

Glossary of Key Racial Equity Terms

Definitions from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) unless otherwise specified

Race – A social construct that categorizes people based on physical characteristics and ancestry to justify inequitable distribution of resources and power.

Ethnicity – A social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, history and customs.

Diversity[§] – Physical, social, and psychological differences between people and groups, including race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, tribe, socio-economic status, thinking and communication styles.

Inclusion[†] – Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Equity^{*} – Just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Racial equity – Eliminating race-based outcome gaps so that race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved.

Racial inequity – Outcome gaps between people of different races based on historical or current factors or structures that benefit white people more than people of color.

Bias – Prejudice toward one group and its members relative to another group.

Explicit bias – Biases that people are aware of and that operate consciously. They are expressed directly.

Implicit bias – Biases people are usually unaware of and that operate at the subconscious level. Implicit bias is usually expressed indirectly.

Racism

Individual racism – Bigotry or discrimination by an individual based on race.

Institutional racism – Policies or practices that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

Structural racism – A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.

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. (Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the theory of intersectionality, 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.)

Microaggression[¶] – 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.

[§] [Long Beach Equity Toolkit for City Leaders and Staff](#)

[†] [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#); Opensource Leadership Strategies

^{*} [The Equity Manifesto](#), PolicyLink

[‡] [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#); Adia Harvey Wingfield

[¶] [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#); Derald Wing Sue, PhD, "Microaggressions: More than Just Race" (Psychology Today, 17 November 2010).