

UTSU Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Glossary

EQUITY: The state of being impartial and fair to everyone.

DIVERSITY: The state of being different and being inclusive of people from various backgrounds, genders, cultures etc.

INCLUSION: Providing the same amount of access to resources and opportunities to all parties for fairness and justice.

OPPRESSION: As the “systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions.”

RACISM: Racism is a system that is implemented in every part of the legal/social/economic structure of this country and continues to this day due to these systems being upheld.

IDENTITY: Identity is a historically and socially constructed concept. Many individuals and groups have slightly different notions of identity that are specific to certain times, places, cultures, and lived experiences. Broadly, identity is formed based on how we interact with others, how the world interacts with us, and how we reflect on these interactions personally.

MARGINALISATION: Marginalisation is when a certain person, group or concept is treated unfairly, and are oppressed. Oftentimes those who are marginalised are in a position of insignificance or less power in society.

POWER: The ability to control, dictate or have influence over those who are marginalised or oppressed in society. Power can be derived from expertise.

PRIVILEGE: An advantage, which is unearned and, “granted to a particular group of people who (often unintentionally) gain from the oppression of another group.”

DOMINANT AND NON-DOMINANT: Those dominant have more power and control over those who are non-dominant. The dominant group overlook the non-dominant members from a superior or powerful position in society.

INTERSECTIONALITY: Coined by American civil rights advocate, law professor, and critical race theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in the 1980s. When varying power structures and identities interact and shape lived experience, Crenshaw was explaining how power structures intersect to negatively affect marginalized individuals.

SOCIAL LOCATION: Your place or position in history and society in relation to what is dominant in society and our privileged identity. All people have a social location that is defined by their gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location, etc. Some aspects of your social location may change over the course of your life, while others are fixed.

ASSUMPTION: A willingness to accept something as true without question or proof. Assumptions about other people, social groups, and communities are enabled by societal and cultural conventions, by-laws and policies, and by media and messaging. Assumptions are often part of our belief system and are used to interpret the world around us. However, when we make assumptions about groups of people and do not question those assumptions, they can be harmful, and prevent us from critically engaging with the people around us in an open and non-judgmental way.

BIAS: Having prejudice against a certain group. Bias can be in a form of feeling, opinion or inclination.

SOLIDARITY: Solidarity the practice of taking action against the oppression of groups that you do not belong to in order to build stronger communities for ourselves and for each other. Solidarity work is not just for people whose identities are all privileged in society, but it can take on many forms. For example, immigrant and refugee communities can work in solidarity with Indigenous communities; Muslim communities can work in solidarity with Black communities, etc.

ALLYSHIP: Allyship is an important part of anti-oppression advocacy and supporting those who are most marginalized. Allyship is a meaningful act, not an identity. It is an ongoing process that occurs over time, and one ceases to be an ally when their acts of allyship stop. One can begin to practise meaningful allyship by reflecting and questioning their own beliefs about society and why they believe them.