

BUSSW Racial & Social Justice Vocabulary List

Note: The definitions provided here were obtained through a literature review and selected based on informal group discussion among students, professors and faculty. These terms are neither absolute nor static, and this list is by no means exhaustive; it is intended to serve as a starting point for dialogue.

Below are a few selected vocabulary words related to oppression:

Institutional Racism – policies, laws, practices and rules within political and social institutions (e.g. schools, businesses, the media) that advantage White Americans at the expense of People of Color (Griffith et al., 2007; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008).

Intersectionality – the intersecting nature of multiple different categories of oppression, which interact with one another in complex ways that amplify and complicate one another (Crenshaw, 1991; Lee & Brotman, 2014). *Example: women of color experience racism, sexism, and the interaction of racism and sexism; and their experiences of identity are therefore unique and not adequately captured in feminism or antiracism alone (Crenshaw, 1991).*

Marginalization –rejection of an out-group by in-group members (Betts & Hinsz, 2013) such that members of the out-group are excluded from resources, stigmatized, and/or treated negatively on the basis of their perceived group identity (Chambers & McCready, 2011). *Example: individuals that do not speak English face challenges finding work and seeking out resources for livelihood in the United States (Racism 101, n.d.).*

Oppression – the unjust exercise of power by a dominant group over people who have less power such that the dominant group is privileged at the other group's expense (Lechuga, Clerc & Howell, 2009; Sue, 2015). Oppression is the complicated and multifaceted manifestation of power and privilege (Dei, 2007; Spencer, 2008).

Prejudice – attitudes and/or beliefs (typically negative) held toward a person or group based on preconceived notions (Williams, 1999).

Privilege – unearned opportunities, advantages, benefits, and freedoms given to dominant group members that are denied to all others (McGrady, 2015); privileges are obtained at the expense of non-dominant groups, and individuals can be privileged along certain identity axes and not others (Branscombe, 1998; Case, 2012; IGNITE!, n.d.). *Examples: White people can be sure that race will not work against them in moving to a new neighborhood, seeking medical attention, or being pulled over by a police officer (McIntosh, 1989). Christians receive time off from work or school for religious holidays while members of other religions do not (Cheney, LaFrance & Quinteros, 2006).*

Racial microaggression – “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). *Examples: color blindness, “there is only one race,” or “I don’t see race”; myth of meritocracy, “anyone can get ahead if they work hard enough”; complimenting a person of color on their intelligence; asking an Asian American or Latino American individual where they are from, assuming that they were not born in the U.S.; claiming as a White person that you understand racism because you experience other forms of oppression such as sexism, etc. (Sue et al., 2007).*

Racialization – the structuring of social groups by race through a process in which racial categories are applied based on observed characteristics, and these categories are imbued with meaning (Bonilla-Silva, 2005, p. 469; Guess, 2006; Lipsitz, 1995). *Example: American poverty was racialized in the 1960s by the White U.S. media, which portrayed poor people as being lazy, undeserving and Black, around the same time that the Civil Rights Movement sought to end racial segregation and discrimination (Gilens, 2003).*

Structural racism – the multi-level, long-standing, pervasive influence of racism within U.S. institutions, policies, culture, and social structures that creates a hierarchy in our society based on race that is pernicious, deep-rooted, and more harmful and more difficult to eradicate than individual acts of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2005; Calmore, 1997; Gee, 2011).

White supremacy – a political term to describe the system in which Whites enjoy social, economic and political benefits and preferential treatment at the expense of others (Mills, 2008; Mills, 2000; Morris, 1995).

Transphobia – irrational fear of and negative attitudes toward transgender people (Bettcher, 2014; Ferguson, 2014).

An alternate set of definitions can be found at this website: <http://anti-racism.ca/node/1.html>

Below are a few selected vocabulary words primarily related to gender identity :

A note related to gender pronouns:

There are many pronouns which we can use to refer to ourselves (i.e. he, she, ze, they, his, hers, theirs, etc.). We can ask people which pronouns they use because we want to respect everyone's identity and address them appropriately. When introductions don't include pronouns, it implies that you can tell everyone's pronouns by their appearance and that everyone in the group uses male/female binary pronouns, both of which are assumptions that may not be true.

