

SCPL Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lexicon

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Section 1: Don't Use These Please

The following terms are considered outdated, offensive, or oppressive and should not be used.

- **Alien/ Illegal** -should not be used when referring to those who may be **out-of status –see definition under Section 2: Identities.**
- **Down's** -it is incorrect to use the term 'down's' to refer to a person who has Down syndrome. If an abbreviation is required, one should use DS.
Website: [Down syndrome fact sheet and terminology guide](#)
- **Feminazi** - this is a derogatory term used against feminists to remove power and dismiss them as irrational, ill-guided, and dangerous.
- **Foreign/Foreigners** - should not be used to refer to people who are not from the United States. Instead of saying- Jim is a foreigner. Be specific, and say- Jim is from Italy.
- **Disabled** – Use this guide from the [National Disability Authority](#).
- **Indian** – should not be used in reference to Native Americans/American Indians
Video: [Should you say Native American or American Indian](#)
- **Mexican** – should not be used as a general term to refer to people who are **Hispanic** or **Latinx**- **see definitions under Section 2: Identities.** It should only be used to refer to someone who is from Mexico.
- **Mixed** - should not be used to refer to someone who is **biracial** or **multiracial**-**see definitions under Section 2: Identities**
- **Oriental** - this is an adjective that should only be used to describe objects(i.e. lamps or rugs) , not people
- **Transvestite**- this is an outdated term it is correct to use **transgender** – see definition under **Section 2: Identities**
- **Transsexual** – this is an outdated term it is correct to use **transgender** – see definition under **Section 2: Identities**
- **ANY HURTFUL TERM**

What to do if you witness someone make an inappropriate comment?

Do:

- Understand the consequences of not speaking up. Overlooking a comment without addressing it may give the person permission to do the same thing again.
- Recognize that if you are in a position of power or authority, you have a responsibility to address offensive comments.
- Ask questions that help the person reflect on what they said and clear up any misunderstandings. **Ex. Joe, do you understand what it meant when you called Jan _____? This term is hurtful and should not be used.**

Don't:

- Assume the person meant to offend you or anyone else; it's possible that they are unaware that they have been offensive.
- Accuse someone of being biased. Lead with care as an accusation of bias can make someone defensive and unwilling to change their behavior in the long term. **Ex. I don't know if you are aware of this, but the term you just used is considered offensive. The term that should be used is _____.**

Section 2: Identities

General

Identity group: A particular group, culture, or community with which an individual identifies or shares a sense of belonging. Individual agency is crucial for identity development: no person should be pressured to identify with any existing group, but instead should have the freedom to self-identify on their own terms.

Social identity: The portion of a person's self-concept that is derived from the membership in a social or identity group. Social identity helps people define how they are perceived by others. Examples include identifying as a Christian, transgender, or Latinx.

Religion (Commonly misunderstood religious terms)

Muslim: A follower of the religion of Islam and its practices. In Arabic, Muslim means "one who surrenders".

Irreligious: A blanket term that applies to people who live with the absence, indifference, rejection of, or hostility toward religion. Examples of irreligion include *agnosticism* (the belief that before talking about whether there is a god, god must first

be concretely defined) and *spiritual but not religious* (rejecting organized religion to focus on internal spiritual growth).

Atheist: A person who rejects the belief that any sort of god or gods exist.

Agnostic: A person who believes that the existence of god is impossible to know.

Race

Biracial: a person who has heritage from two different races.

Multiracial: a person (or group) who has heritage from three or more races.

Latinx (includes Afrolatinx): a gender-neutral term sometimes used in lieu of Latino (male) or Latina (female). Afrolatinx describes someone who is of African and Latin American heritage.

Latina/Latino: a person who of Latin American origin. This includes Brazil, but excludes Spain.

Hispanic: a Spanish-speaking person living in the US, especially one of Latin American descent.

Video: [Terms Every Latino, Hispanic and Latinx Want You To Know](#)

Person of color/POC: a person who is not white or of European heritage.

Indigenous people: ethnic groups who are the first settlers of a given region. Examples include the Inuit in Alaska, the Aboriginal tribes of Australia, Native Americans/American Indians (United States), First Nations (Canada)

Sex and gender

Asexual: a person who has no sexual attraction to others. The asexual community refers to itself as the ace community, and some asexual people may be in relationships.

Cisgender: a person whose personal identity and gender match their assigned sex at birth.

Gender – Is a social and legal status, and set of expectations from society, about behaviors, characteristics, and thoughts. Gender has historically been male or female.

But instead of being about body parts, it is about how one is culturally expected to act because of your sex.

