



Scarsdale Public Schools Glossary of Bias Terminology

In order to best facilitate dialogue on multiculturalism, diversity, belonging, and inclusion, the District's Compact Committee believes that it is important to share a common language of social justice terms.

This glossary is not meant to be exhaustive. Because of the way that language works, particularly around these concepts, it is important to note that many of these terms continue to evolve.

Identities

Our identities are who we are as individuals, including our personal characteristics, history, personality, name, and other characteristics that make us unique and different from other individuals.

- **Asexual:** someone who does not experience sexual attraction.
- **Biracial:** a person who identifies as coming from two races; a person whose biological parents are of two different races.
- **Bigender/Dual Gender:** a person who possesses and expresses a distinctly masculine persona and a distinctly feminine persona and is comfortable in and enjoys presenting in both gender roles.
- **Bisexual:** a person who is attracted to people of their own gender as well as another gender.
- **Cisgender:** a description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression and sex assigned at birth align (e.g., man, masculine and male).

- **Ethnicity:** the culture of people in a given geographic region, including their language, heritage, religion, and customs.
- **First Nations People:** individuals who identify as those who were the first people to live on the Western Hemisphere continent; people also identified as Native Americans.
- **Gender:** social, cultural, and psychological traits linked to males and females that define them as masculine or feminine.
- **Gender Identity:** refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being a man or woman, or something other or in between, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth; because gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others.
- **Heterosexual:** a person attracted to members of another sex or gender.
- **Homosexual:** a person who is attracted to members of what they identify as their own sex or gender (the terms Gay and Lesbian are preferred).
- **Intersex:** a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive organs, sexual anatomy, or chromosomes that are not considered "standard" for either male or female.
- **Latinx:** a gender-neutral neologism, sometimes used instead of Latino or Latina to refer to people of Latin American cultural or racial identity in the United States. The <-x> suffix replaces the standard <-o/-a> ending of nouns and adjectives, typical of grammatical gender in Spanish. Its plural is Latinxs.
- **LGBTQIA:** an inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.
- **Multiracial:** a person who identifies as coming from two or more races; a person whose biological parents are of two or more different races.
- **Multiethnic:** a person who identifies as coming from two or more ethnicities; a person whose biological parents are of two or more ethnicities.
- **Pansexual** (also referred to as omnisexual or polysexual): referring to the potential for sexual attractions or romantic love toward people of all gender identities and biological sexes; the concept of pansexuality deliberately rejects the gender binary.
- **People of Color:** used primarily in the United States to describe any person who is not white; the term is meant to be inclusive among non-white groups, emphasizing common experiences of racism.
- **Queer:** an umbrella term that can refer to anyone who transgresses society's view of gender, sexual orientation or sexuality.
- **Questioning:** refers to an individual who is uncertain of their sexual orientation, gender or identity.
- **Race:** refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of physical characteristics that result from genetic ancestry. Sociologists use the concept of race to describe how people think of and treat groups of people, as people

very commonly classify each other according to race (e.g., as African-American or as Asian). Most sociologists believe that race is not “real” in the sense that there are no distinctive genetic or physical characteristics that truly distinguish one group of people from another; instead, different groups share overlapping characteristics.

- **Religion:** a system of beliefs, usually spiritual in nature, and often in terms of a formal, organized denomination.
- **Sex:** separate from gender, this term refers to the cluster of biological, chromosomal and anatomical features associated with maleness and femaleness in the human body. Sexual dimorphism is often thought to be a concrete reality, whereas in reality the existence of Intersex individuals points to a multiplicity of sexes in the human population. Sex is often used synonymously with gender in this culture. Although the two terms are related, they should be defined separately to differentiate the biological (“sex”) from the sociocultural (“gender”).
- **Sexual Orientation:** refers to the gender(s) that a person is emotionally, physically, romantically and erotically attracted to. Examples of sexual orientation include homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, and asexual. Trans and gender-variant people may identify with any sexual orientation, and their sexual orientation may or may not change before, during or after gender transition.
- **Social Identity:** involves the ways in which one characterizes oneself, the affinities one has with other people, the ways one has learned to behave in stereotyped social settings, the things one values in oneself and in the world, and the norms that one recognizes or accepts governing everyday behavior.
- **Transgender:** has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who deviate from their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. This includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, genderqueers, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others. Some transgender people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories but rather somewhere between, beyond or outside of those two genders.
- **Transsexual:** refers to a person who experiences a mismatch of the sex they were born as and the sex they identify as. A transsexual sometimes undergoes medical treatment to change their physical sex to match their sex identity through hormone treatments and/or surgically. Not all transsexuals can have or desire surgery.

