# Equity Training: Living Glossary

Created by Skeo

This living glossary is intended to help provide a common understanding of the language we use to talk about the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. For many of these words, multiple definitions exist that help to capture the nuance and how the words are used in different contexts. Additionally, definitions of words can change over time as society changes.
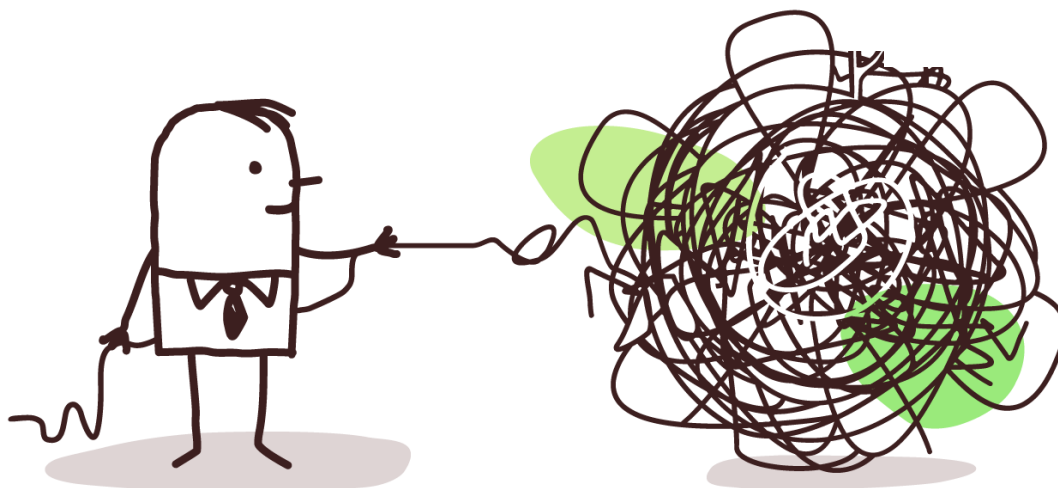
Untangling the language we use.

Bias – A prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair by those "others". Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences. There are types of biases:

- Conscious bias (also known as explicit bias)
- Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias)

It is important to note that biases, conscious or unconscious, are not limited to ethnicity and race. Though racial bias and discrimination are well documented, biases may exist toward any social group. One's age, gender, gender identity physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, weight, and many other characteristics are subject to bias. (Credit: Dr. Renee Navarro)

Unconscious Bias (also known as Implicit Bias) – social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one's conscious values. Certain scenarios can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs. For example, biases may be more prevalent when multi-tasking or working under time pressure. (Credit: Dr. Renee Navarro)

Microaggressions – 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. (Credit: Dr. Derald Wing Sue)

Privileged – belonging to a class that enjoys special right or advantages that others do not have (Credit: Skeo)

Culture – The ideas, customs, habits, skills, arts, etc. of a people or group that are transferred, communicated, or passed along to succeeding generations. (Credit: Webster's Dictionary)

Ethnocentrism – evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture. (Credit: English Oxford Living Dictionaries)

Cultural Competence – The ability to (1) move freely in and between social environments while generating a sense of comfort and ease and (2) win the approval of others in those social environments. (Credit: Michael J. Lythcott, Jr.)

Cultural Humility – The ability to maintain an interpersonal [or cross-group] stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person or group]. (Credit: Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington and Utsey)

Prejudice: A judgment or opinion, usually but not always negative, formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. Prejudices can be learned and can be unlearned. (Credit: CommonHealth ACTION, adapted from American Medical Students Association)

Race prejudice: A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities, and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. (Credit: Merriam Webster)

Institutional racism (also known as structural or systemic racism): (1) Institutional racism refers to the policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor, or put a racial group at a disadvantage. (2) A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. The term identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist. (Credit: Aspen Institute)

Racial inequity: When two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing. (Credit: Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist)

Racist policy: Any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups. (Credit: Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist)

Racist ideas: Any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior to another racial group in any way. (Credit: Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist)

[institutional] Racism: A powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas.(Credit: Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist)

Anti-racism: A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas. (Credit: Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist)

Underserved or overburdened – Populations who receive inadequate or inequitable investment and services, who experience environmental and/or quality-of-life disparities when compared to surrounding populations, and who may in some circumstances have little power or influence over outside decisions that impact their daily quality-of-life. (Credit: Skeo)

Underrepresented – Populations whose representation in a particular space is lower than their representation in the U.S. population. Their absence contributes to knowledge gaps in that space. Representation is commonly assessed using population groups like sex or race/ethnicity; however, when assessing underrepresentation, it is a best practice to consider whose lives will be impacted by decision-making (e.g., underserved or overburdened populations, environmental justice communities) and ensure that those groups are represented and included in that decision-making. (Credit: Skeo)

Justice – The quality of being just, impartial, or fair. (Credit: Merriam Webster)

> Directly dismantling barriers to resources and opportunities in society so that all individuals in communities can live a full and dignified life. (Credit: Avarna Group)

Environmental justice - the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies[1], and "decisions [that] support sustainable communities where people can interact with confidence that their environment is safe, nurturing, and productive..."[2]

"Women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minority groups—blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, and American Indians or Alaska Natives—are underrepresented in science and engineering (S&E). That is, their representation in S&E education and S&E employment is smaller than their representation in the U.S. population.

Although women have reached parity with men among S&E bachelor's degree recipients—half of S&E bachelor's degrees were awarded to women in 2016—they are still underrepresented in S&E occupations. Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, and American Indians or Alaska Natives have gradually increased their share of S&E degrees, but they remain underrepresented in S&E educational attainment and in the S&E workforce."

- Introduction to the <u>Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering</u> report (National Science Foundation and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2019)

For more information: https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf19304/

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[1] U.S. EPA: https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice.
[2] Bunyan Bryant, Professor Emeritus, former Director of the Environmental Advocacy Program at University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability.

Justice – The quality of being just, impartial, or fair. (Credit: Merriam Webster)

Directly dismantling barriers to resources and opportunities in society so that all individuals in communities can live a full and dignified life. (Credit: Avarna Group)

Equity – Improving equity is to promote justice, impartiality and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources and rewards by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of disparities within our society. (Credit: D5 Coalition)

Justice and equity have to do with policies, procedures and systems.

Diverse/Diversity – The demographic mix of a specific collection of people, taking into account elements of human difference. For example: racial and ethnic groups, income, spectrum of built environment settings (rural to urban), faith communities, LGBTQ+ populations, people with disabilities, gender, relationship to the natural environment. (Credit: Skeo, adapted from the D5 Coalition)

Inclusion – Refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group. While a truly "inclusive" group is necessarily diverse, a "diverse" group may or may not be "inclusive." (Credit: D5 Coalition)

It is possible to be diverse without being inclusive.

Equity – Improving equity is to promote justice, impartiality and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources and rewards by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of disparities within our society. (Credit: D5 Coalition)

Equity can be further broken down into categories such as:

- *Procedural Equity*—inclusive, accessible, authentic engagement and representation in decision-making processes regarding programs and policies.
- *Distributional Equity*—programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need.
- *Structural Equity*—decisions are made with a recognition of historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that have routinely advantaged privileged groups in society.
- *Transgenerational Equity*—decisions consider generational impacts and do not result in unfair burdens on future generations. (Credit: Urban Sustainability Director's Network, 2014)
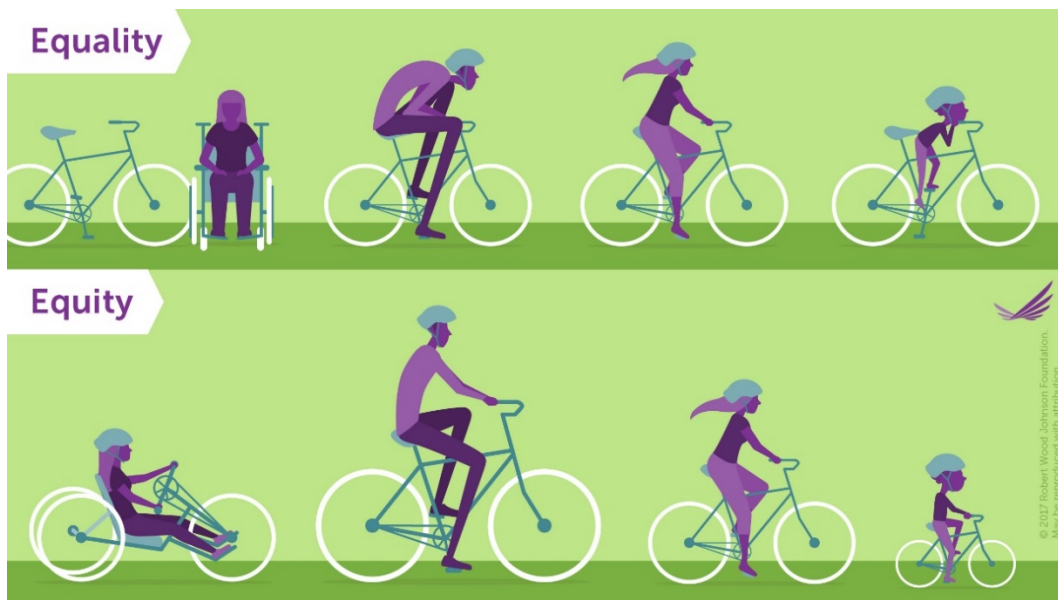
Equality is not the same as equity.