

Terms to Know



Affirmative action: action taken by a government or private institution to make up for past discrimination in education, work, or promotion on the basis of age, birth, color, creed, nationality, ethnic origin, physical or mental ability, familial status, gender, language, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation

Agency: the ability to act independently and make free choices; the ability to make conscious decisions for oneself

Agent: a member of a dominant or majority group

Ally: a person who supports marginalized, silenced, or less privileged groups without being a member. This person will often directly confront and challenge systems of oppression

Activists: a person who diligently and repeatedly tries to achieve some social, economic, or political objective, especially by participation in protest, pressure, organizing, or resistance.

Bias: an inclination of preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgement

Capitalism: an economic and political order that relies on a mostly private, unequal market system of production and consumption

Civil rights: the rights establish and ensured by a state government regarding political and social equity

Classism: an attitude or institutional practice which subordinates people of a certain socioeconomic class due to income, occupation, education, and/or their economic status; a system that works to keep certain communities within a set socioeconomic class and prevents social and economic mobility

Coalition: an alliance or union of different people, communities, or groups working for a common cause

Cultural appropriation: the act of members of dominant/powerful/privileged groups claiming ownership of, or the rights to, less powerful/privileged groups' cultural and/or religious symbols, dress and ceremonies

Democracy: a governmental system whose actions and principles value and reflect the people's views through their views

Diversity: a multiplicity of shared and different individual and group experiences, values, beliefs, and characteristics among people

Direct service: active service on cases and work with patients as distinguished from staff functions

Genocide: the intentional attempt to completely erase or destroy a people through structural oppression and/or open acts of physical violence

Immigrant: a person who moves out of their country of birth, for permanent residence in a new country

Institution: any established law or custom that is accepted as part of a culture

Intersectionality: the intersection of race, class, gender, and ability identities within everyone that informs how one views, discusses, and navigates through the world the way each of us views and discusses the world the way each of us views and discusses the world

Justice: the establishment or determination of rights according to rules of law and standards of equity; the process or result of using laws to fairly judge crimes and criminality

Privilege: benefit, advantage, or favor granted to individuals and communities by unequal social structures and institutions

Race: a term used to identify and define individuals as part of a distinct group based on physical characteristics and some cultural and historical commonalities; once used to denote differentiation in humankind based on physiology and biology, race is now understood as a social construct that is not scientifically based, though is still commonly associated with notions of biological difference; race is still sometimes perceived as innate and inalterable

Radical: (especially of change or action) relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something far reaching or thorough

Racial Profiling: A form of racialized community violence.2. Structural and institutional racial xenophobia.3. Refers to the practice of a law enforcement agent or agency relying, to any degree, on race, ethnicity, religion, national origin in selecting which individuals to subject to routine or investigatory activities such as traffic stops, searches, and seizures

Reform: make changes in (something, typically a social, political, or economic institution or practice) to improve it

Social justice: an anti-oppression orientation to social and political organization. 2. The process and goal of addressing the root causes of institutional and structural “isms”