



Key Terminology and Definitions

Stereotype

A *generalization* about a group of people that may or may not be based in truth, most commonly used to unfairly categorize people.

- Everyone stereotypes.
- Although stereotypes can be *perceived* as both negative and positive, they have long lasting negative impacts on both targeted and non-targeted groups.

Bias

A conscious or unconscious preference that inhibits a person's capacity for impartial judgment.

Prejudice

An unfair *pre-judgment* of an individual based on real or perceived group membership and bias.

Bigotry

Holding blindly and intolerantly to a particular creed, opinion, etc; narrow-mindedness; intolerance; prejudice.

Privilege

An unearned advantage, access, immunity, exemption.

Power

Ability to exert control and influence over *institutions, resources* and *cultural norms*.

Oppression

Any *attitude, action or institutional structure* that subordinates a person because of his/her membership in a targeted group.

- Examples of target groups are: Women, Asians, African Americans, Latino/as, individuals with disabilities, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender people, Jewish individuals, Native Americans, the Elderly, Children.
- Oppression can be intentional or unintentional.

Discrimination

An *action or behavior* that favors some people and disadvantages others.

Ism

The combination of *prejudice* and *power* that creates a *system of advantages* based on dominant ideology/idea.

Racism

The combination of *prejudice* and *power*, which creates a *system of advantages* based on race. In the U.S. that system favors white people.

Sexism

The combination of *prejudice* and *power*, which creates a *system of advantages* based on gender (that favors men).

Heterosexism

The combination of *prejudice* and *power* that creates a *system of advantages* based on sexual orientation (that favors heterosexuals). It is the assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual.

- Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people.

Homophobia

The *irrational fear, disgust, or hatred* of *gay men, transsexuals, lesbians, bisexual people*, or the *homosexual feelings in oneself*.

- Homophobia refers to the discomfort one feels with any behavior, belief, or attitude toward self or others that does not conform to heterosexual stereotypes or assumptions.

Classism

The combination of prejudice and power that creates a system of advantages based on class. The systematic mistreatment of a group of people who have less material and educational resources; a set of arbitrary, economic divisions based on fear.

- Class is a mix of resources including, but not limited to money, culture, contacts, and education. Class includes food, clothing, language, cars, entertainment, work, and much more.

Ableism

The combination of prejudice and power that creates a system of advantages based on abilities that favors able-bodied people.

Ally

Someone in the position of privilege that understands that his/her privilege is unearned. They understand that the institutional oppression is harmful to targeted groups, and they actively work to rectify this inequity.

People that mutually understand and recognize each others' oppressions and work towards building coalitions in order to address inequity.

Diversity

It includes (but is not limited to) race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, language, religion, and socio-economic background.

For the purpose of addressing institutional and structural barriers, it often does not include political beliefs or geographic diversity. While these two areas come up indirectly, they are not often seen as *diversity* issues per se.

Inclusion

The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of the diversity of a company or organization in order to create equal access, well being, and a sense of belonging for all its members.