

RACE EQUITY TERMS

**Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)
Race Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee**

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NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The words we speak shape and impact the perceptions and attitudes of those around us every day. Our words have the power to change the world, and a world of good can come from choosing them carefully. The contributors to this Race Equity Terms booklet are advocates, allies, and people with lived experiences - each of whom believes that it is their responsibility to use language that challenges and positively influences society's views about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) as well as other minoritized communities. We write this note on language to encourage readers to share in this responsibility to mindfully choose their own words, to avoid labels whenever possible, and when labels are necessary, to ascribe them with respect and kindness.

This booklet defines and exemplifies goals, problems, and solutions relevant to the effective discussion of race equity and inclusion. There are many approaches to this work, albeit sometimes conflicting, that are generally accepted and utilized. We invite those who read this booklet to provide its drafters with thoughtful feedback and constructive criticism. Our desire is to be effective contributors to this evolving landscape, and we are constantly committed to learning to do better. We can be reached at jdai.massachusetts@gmail.com.

In solidarity,

The Massachusetts JDAI Race Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee



EXPLANATION OF PREFERRED TERMS

BIPOC/POC Both acronyms are acceptable, although BIPOC tends to be preferred more widespread.

BIPOC stands for “Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.” It is person-first language. Oftentimes, the choice to use BIPOC reflects the desire to illuminate specific injustices affecting Black and Indigenous people.

POC stands for “People of Color.” It is a general umbrella term that collectively refers to all People of Color or anyone who isn’t White.

Color evasiveness is preferred to “color blindness” as the latter term denies the existence of race and, therefore, effectively, racism. “color blindness” is also an ableist term, implying that blindness equates to ignorance.

Minoritized is preferred to “minority” or “underrepresented” when referring to a group of people that is socially or institutionally forced to the margins and/or mistreated. People who are minoritized endure mistreatment and face prejudices that are enforced upon them because of situations outside of their control by groups of people who are socially constructed to have privilege in making those decisions.



ACCOUNTABILITY

definition

Accountability, in the context of racial equity work, refers to the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible. To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process.

(Racial Equity Tools)

examples of accountability:

- Using data to set baselines and to measure progress/setbacks
- Creating vision statements and strategic goals with a race equity and inclusion focus
- Using self-assessment tools or bias checks

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

definition

Affirmative action refers to programs and policies designed to help advance those who have historically been disadvantaged. Affirmative action programs and policies seek to remove systemic barriers without disadvantaging any group. (DMH)

examples of affirmative action:

- Hiring practices that promote equal consideration of BIPOC candidates
- Policies that support the recruitment and retention of BIPOC candidates

ALLY(SHIP)

definition

An ally is 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 in the struggle for justice. Allies understand it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of allyship:

- White allies marching in the back of Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests
- Advocating for more women, BIPOC, and members of other underrepresented groups as employees/ vendors/ speakers/ panelists
- Being aware of inequality, calling it out where it exists, listening to people who experience it and elevating their voices

ANTI-RACISM

definition

Anti-Racism is the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach set in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts. An anti-racist's values are evidenced in their ideas, conscious efforts, and deliberate actions. (Racial Equity Tools/REI Subcommittee)

examples of anti-racism:

- Data driven policy efforts, including but not limited to, justice system reform
- Training on implicit bias, microaggressions, etc.
- Holding friends and family accountable
- Supporting BIPOC work, art, and businesses

IMPLICIT BIAS

definition

Implicit bias refers to a negative association someone unknowingly holds about a person or group of people expressed automatically without conscious awareness. Implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not 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. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of implicit bias:

- Hiring managers reviewing candidates' resumes based on the candidate's name rather than their experience and skills
- Neglecting or ignoring any piece of information that does not fit into one's previously stored information about a person or group of people.

COLOR EVASIVENESS

definition

Color evasiveness is the ideology that racial group membership should not be considered or noticed. It is often employed as a strategy for addressing or denying the continued impacts of racism, which perpetuates racial disparities. Effectively, it means that we pretend not to notice race even while the racialization process continues. (DMH/JDAI)

examples of color evasiveness:

- Saying or believing things like: "I don't see race" or "I don't see color"
- Replying "All Lives Matter" in response to the assertion that "Black Lives Matter"

COLORISM

definition

Colorism is a form of discrimination and prejudice against people with darker skin tones; the preference of lighter skin over darker skin. Colorism can occur both intra-racially (within one racial group) and interracially (between racial groups). (DMH/REI Subcommittee)

examples of colorism:

- Media airbrushing someone with darker skin to make their skin lighter because it's considered "more attractive"
- Light skin folks perceived as White and treated more favorably, while folks of the same ethnicity, who have darker complexions, are perceived as Black and experience discrimination

CULTURAL HUMILITY

definition

Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby an individual not only learns about another's culture but also starts with an examination of their own beliefs and cultural identities. (DMH)

examples of cultural humility:

