beyond equity (“condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares”), justice speaks to the restructuring of systems. “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.”¹⁷</p> <p><i>Note: This graphic provides a useful visual representation of the differences among inequality, equality, equity, and justice.</i></p>
Microaggressions	<p>“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.”¹⁸</p> <p><i>Note: see the “Weathering Hypothesis” and “John Henryism” for more info.</i></p>
Organizing & Movement Building	<p>Organizing is action aiming to build a movement; it is the process of someone sharing desires and vision with others and building relationships while developing shared language and analysis to build a base to challenge existing power structures. “Adapted from Parker Palmer’s work, movements for social change emerge when: individuals refuse to act outwardly in contradiction to something they know to be true inwardly; groups emerge when these individuals find each other, begin to build community, and spread the word; and collective action happens when the group begins to translate individual problems into public organizing issues that address the root cause of the issue.”¹⁹</p>
Race	<p>A social construct— <i>not</i> a biological phenomenon— constructed by Europeans during the time of worldwide colonization for social and political purposes, to assign power to those with white skin, and divide and conquer poor and working white people from poor and working People and Communities of Color.²⁰</p>
Racism	<p>As “a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas,”²¹ racism combines social and institutional power with racial prejudice. It creates a system of advantage based on race, which is a system of race-based oppression, and therefore a white supremacy system. Racism can occur on a personal (individual acts), cultural (societal norms or values), or institutional (policies and structures) level.²²</p>

<p>Structural/Systemic Racism</p>	<p>Systemic racism is the prolonged system of oppression that was not an accident of history but was created intentionally by white Americans. It describes “the overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society.”²³ U.S. institutions have been so thoroughly pervaded and permeated by racial stereotypes, ideas, images, emotions, and practices that American culture has evolved distinctive social worlds over 400 years of racial oppression.²⁴</p> <p><i>Big-picture example: Look at U.S. history and who had access to resources and opportunities and who didn't, based on race. From 1619-1865 African Americans' citizenship status was chattel slavery. From 1865 to 1965 the U.S. was in a period of Jim Crow - legalized separation, but never equal co-existence (following a brief period of reconstruction). This cumulative disadvantage for People of Color and cumulative advantage for those who have become white over generations provides a critical foundation to understand how people are situated differently today based on race.</i></p>
<p>White Fragility</p>	<p>Term coined by Robin DiAngelo describing white people's resistance to talking deeply about race, to having their views about race challenged, or to connecting themselves to our existing system of racism. DiAngelo suggests that white people's defensiveness around issues of racism stems from their inability to see it beyond individual acts of bigotry. They are resistant to admitting complicity in a culture where historical racist policies yielded present day inequities. DiAngelo asserts that the process of white fragility works to maintain white dominance within the racial hierarchy; it “is not weakness per se. In fact, it is a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of white advantage.”²⁵</p>
<p>White Privilege</p>	<p>A term that requires that white people see and explore what it means to them that they have an experience based on race and their racialized experience in each of our systems and institutions. The nature of that experience manifests as an advantage relative to People of Color in the United States (outcomes that cannot be explained by other social phenomena including socio-economic status).²⁶</p>
<p>White Supremacy</p>	<p>“A form of racism centered upon the belief that white people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that whites should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-whites. While often associated with violence perpetrated by the KKK and other white supremacist groups, it also describes a political ideology and systemic oppression that perpetuates and maintains the social, political, historical and/or industrial white domination.”²⁷</p>

Supplementary Resources	
“What it means to be anti-racist” by Anna North (<i>Vox</i>)	https://www.vox.com/2020/6/3/21278245/antiracist-racism-race-books-resources-antiracism
Berkeley Library’s Anti Racism Reader: Other Reading Lists and Resources	https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=1047419&p=7602418
Racial Equity Institute bibliography	https://www.racialequityinstitute.com/bibliography
The 1619 Project	https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html
“Allyship - The Key To Unlocking The Power Of Diversity” by Sheree Atcheson (<i>Forbes</i>)	https://www.forbes.com/sites/shereeatcheson/2018/11/30/allyship-the-key-to-unlocking-the-power-of-diversity/?sh=510f673f49c6 For your additional consideration: White People, Please Stop Declaring Yourself Allies
Georgetown University Library’s Antiracism Glossary	https://guides.library.georgetown.edu/antiracism/glossary
“The downside of ‘John Henryism’” by Karen Feldscher	https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/the-downside-of-john-henryism/
“‘Weathering’: What are the health effects of stress and discrimination?” from Medical News Today	https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/weathering-what-are-the-health-effects-of-stress-and-discrimination

- ¹ “Beyond Allyship.” Rochester Racial Justice Toolkit. Accessed May 26, 2021. <https://thetoolkit.wixsite.com/toolkit/beyond-allyship>.
- ² “Racial Equity Tools Glossary.” Racial Equity Tools. Center for Assessment and Policy Development. Accessed May 26, 2021. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>.
- ³ “Race Reporting Guide.” New York: Race Forward, 2015. https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/Race%20Reporting%20Guide%20by%20Race%20Forward_V1.1.pdf
- ⁴ “Being Antiracist.” National Museum of African American History and Culture. Smithsonian, May 7, 2021. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>.
- ⁵ The BIPOC Project. Accessed May 26, 2021. <https://www.thebipocproject.org/>.
- ⁶ Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.
- ⁷ Kendi, Ibram X. *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York, NY: One World, 2019.
- ⁸ Vinney, Cynthia. “Social Constructionism Definition and Examples.” ThoughtCo. Dotdash, March 28, 2019. <https://www.thoughtco.com/social-constructionism-4586374>.
- ⁹ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. “Critical Race Theory.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., April 2, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory>.
- ¹⁰ Chua, Peter. “Cultural Racism.” *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, December 4, 2017, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118430873.est0079>.
- ¹¹ Stats, Cheryl, and Charles Patton. “Implicit Bias Review.” Columbus: Kirwan Institute, 2013. http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/docs/SOTS-Implicit_Bias.pdf
- ¹² Potapchuk, Maggie, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major. “Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building.” Silver Spring: MP Associates, Inc., 2005. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19E7pj9rZCaiUJhNTGYTzE7tFNLYdUh1U/view>
- ¹³ Bivens, Donna. “Internalized Racism: A Definition.” Women’s Theological Center, 1995.

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- ¹⁴ “Day 6: Addressing the Four Levels of Racism - Internalized Racism (within the Individual).” Division of Inclusion, Diversity & Equity. University of Missouri, June 4, 2020. <https://diversity.missouri.edu/education-development/self-guided-curriculum-race-racism-and-the-american-experience/day-6-addressing-the-four-levels-of-racism-internalized-racism-within-the-individual/>.
- ¹⁵ Crenshaw, Kimberlé. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989). <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1052&context=ucf>.
- ¹⁶ “What Does Intersectional Feminism Actually Mean?” IWDA. International Women's Development Agency, May 11, 2018. https://iwda.org.au/what-does-intersectional-feminism-actually-mean/?gclid=CjwKCAjwpKCDBhBPEiwAFgBzj7anJvFr4PL7eeY_LJewv0oIqsY89OMQ3NIaSWNHsJazbfBi8vPHmhoCB4oQAvD_BwE.
- ¹⁷ “Race Reporting Guide” (New York, 2015). https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/Race%20Reporting%20Guide%20by%20Race%20Forward_V1.1.pdf
- ¹⁸ Wing Sue, Derald. “Microaggressions: More Than Just Race.” *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers, November 17, 2010. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>.
- ¹⁹ “Analysis Tools.” dRworksBook. Dismantling Racism Works, May 2021. <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/analysis-tools.html>.
- ²⁰ “Racism Defined.” dRworksBook. Dismantling Racism Works, May 2021. <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>.
- ²¹ Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (New York, NY: One World, 2019).
- ²² “Racism Defined,” dRworksBook (Dismantling Racism Works, May 2021), <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>.
- ²³ “Being Antiracist,” National Museum of African American History and Culture (Smithsonian, May 7, 2021), <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>.
- ²⁴ Feagin, Joe R. *Systemic Racism: a Theory of Oppression*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.
- ²⁵ DiAngelo, Robin J. *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2018.
- ²⁶ McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” *Peace and Freedom Magazine*, 1989. <https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>.
- ²⁷ NEA Center for Social Justice. “White Supremacy Culture Resources.” NEA. National Education Association, December 2020. <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/white-supremacy-culture-resources>.