Bi-gendered: One who has a significant gender identity that encompasses both genders, male and female. Some may feel that one side or the other is stronger, but both sides are there (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Cisgender – a term used to describe individuals whose gender identity matches the gender identity [girl/woman, boy/man] that was assigned to them at birth (Fish & Karban, 2015, p. x; Johnson, 2015).

Cissexism – attitudes and/or practices that preference and reinforce the experience of cisgender people at the expense of transgender and non-binary people (Ferguson, 2014; Johnson, 2013). *Examples: to assume that a sonogram can tell you the gender of an unborn child (i.e., to assume a child's gender based on their genitalia); teaching in sexual education that there are two categories of gender—male and female—and that all women are born with vaginas and all men with penises (Ferguson, 2014).*

Gender Identity: An individual's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Gender Expression: How a person represents or expresses one's gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Gender Non-conforming: A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Gender norms – societal expectations and assumptions for appropriate or acceptable behavior, appearance, dress, etc. based on a person's actual or perceived gender (Bartlett, 1994; Hawkesworth, 1997; Jakubowki, 2014).

Genderqueer: A term used by some individuals who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Transgender: A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Transgender is a broad term and is good for non-transgender people to use. "Trans" is shorthand for "transgender." (Note: Transgender is correctly used as an adjective, not a noun, thus "transgender people" is appropriate but "transgenders" is often viewed as disrespectful.) (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Transgender Man/ Transman: A term for a transgender individual who currently identifies as a man (see also “FTM”). (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

FTM: A person who transitions from “female-to-male,” meaning a person who was assigned female at birth, but identifies and lives as a male. Also known as a “transgender man” (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Transgender Woman/ Transwoman: A term for a transgender individual who currently identifies as a woman (see also “MTF”) (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

MTF: A person who transitions from “male-to-female,” meaning a person who was assigned male at birth, but identifies and lives as a female. Also known as a “transgender woman” (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014).

Here are some helpful links to learn more about gender pronouns
(<https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>;
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/11/pronoun-etiquette/>)

Student Contributors (alphabetical):*

Christine Brienza, SSW 2016

Jessica Hall, SSW/SPH 2017

Jenn Kong, SSW 2016

Pear Lada, SSW 2016

Aida Manduley, SSW 2016

Katelyn Oimet, MSW/2017

Ashley Slay, SSW 2016

Jessica Sousa, SSW/SPH 2017

Staff/Faculty Advisors:

Deborah Chassler, MSW, Associate Director & Senior Academic

Luz Lopez, MSW, MPH, PhD, Clinical Associate Professor

Cate Solomon, MSW, PhD, Director of Student Services

Compiled by:

Jessica Sousa, SSW/SPH 2017

*Individual contributions to this guide were made via Facebook, email, and through in-person conversation among BUSSW Orientation Committee members. Contributors did not all have the opportunity to review this document, and the above acknowledgment is therefore intended to express our thanks; not to imply endorsement.

References

- Bartlett, K. T. (1994). Only girls wear barrettes: Dress and appearance standards, community norms, and workplace equality. *Michigan Law Review*, 2541-2582.
- Bettcher, T. M. (2014). Transphobia. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1(1-2), 249-251.
- Betts, K. R., & Hinsz, V. B. (2013). Group Marginalization Extending Research on Interpersonal Rejection to Small Groups. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 17(4), 355-370.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American sociological review*, 465-480.
- Branscombe, N. R. (1998). Thinking about one's gender group's privileges or disadvantages: Consequences for well-being in women and men. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 37(2), 167-184.
- Calmore, J. O. (1997). Race/ism Lost and Found: The Fair Housing Act at Thirty. *U. Miami L. Rev.*, 52, 1067.
- Case, K. A. (2012). Discovering the privilege of whiteness: White women's reflections on anti-racist identity and ally behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1), 78-96.
- Chambers, T. T. V., & McCready, L. T. (2011). "Making Space" for Ourselves: African American Student Responses to Their Marginalization. *Urban Education*, 0042085911400322.
- Cheney, C., LaFrance, J., & Quinteros, T. (2006). Basic anti-oppression theory. Tricounty Domestic & Sexual Violence Network Anti-Oppression Training for Trainers. Retrieved from <https://www.pcc.edu/resources/illumination/documents/power-nonpower-chart-institutional-oppression-exercise.pdf>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford law review*, 1241-1299.

