

Anti-Oppression Vocabulary

Acceptance - Acceptance is better than tolerance. Acceptance makes space for everyone and our differences. It lets us shine. Tolerance just says, that's ok I will allow you to exist.

Anti-Blackness - Anti-Blackness is very widespread unfortunately. It is the idea that Black people are less important than others.

Anti-racism - Anti racism is the act of working actively against racism in our society. It's more than just accepting and not hating other people. It's speaking up, it's signing political petitions, it's protesting, it's starting conversations with your family and friends, it's not laughing at racist jokes, it's teaching children about racism, and talking to others about their racist behaviour if it feels safe to do so.

Colourism - In most societies people with lighter skin tones hold more power. Even in predominantly Black societies this can be true.

Discrimination - Excluding someone or treating them unfairly because of their appearance, characteristics or identity.

Diversity - Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographic location, socio-economic status, age, physical or cognitive abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

[Alternative definition] Diversity is all the things that make us unique as human beings. The same things that we experience prejudice for, as well as our thoughts, opinions, and life experiences make us diverse. In nature an ecosystem with more diversity is strongest. A diverse society is also stronger than one where everyone feels they have to be the same as others.

Equity - Providing opportunities to certain groups or individuals in order to achieve equality and fairness of outcomes.

Inclusion - The behaviours, actions and social norms that ensure people of minority backgrounds have access to equal opportunities and resources, as well as feeling welcome, safe and supported.

LGBTQI+ - This is an acronym that includes a spectrum of sexuality and gender diversity that has often been excluded or oppressed. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and the + symbolizes space for additional orientations and identities other than cisgender, straight or heterosexual.

Bisexual - A description for someone who is attracted romantically to people of the same gender as themselves or any other gender.

Cisgender - A description for someone whose body parts and hormones match their feelings about their own gender identity. Most men and women are cisgender, their body parts and mind match.

Gay - A description for a man or woman who is attracted to people of the same gender as themselves

Gender - The roles in society, feelings and interactions that make someone feel like a man, a woman or sometimes like they don't belong in either category, or they belong in both.

Intersex - Someone who may be born with hormones, chromosomes or private body parts that do not have a typical arrangement or development.

Lesbian - A woman who is romantically attracted to other women.

Transgender - Someone whose body (chromosomes, hormones and sex organs) does not match their Gender identity (the roles they feel comfortable taking in society). This is the opposite of cisgender.

Queer - Another word for gay, lesbian or bisexual that is less specific. It can also mean "strange" and in the past was often used as an insult against members of the gay community but it has since been reclaimed. Some older people may still not like this term very much.

Oppression - Using privilege and power to hold others back.

Solidarity - Solidarity is standing with others to protect each other from harm, even when an issue does not directly affect you. Solidarity means making someone else's challenge or struggle into your challenge too.

Prejudice - The belief that someone has negative qualities because of the way they look or their identity or experiences. Prejudice can exist against ethnicities, religious groups, disabilities, poverty, skin tone, weight/body type, sexual identity/LGBTQ, gender, criminal history, education, and many other factors that make up the human experience.

Pride - Pride is a feeling of happiness and joy about who you are. Pride is something everyone feels sometimes but it is a really important feeling for people who experience discrimination regularly, to be able to take the thing that others may see as a weakness and celebrate it as a strength.