Gender identity: a person's perception of having a particular gender, which may or may not correspond with their assigned sex at birth. It is helpful to specify gender by using the following pronouns- **he/him/his, she/her, hers, they/them.**

Web Resource: <https://www.genderbread.org/resource/genderbread-person-v4-0>

LGBTQIA+: an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual (or allied), and beyond.

Intersex: a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.

Non-binary: an umbrella category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Examples include identifying with neither gender (*agender*) or all genders (*pangender*).

Queer: an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual or cisgender. Examples include both sexual identities like *pansexuality* (attraction to everyone, regardless of their sex) and gender identities such as *transgender*. *** It is important to note that the word 'queer' has a complicated past having originally been used strictly within the LGBTQIA community. More recently, there has been larger acceptance of this term.**

Questioning: The exploration of one's gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or all three. It is a process by people who may be unsure of, still developing, or concerned about applying a social label to themselves for various reasons.

Transgender: a person whose personal identity and gender do not correspond with their assigned sex at birth.

Immigration

Out-of-status: In terms of immigration, a person who is out-of-status currently has lost their standing as a legal immigrant. Examples include immigrants who have allowed their work visas to expire, immigrants who have misfiled paperwork, and immigrants who have entered the country without pre-approval. If an immigrant leaves America while

out-of-status, they are not allowed to return for up to a decade.

Section 3: Types of Bias

Ableism – Discrimination against learned persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals.

Ageism – Discrimination against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes

Anti-Semitism – hostility to, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews. A person who holds such positions is called an anti-Semite. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Biphobia – is aversion toward bisexuality and toward bisexual people as a social group or as individuals. It can take the form of denial that bisexuality is a genuine sexual orientation, or of negative stereotypes about people who are bisexual. People of any sexual orientation can experience or perpetuate biphobia.

Classism – refers to treating people unequally based on the social class in which they belong to. Class can be thought of as a hierarchical social structure in which groups of individuals are divided based on factors that our society deem as prestigious (e.g., wealth and education). Classism consists of a collection of behaviors, thoughts, attitudes, practices, and policies that work together to create and maintain a system of inequality that benefits those in a higher class while negatively impacting people of a lower class.

Colorblind – is the belief that racism is no longer a problem and that we all have equal opportunities. People who subscribe to colorblind explanations claim they do not see the color of people's skin and believe everyone to be equal. Colorblindness prevents us from seeing the historical causes of racial inequality and how racial inequality persists in our society.

Complicit – choosing to be involved in an illegal, unlawful or morally wrong activity, especially with others; accepting behaviors that do not align with someone's values.

Quote from Coca-Cola Company vice president of national retail sales Pamela Stewart:

“wherever you are, whatever you are doing, if you witness someone experiencing inequality, speak up to support them. Being silent is aligned to being complicit. Don't be afraid to speak up in the moment to make a positive change, and ultimately help to re-educate.”

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) – Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any aspect of employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Ethnocentrism – The practice of using a particular ethnic group as a frame of reference, basis of judgment, or standard criteria from which to view the world. Ethnocentrism favors one ethnic group's cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.

Eurocentrism – The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.

Harassment – Unwelcome, intimidating, exclusionary, threatening or hostile behavior against an individual that is based on a category protected by law.

Heterosexism – Viewing the world only in heterosexual terms, thus denigrating other sexual orientations.

Homophobia – The fear or hatred of LGBTQIA (and other non-heterosexual identities) persons perceived to be gay or lesbian.

Implicit bias – refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness.

Individual Racism – the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism; can occur at both a conscious and unconscious level, and can be active or passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of Whites.

In-group Bias – The tendency for groups to 'favor' themselves by rewarding group members economically, socially, psychologically and emotionally in order to uplift one group over another.

Institutional Racism – Refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for Whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as People of Color.

Islamophobia – The fear or hatred of Muslims, Islam, and related symbols.

Marginalization – the placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the dominant culture is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive. Also: pushing a particular group of people to the edge of society by not allowing them an active voice.

Oppression – the systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privilege group's benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.

Systems of oppression work on an individual level through personal actions, an institutional level through laws, norms and rules, and a societal level through roles, rituals, and language.

Othering – To view or treat (a person or group of people) as intrinsically different from and alien to oneself.

Racism – Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in race/ethnicity, usually by white/European descent groups against people of color.

Sexism – is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but it primarily affects women and girls. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another. Extreme sexism may foster sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Gender discrimination may encompass sexism, and is discrimination toward people based on their gender identity or their gender or sex differences.

Silencing – Quote from Rachel Elizabeth Cargle: "Silencing happens when hearing the truth is too much; when the truth hangs so painfully heavy on particular groups' shoulders that they'd rather get rid of the weight, than actually face the issue head on. But why would something as virtuous as truth be a burden for some? Because when the truth is held up, it reflects the false securities that our society rests on: the elitism, the capitalism, the racism, the ableism, the sexism, the homo/transphobia, the xenophobia, the anti-blackness. And the people who benefit from those systems have a hard time letting go of their privilege within those realms. To escape these truths, silencing has very often been the answer."