Types of Bias

Bias is prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

- **Ableism:** prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in physical, mental, and/or emotional ability; usually that of able-bodied/minded persons against people with illnesses, disabilities, or less developed skills.
- **Anti-Semitism:** the fear or hatred of Jews, Judaism, and related symbols.
- **Biphobia:** the fear or hatred of persons perceived to be bisexual.
- **Classism:** prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in socioeconomic status, income, class; usually by upper classes against lower classes.
- **Discrimination:** actions based on conscious or unconscious prejudice that favor one group over others in the provision of goods, services, or opportunities.
- **Hate Crime:** hate crime legislation often defines a hate crime as a crime motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.
- **Heterosexism:** viewing the world only in heterosexual terms, thus denigrating other sexual orientations.
- **Homophobia:** the fear or hatred of homosexuality (and other nonheterosexual identities) and persons perceived to be gay or lesbian.
- **Implicit Bias:** occurs when someone consciously rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts but also holds negative associations in their mind unconsciously.
- **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.
- **Islamophobia:** the fear or hatred of Muslims, Islam, and related symbols.
- **Marginalized:** excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.
- **Microaggression:** everyday insults, indignities, and demeaning messages sent to historically marginalized groups by well-intentioned members of the majority group who are unaware of the hidden messages being sent.
- **Oppression:** results from the use of institutional power and privilege where one person or group benefits at the expense of another; oppression is the use of power and the effects of domination.
- **Prejudice:** a preconceived judgment about a person or group of people, usually indicating negative bias.
- **Racism:** prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in race/ethnicity, usually by white/European descent groups against people of color.
- **Sexism:** prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in sex/gender, usually by men against women.
- **Silencing:** the conscious or unconscious processes by which the voice or participation of particular social identities is excluded or inhibited.

- **Stereotype:** blanket beliefs, unconscious associations, and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information, and are highly generalized.
- **System of Oppression:** conscious and unconscious, nonrandom, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups.
- **Transphobia:** the fear or hatred of persons perceived to be transgender and/or transsexual.
- **Xenophobia:** the fear or hatred of foreigners.

Other Helpful Terms

- **Advocate:** someone who speaks up for themselves and members of their identity group; e.g., a woman who lobbies for equal pay for women. Advocates acknowledge responsibility as citizens to shape public policy to address intentional or unintentional harm to minorities and the oppressed, whether caused by action or inaction.
- **Ally:** someone who speaks on behalf of others in need or distress until they are empowered to speak for themselves.
- **Bias Incident:** a discriminatory or hurtful act that appears to be motivated or is perceived by the victim to be motivated all or in part by race, ethnicity, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. To be considered an incident, the act is not required to be a crime under any federal, state or local statutes.
- **Color Blind:** the belief in treating everyone “equally” by treating everyone the same; based on the presumption that differences are, by definition, bad or problematic and therefore best ignored (i.e., “I don’t see race, gender, etc.”).
- **Dialogue:** “communication that creates and recreates multiple understandings” (Wink, 1997); it is bidirectional, not zero-sum and may or may not end in agreement. Dialogue can be emotional and uncomfortable, but is safe, respectful and has greater understanding as its goal.
- **Diversity:** the wide variety of shared and different personal and group characteristics among human beings.
- **Doing Gender:** the notion that gender emerges not as an individual attribute but as something that is accomplished in interaction with others.
- **Dominant Culture:** the cultural values, beliefs and practices that are assumed to be the norm and are most influential within a given society.

- **Privilege:** a right, license or exemption from duty or liability granted as a special benefit, advantage or favor.
- **Safe Space:** refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.
- **Social Justice:** is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.
- **Tolerance:** acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes and cultures; does not necessarily connote agreement with the differences.

References

This glossary was compiled from existing resources provided by the National Conference for Community and Justice, Oregon State University, Arizona State University, Intergroup Relations Center, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*, 5/e by Linda Lindsey. Pearson/Prentice-Hall, 2011, The National Center for Transgender Equality, [The Center](#), and [Chegg](#), Gender Equity Resource Center, BGSU, University of Michigan, Indiana University, Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice (Ed by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, Pat Griffin).