- Dei, G. J. S. (2000). Recasting anti-racism and the axis of difference: Beyond the question of theory. *Race, Gender & Class*, 38-56.
- Ferguson, S. (2014, March 21). 3 examples of everyday cissexism. *Everyday Feminism*. Retrieved from <http://everydayfeminism.com/>
- Fish, J., & Karban, K. (Eds.). (2015). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans health inequalities: International perspectives in social work*. Policy Press.
- Gee, G. C., & Ford, C. L. (2011). Structural racism and health inequities. *Du Bois review: social science research on race*, 8(01), 115-132.
- Gilens, Martin. (2003). How the poor became black: The racialization of American poverty in the mass media. In S.F. Schram, J. Soss, & R.C. Fording (Eds.), *Race and the politics of welfare reform*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Griffith, D. M., Mason, M., Yonas, M., Eng, E., Jeffries, V., Plihcik, S., & Parks, B. (2007). Dismantling institutional racism: theory and action. *American journal of community psychology*, 39(3-4), 381-392.
- Guess, T. J. (2006). The social construction of whiteness: Racism by intent, racism by consequence. *Critical Sociology*, 32(4), 649-673.
- Hawkesworth, M. (1997). Confounding gender. *Signs*, 649-685.
- IGNITE! (n.d.) Power, privilege and oppression. [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://antiracist-toolkit.users.ecobytes.net/?page_id=124
- Jakubowski, K. (2014, March 4). Too queer for your binary: Everything you need to know and more about non-binary identities. *Everyday Feminism*. Retrieved from <http://everydayfeminism.com/>
- Johnson, D. (2015, June 3). ID a day: Transgender. *The Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health*. Retrieved from <http://www.thecsph.org/id-a-day-transgender/>
- Johnson, J. R. (2013). Cisgender privilege, intersectionality, and the criminalization of CeCe McDonald: Why intercultural communication needs transgender studies. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 6(2), 135-144.

- Lechuga, V. M., Clerc, L. N., & Howell, A. K. (2009). Power, privilege, and learning: Facilitating encountered situations to promote social justice. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*(2), 229-244.
- Lee, E. O. J., & Brotman, S. (2013). SPEAK OUT!: Structural intersectionality and anti-oppressive practice with LGBTQ refugees in Canada. *Canadian Social Work Review, 30*(2).
- Lipsitz, G. (1995). The possessive investment in whiteness: Racialized social democracy and the "white" problem in American studies. *American Quarterly, 36*(9), 369-387.
- McGrady, K. (2015). Confronting privilege. *Voice*. Retrieved from apps.carleton.edu/voice/
- McIntosh, P. (2010). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. 1988. *Peace and Freedom Magazine, July/August, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia*, 10-12.
- Mills, C. W. (2008). Racial liberalism. *PMLA, 138*(10), 1380-1397.
- Mills, C. W. (2000). Race and the social contract tradition. *Social Identities, 6*(4), 441-462.
- Morris, A., Allen, W., Maurrasse, D., & Gilbert, D. (1994). White supremacy and higher education: The Alabama higher education desegregation case. *Nat'l Black LJ, 14*, 59.
- National Center for Transgender Equality. (2014). Transgender Terminology. Retrieved from <http://www.transequality.org/issues/resources/transgender-terminology>
- Racism 101. (n.d.). Retrieved June 13, 2015 from the Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough website, <http://www.anti-racism.ca/node/1>
- Spencer, M. S. (2008). A social worker's reflections on power, privilege, and oppression. *SOCIAL WORK-ALBANY NEW YORK-*, 53(2), 99.
- Sue, D. W. (2015). Therapeutic harm and cultural oppression. *The Counseling Psychologist, 43*(3), 359-369.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice. *American psychologist*, *62*(4), 271.

Unzueta, M. M., & Lowery, B. S. (2008). Defining racism safely: The role of self-image maintenance on white Americans' conceptions of racism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*(6), 1491-1497.

Williams, D. R. (1999). Race, socioeconomic status, and health the added effects of racism and discrimination. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *896*(1), 173-188.