



10
important
words in
anti-racism
work

Anti-Racism
Advisory Group

About this list

This is by no means a complete list. There are more than 10 important words in anti-racism work.

But as those of us in the committee continue engaging with others doing similar work, we've learned that understanding some of the most commonly-used terminology is valuable in helping us—and anyone interested in this issue—move the work forward.

The definitions adopted here were cobbled together from various sources (listed near the end of this collection). And although most of the terms are not new, their usage and meaning have evolved over time, especially in the context of race relations and equity conversation. We did our best to capture the most current usage of the words in the context of anti-racism work.

We hope this helps you kickstart or strengthen your engagement with the important work of eliminating racism.

Anti-Racism Advisory Group

U.N. International Day for the
Elimination of Racial Discrimination
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**10 important words
in anti-racism work**



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1. Bias

Bias—a prejudice and general idea about a specific people based on physical characteristics or stereotypes.

Implicit Bias—also known as unconscious biases, refers to attitudes and stereotypes that people unknowingly attribute to another person or group based on race, gender, disability or other physical characteristics that affect how they understand and engage with that person or group.

2. BIPOC

Stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. It is primarily used to describe any person who is not considered white (non-BIPOC).

Check out:

- [How to say BIPOC](#)

3. Equity vs. Equality

Equity—intentional attitude and action to recognize, accept and operate fairly towards a person or group. This includes elimination of policies, practices and attitudes that reinforce, or fail to eliminate, differences.

Equality—the belief that status opportunities and rights are evenly distributed.

Learn more:

- [Equity vs. Equality](#)

4. Inclusion

The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as members of minority groups. Using inclusive language is a pillar of inclusion.

Learn more:

- [Inclusion starts with I](#)

5. Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept that inequities involve the interactions and intersections of different social identity factors such as race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, economic status, sexuality, geography, age, (dis)ability, migration status, religion, etc. This means that inequities do not result from a single identity factor in isolation, but rather from the intersections of different parts of an individual's identity, power relations, and experience.

Learn more:

- [Intersectionality 101](#)
- [Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality](#)

6. Microaggression

Commonplace verbal or behavioural indignities—whether intentional or unintentional—which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards members of a marginalized group such as people of color, women, disabled or LGBTQ+.

Learn more:

- [Microaggressions: Did you really just say that?](#)
- [Examples of racial microaggressions](#)

7. Privilege

Unearned, special advantages that a person is born into or acquires during their lifetime. It's supported by informal and formal institutions of society and conferred to all members of a particular identity group. There are different dimensions of privilege resulting in oppression, eg. racial, gender, ability.

Learn more:

- [What is Privilege?](#)

8. Racialized

Racialized communities encompass people that are non-Caucasian in race, or non-white in colour.

9. Racism

Racism—the belief that one group, defined by the skin colour or their perceived common ancestry, is inherently superior to others. Deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs, racism is either openly displayed in jokes, slurs or hate speech, or hidden in unconscious biases.

Systemic racism—consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that create and maintain the power of certain racial groups over others, or reinforce the disadvantage of certain racial groups.

Learn more:

- [Systemic Racism Explained \(U.S. example\)](#)

10. Settler

Within the context of race relations, refers to the non-indigenous population of a country. In Canada and in other countries, the imposed establishment of settler culture has resulted in the demotion and displacement of indigenous communities including their distinct identity and sovereignty over the land.

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**Racism hurts everyone
Everyone can stop racism**

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