- Listening and engaging in meaningful dialogue to educate oneself about other cultures
- Promoting cultural training opportunities for workforces
- Sharing community cultural resources within the workforce

DISCRIMINATION

definition

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, national origin, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or ability. (DMH/JDAI)

examples of discrimination:

- Prejudice shown against a person based on an aspect of their identity
- Practices or actions of excluding people because of an aspect of their identity

DISPARITY

definition

Disparity is a significant and measurable difference between communities or people; usually resulting from the systematic oppression of marginalized groups. This can be based on race, economic status, income, housing options, societal treatment, safety, and myriad other aspects of life and society. (DMH/REI)

examples of disparity:

- When White students are referred for behavioral health services for the same behavior used to discipline and expel Brown and Black youth
- Holding female youth in secure settings to “keep them safe” and releasing male youth who are engaging in similar behaviors
- Denying trans youth appropriate health care and treatment

DIVERSITY

definition

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the characteristics that make one individual or group different. It is all-inclusive and recognizes the value of every person and every group. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender, but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also includes honoring different ideas, perspectives, and values. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of diversity:

- Having minoritized people in positions of power and decision making
- Valuing intersectionality and respecting that multiple identities comprise someone's whole self

EQUALITY

definition

Equality is an aspirational state where all people have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources. The state of equality may create inequity if the historical inequalities that have created inequality between groups are not first addressed. (DMH)

examples of equality:

- Giving all people the same tools to succeed, although they may not be starting from the same place
- Treating everyone the same regardless of race, gender, identity, etc., despite historical inequities

EQUITY

definition

Equity is a state in which all people have equal civil rights, opportunities, and access to resources. This state is reached through focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of disparities. (DMH)

examples of equity:

- Providing individualized educational planning and support that meet all youth where they are at
- Creating resources designed to meet the specific needs of communities that have traditionally been excluded
- Offering culturally responsive individualized services to all youth and families

INCLUSION

definition

Inclusion is authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power. (DMH)

examples of inclusion:

- Youth-serving agencies engaging youth and fostering youth participation in decision making
- Respecting the voices of all impacted players in policy making
- Agencies actively seeking out diverse candidates for employment that are representative of the communities in which they exist and serve

INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM

definition

Institutional racism refers specifically to how the policies and practices of institutions create different outcomes for different racial groups. Although these policies may not specifically mention any racial group, their effect is to create advantages for Whites and to oppress and disadvantage BIPOC. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of institutionalized racism:

- Government policies restricting the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of BIPOC (i.e. “red-lining”)
- City sanitation department policies that disproportionately concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards in BIPOC communities
- BIPOC youth facing restraint and seclusion at higher rates than their white counterparts
- Lack of race equity training and policies across people serving agencies

INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

definition

Internalized oppression is conscious or unconscious acceptance of prejudicial or biased attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, ideologies, and/or social constructs toward the identity group to which one belongs. (REI Subcommittee)

examples of internalized oppression:

- Media/social media influencing a racial group's view of themselves
- Loss of language/cultural identity in order to be more like dominate group

INTERPERSONAL RACISM

definition

Interpersonal Racism is racism that occurs between individuals. Interpersonal racism can be expressed overtly as bigotry, hate speech, or racial violence or it can be subtle, taking the form of microaggressions. (JDAI)

examples of interpersonal racism:

- System actors assuming parents of BIPOC youth do not work and failing to ask their availability when scheduling appointments
- Microaggressions against BIPOC
- Questioning or doubting a statement made by BIPOC when you would not do so if made by a White person

INTERSECTIONALITY

definition

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw describing how the overlapping of various oppressed social identities (for example, being Black and female) contribute to the compounded oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual. Refusal to consider the intersectional experience prevents inequities from being sufficiently addressed and misses the way in which those with intersectional identities are subordinated. (DMH)

examples of intersectionality:

- Recognizing that youth involved within the juvenile legal system may identify in multiple ways and supporting each facet of their identity
- Understanding that youth may be experiencing multiple forms of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, xenophobia, etc., that require unique attention and person-centered approaches

LIBERATION

definition

Liberation is a state achieved through the creation of relationships, societies, communities, organizations, and collective spaces characterized by equity and fairness. Liberation will be reached when all systems support the full participation of each human and the promotion of their full humanness. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of liberation:

- A justice system where racial disparities no longer exist, and youth and families are treated in a culturally aware and trauma-sensitive manner
- Access to appropriate, well-developed services for all youth and families

MARGINALIZATION

definition

Marginalization refers to a social process through which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and considered insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable by a community or “mainstream” society. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender, or financial status. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of marginalization:

- Finding ways to purposefully exclude or isolate someone
- Denying professional opportunities because of aspects of someone’s identity
- Not providing equal access to resources because of someone’s identity
- Assuming someone got where they are only because they “check a diversity box”

MICROAGGRESSION(S)

definition

Microaggressions are 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 membership in a marginalized group. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of microaggression(s):

- Assuming English is someone's second language simply because they are not White presenting
- Using slurs or offensive terminology in a joking context
- Interrupting or talking over BIOPC colleagues

OPPRESSION

definition

Oppression is the systematic subjugation and/or exploitation of a historically marginalized group by a more powerful group for its own benefit (e.g. political, social, and/or economic). (REI Subcommittee)

examples of oppression:

- Decisions made in the legal system that disproportionately impact BIOPC youth such as charging decisions, bail determinations, and probation conditions
- School discipline practices targeting BIOPC youth
- Disparity in school funding resulting in lesser opportunity for BIOPC youth
- Employment practices such as hiring and promoting that disadvantage BIOPC candidates

PREJUDICE

definition

Prejudice refers to a pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one individual or group towards another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations or stereotypes that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with unique characteristics. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of prejudice:

- Zero tolerance policies in schools that disproportionately punish students of color or tracking systems that place them in lower-level classes
- BIPOC experiencing heightened surveillance by police simply based on their skin color
- Passing over people with accents for opportunities or assuming they are less competent than their peers
- Denying people access to housing or limiting their housing options, based on their race or ethnicity

RACIAL JUSTICE

definition

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 inequity, but the presence of deliberate systems and supports that achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventive measures. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of racial justice:

- Agencies adopting and faithfully using race equity tools to enact reforms across the Commonwealth
- Workforces accurately reflecting the communities they serve across all levels of employment

RACISM

definition

Racism is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities, extending beyond personal prejudice. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination against another by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support their policies and practices. Racism establishes and perpetuates a system of White supremacy where BIPOC are oppressed based on race. (JDAI/REI Subcommittee)

examples of racism:

- Police using of excessive deadly force on BIPOC
- Policies created by White people that mainly affect BIPOC
- Concentrated White leadership that does not seek to promote and include BIPOC in upper-level/management positions

STRUCTURAL RACISM

definition

Structural Racism is the racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege White people and disadvantage BIPOC. 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. (JDAI)

examples of structural racism:

- A juvenile legal system that polices, charges, and detains BIPOC youth at higher rates than their White counterparts
- Lack of access to quality services across the healthcare system results in poorer outcomes for BIPOC
- Lack of quality educational opportunities, school-based services, and educational resources in communities of color
- Wage disparities for BIPOC

TOKENISM

definition

Tokenism occurs when the representation and contributions of an individual are valued solely or primarily because of their membership in a specific marginalized group — not because of their skills, abilities, and actual input. Tokenism makes those in power appear non-racist and even champions of diversity; however, it uses BIPOC as racialized props. (DMH/Racial Equity Tools)

examples of tokenism:

- Recruiting BIPOC to formal leadership positions but keeping all the power with White folks
- Inviting youth to be a part of important conversations but not allowing them any decision-making power

WHITE FRAGILITY

definition

White fragility refers to the discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a White person when confronted with information about racial inequality and injustice, including when their White privilege is made apparent. (DMH)

examples of white fragility:

- The unwillingness of White folks to participate in meaningful conversations about race
- The inability of White people to acknowledge their privilege
- White system actors refusing to participate in implicit bias work to recognize potential blind spots in their practices

WHITE PRIVILEGE

definition

White privilege is the unearned rights, benefits, and advantages provided to White people as a result of White supremacy, including the freedom to remain ignorant to racial inequities. (DMH)

examples of white privilege:

- A White person not having to fear bodily harm during a police encounter
- Appropriating the ideas and culture of BIPOC
- Gaslighting or undermining a BIPOC's reality by saying things such as: "It's just a joke; you're being too sensitive" or "Not everything is about color."

WHITE SUPREMACY

definition

White supremacy is the idea that White people and their ideas, thoughts, and beliefs are superior to BIPOC. 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 BIPOC individuals and communities as worthless, immoral, bad, 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 the structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level. (Racial Equity Tools)

examples of white supremacy:

- Whitewashing history
- White public figures using and promoting racist rhetoric
- Believing myths such as “youth of color commit more crimes because they are more likely to be ‘bad kids’”

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SOURCES

Department of Mental Health (DMH) Race Equity and Inclusion Glossary
[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Department of Youth Services (DYS) Interaction Institute for Social Change
Definitions
[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Indiana JDAI Race, Equity, and Inclusion Dictionary and Resource Guide
[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

JDAI Race Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee
[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Racial Equity Tools
[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

RESOURCES

Anti-Racist Reading List from Ibram X. Kendi
[CLICK HERE FOR THE LINK](#)

Anti-Racism Resources for White-Led Organizations
[CLICK HERE FOR THE LINK](#)

Anti-Racism Resources for White People
[CLICK HERE FOR THE LINK](#)

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[Annie E. Casey Foundation - Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative](#)

[Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative - Massachusetts Department of Youth Services JDAI Team Email](#)