Transphobia – The fear or hatred of persons perceived to be transgender.

Xenophobia – is the fear and distrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Xenophobia can involve perceptions of an in-group toward an out-group and can manifest itself in suspicion of the activities of others, and a desire to eliminate their presence to secure a presumed purity and may relate to a fear of losing national, ethnic or racial identity.

Section 4: Other Important Terminology

Ally- A person who recognizes and takes action to dismantle the oppression of targeted groups. Allies strengthen their knowledge, commit to reducing their own complicity in structural oppression, and work in support of and in community with recognized leaders.

Video: [5 Tips for Being an Ally](#)

Closeted – Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed or is not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Some individuals may be out to some people in their life, but not out to others due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing one's job, or other concerns. (Not out preferred to closeted).

Coming out–The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others. LGBTQ people forge their identity first to themselves and then they may reveal it to others. Publicly sharing one's identity may or may not be part of coming out.

Denial – The refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges that are granted or denied based on a person's identities. Examples include “I don't see color. People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin.” Denial perpetuates the hierarchical structures of privilege, racism, and oppression.

Discrimination– The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different groups or categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

Diversity– the inclusion of different types and or groups of people (such as people of varying sex, race, or culture) in a group or organization.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – The teaching of English to people who speak a different language (historically, to those who live in a country where English is the main language spoken.)

Ethnicity– Refers to cultural factors, including nationality, regional culture, ancestry, and language which bind a group of people. Ethnicity connotes shared cultural traits and a shared group history. Some ethnic groups also share linguistic or religious traits, while others share a common group history but not a common language or religion.

Equity – The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement, with the explicit understanding that such a principle also requires the elimination of identified barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically underserved and underrepresented populations. Equity recognizes that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed in order to provide equal opportunities to all groups.



Feminism – The belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. Although largely originating in the West, feminism is manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to activity on behalf of women's rights and interests.

Inclusion – The act of creating environments, in which any individual or group can feel and be welcomed, respected, valued, and supported to fully participate. An inclusive climate embraces differences and offers respect for all people in both words and actions.

Inclusive Language– Words or phrases that include all potential audiences from any identity group. Inclusive language expands beyond potential stereotypes or prejudices associated with a group. For example, using “firefighters” instead of “firemen” rejects the stereotype that only men serve as first responders.

Intent vs. Impact – Intent is what a person meant to do/say and impact is the actual effect they had. Within an inclusive environment, impact must take precedence over intent. It is imperative to recognize how behaviors, language, actions, and policies affect or influence other people. How actions are received should be the focus, especially when involving marginalized groups.

Intersectionality- The ways in which a person's multiple identities (race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, education, legal status, financial status, etc.) – and the corresponding oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.) – are interconnected. As such, they cannot be examined separately from one another.

Microaggression – The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, which communicate negative, hostile, or derogatory messages to persons based solely upon their marginalized identities. Such aggressions can be either intentional or unintentional.

Video: [Microaggressions in Everyday Life](#)

Out– A person who self-identifies as LGBTQ in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. For example: Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico. (Out preferred to openly gay.)

Outing– Exposing or publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor or speculation) someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without that person's consent. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety, religious, or family situations.

Privilege– Power and advantages benefiting a group, based on a particular identity. Such power is derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups. Examples of privilege include: white, male, heterosexual, religious, socio-economic, etc. Such privilege does not mean that one's life is not difficult, but rather that challenges do not stem from that particular part of one's identity. Low-income men may face classist prejudices, while still benefiting from male privilege. White LGBTQ individuals may face homophobia or transphobia, while still benefiting from white privilege.

Video: [What is Privilege?](#)

Exercise: [Privilege Walk](#)

Race– The term race refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of physical characteristics (which usually result from genetic ancestry). Race presumes shared biological or genetic traits, whether actual or asserted. Historically and today, racial differences were and are ascribed significance in areas of intelligence, health, and personality. There is no evidence validating these ideas.

Safe Space – A place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

Sex– Is a medical assignment usually made by a doctor based on the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and chromosomal genetic differences. Sometimes, a person's genetically assigned sex does not line up with their gender identity. These individuals might refer to themselves as transgender, non-binary, or gender-nonconforming.

Sex / Gender as assigned at birth – Refers to the sex that you're assigned by a doctor at birth based on the genitals you're born with and the chromosomes you have. It goes on your birth certificate.

Social Justice – A vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole.