

## **Multicultural Competency Vocabulary**

**Anti-Semitism:** (Prejudice + Power) Prejudice or discrimination against Jewish people based on native group stereotyping and religious prejudice.

**Bisexual:** A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex, as well as members of the opposite sex.

**Culture:** The shared values, norms, traditions, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people.

**Cultural Filter:** Cultural identity creates in our minds a “cultural filter.” Everything we experience each day goes through this filter and how we think, feel and react to the world around us is directly related to the make-up of our cultural filter.

**Cultural Group:** We each belong to many different cultural groups. We belong to groups based on our ethnicity or race, our gender, age, socioeconomic status, religion, physical abilities, sexual orientation, nationality or even the region of the country we are from.

**Cultural Identity:** The many different group affiliations we hold come together to create a unique cultural identity for each of us. Our cultural identity is very complex with each group membership intersecting with the others. Because of this complexity, we cannot be judged, labeled or categorized based on one aspect of our identity.

**Cultural Pluralism:** Often referred to as the “Salad Bowl” and currently more accepted than the Melting Pot. Allows individual ethnic groups to maintain their own cultural uniqueness, while sharing common elements of being an American.

**Derailing:** This refers to the many ways that White People take a conversation about racism and privilege and make it all about them, rather than the Person of Color.

**Discrimination:** (Prejudice + Power) An action against other people on the grounds of their group membership, particularly the refusal to grant such people opportunities, access, or resources that would be granted to similarly qualified members of one’s own group. There are many forms of discrimination including: racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism etc.

**Dominant Culture:** The cultural group that controls the major aspects of social power, values, and norms within a society.

**Dual (multiple) identity:** Two or more distinct characteristics of individuals that compound their status as a cultural minority, such as a woman who is the member of an ethnic or racial minority. In some cases, central characteristics associated with the distinct identities may conflict and the individual attempts to keep them separate, such as Latina or lesbian, or African American or gay.

**Ethnicity:** Members of an ethnic group usually have common ancestry and generally share language, religion, and other cultural patterns. Many ethnic groups exist within each racial group.

**Ethnocentrism:** The act of regarding one’s culture as superior to all others and hence as the basis for all comparisons with other cultures.

**Gay:** The common and accepted term for homosexual males.

**Heterosexism:** (Prejudice + Power) The societal/cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that heterosexuality is the only natural, normal, acceptable sexual orientation.

**Homophobia:** Irrational fear and/or hatred of homosexuals.

**Internalized oppression:** The process internalization negative and stereotypical myths and messages from the dominant culture about one's group identity. The result of such internalization can be individual and/or group hatred.

**Lesbian:** The common and accepted term for homosexual females.

**Linguicism:** (Prejudice + Power) A conscious or unconscious action or institutional structure that subordinates a person because of their language and/or accent.

**Melting Pot:** Popular image the United States during the early stages of the country's formation in which all nationalities, ethnic groups, and races melted into one "American" culture.

**Minority:** A group of people who, because of physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others of society for differential and unequal treatment. In common usage, numerical size alone does not determine minority status.

**Multiculturalism:** The recognition and appreciation of the distinct cultural groups within a society.

**Nationality:** The status of being a member of a nation by birth or naturalization.

**Oppression:** A state of being which results when many acts of discrimination over time are perpetrated against one relatively less powerful social group by another relatively more powerful social group. The results of which benefit one group over others and is maintained by social beliefs, practices and institutions.

**People of Color:** The term used by many individuals and groups to self-define based on cultural, ethnic, and racial heritage. This term is preferred to "minorities" in some circles.

**Power:** The ability to influence others, enforce one's beliefs, or get what one wants.

**Prejudice:** Conscious or unconscious negative beliefs about another social group and its members without knowledge of or examination of the facts: bias.

**Race:** A socially defined subgroup of people with the distinguishable physical characteristics which are genetically transmitted. Through the years scholars have created a variety of lists of races.

**Racism:** (Prejudice + Power) Conscious or unconscious thought, action, or institutional structure that subordinates a person or group because of race or ethnicity.

**Sexism:** (Prejudice + Power) Conscious or unconscious action or institutional structure that subordinates a person because of gender.

**Stereotype:** A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. While often negative, stereotypes may also be complementary. Yet even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact and can feed into prejudice.

**Transgender:** an “umbrella term” for someone whose self-identification, anatomy, appearance, manner, expression, behavior and/or other’s perceptions of the above challenges traditional societal expectations of congruent gender expression and designated birth sex.

**White Privilege:** Unearned advantages that White People receive simply by virtue of their race. These advantages often go unnoticed and are taken for granted.