Terms & Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Ideology	A system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory or policy. (How one believes the world should run.)
Social and Institutional Power	1. Access to resources 2. The ability to influence others 3. Access to decision-makers to get what you want done 4. The ability to define reality for yourself and others
System	1. A set of things that together make a whole 2. An established way of doing something, such that things get done that way regularly and are assumed to be the 'normal' way things get done 3. Runs by itself; does not require planning or initiative by a person or group
Race	Race categorizes people based on the presumption of shared physical and biological characteristics. As white Europeans colonized and enslaved groups, racial categories became a crucial means to sustain their dominant relations of power and privilege—further institutionalizing a racial hierarchy. Among the personal consequences of such categories is that identities are forced to "fit" into racial categories on the assumption that they reflect a person's ancestral heritage. The most important societal consequence is the legitimation of gaps in equality of wealth, opportunity, and access to other valuable resources. Although racial distinctions are highly problematic—conveying a concreteness that has been repeatedly shown to lack biological validity—these distinctions indeed become "real" through their ongoing social enactment, that is, personally, organizationally, and societally, in every arena of our social world, including day to day microaggressions, pervasive stigmas, exclusionary policies, and established (or lack of adequate) laws. Essentially, race is not biologically real - it is socially and politically constructed via law, public policy and social practices.

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	e.g. A person who could be categorized as black in the United States might be considered white in Brazil or colored in South Africa.
Ethnicity	Socially defined category of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience. e.g. Italian, Jewish
Culture	A way of life of a group of people — the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next. e.g. I grew up in a small mid-western farm town where hunting is a right of passage.
Nationality	1. A group of people who share the same history, traditions, and language, and who usually live together in a particular country 2. The fact or status of being a member or citizen of a particular nation e.g. American, South African
Diverse/Diversity	The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.
Multi-ethnic	1. Involving or including people of several different ethnic groups 2. A multi-ethnic person has parents who come from different ethnic groups
Multi-cultural	Involving or including people or ideas from many different countries, races, or religions
Anti-racism	The policy or practice of opposing racism
Color Blindness	1. Race-based color blindness is the idea that you do not "see"

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color, that you do not notice differences in race. Or that if you do, you do not treat people differently or oppress people based on those differences.
2. A term used to sound non-racist
3. Suppresses public discourse on race and masks discrepancies in decision-making.

Racism

Racism is an oppressive force that creates and reproduces a complex system of social inequality. It involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the major institutions of society. It is a byproduct of racial categorization that focuses on the hierarchical arrangement of various racial groups.

Racism = social and institutional power + race prejudice + white supremacy + oppression

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination.

Categories & Levels:

1. Systemic
    a. Institutional - social institutions, e.g. government, courts of law, banks, schools.
    b. Structural - public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work to perpetuate racial group inequity.2. Individual Interpersonal - occurs between individuals
2. Individual
    a. Interpersonal - occurs between individuals
    b. Internalized - racist attitudes towards members of their own ethnic group, including themselves

Colorism

A global phenomenon evident in countries as a consequence of colonialism denoting prejudice or discrimination against dark skin tones, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.

e.g. 'light skinned girls are prettier than dark skinned girls'

Prejudice

An attitude based on limited information, often on stereotypes. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative. Positive and negative prejudices alike are damaging because they deny the individuality of the person. No one is free of prejudice.

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Oppressed/ Oppression	The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found: 1. the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others, 2. the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them), 3. genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and, 4. members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.
White Supremacy	The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.
White Privilege	White privilege (or white skin privilege) is a term for societal privileges that benefit white people in western countries beyond what is commonly experienced by non-white people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.
Microaggression	A subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minoritized or other non-dominant group that is often unintentional or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype e.g. "I don't see you as Black."
Melanin	The dark brown pigment that gives human skin, hair, and eyes their color. Dark-skinned people have more melanin in their skin than light-skinned people have. Melanin is produced by cells called melanocytes. Melanin protects the body by absorbing ultraviolet radiation from the sun and is also responsible for tanning.
Genotype	The set of genes in our DNA which is responsible for a particular trait. e.g. genes responsible for a person's height

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Phenotype	The physical expression or characteristics of a trait influenced by its genotype and by the environment. e.g. skin color
Brownicity	(pronounced like 'ethnicity') A combination of the words brown and ethnicity. The word brown represents melanin, the pigment we all have. Ethnicity means that which we have in common. We all are hues of brown.
Representations	Cultural images that exhibit and sustain institutional structures; they are not neutral
Frame	An unconscious lens through which we view an issue or problem. Related to social cognition processes encoded in our brains, frames help us quickly make sense of complex information and then make individual and collective decisions on that basis. These processes generate deeply embedded perspectives that are easily activated in the subconscious, especially through devices like images, stories, stereotypes and slogans. e.g. 'Hard work yields prosperity.'
Narratives	Specific stories (whether real, exaggerated, or fictionalized) used to convey or reinforce a given frame. e.g. 'Those who have less are not hard workers, are lazy and are looking for a hand out.'
Messages	The takeaway from frames and narratives that invoke specific action. e.g. 'Because they are lazy and just want a hand-out, don't help poor people.'
Implicit/Unconscious Racial Bias	The thoughts that pop into our minds, the quick random gut reactions when we think about a particular group. They affect our behaviors in areas that maintain or exacerbate inequalities
Inequality	An unfair situation in which some people have measurably more rights or better opportunities than other people.
Inequity	Lack of fairness or justice; an unfair circumstance

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Disparity	May result in the inability to access quality care, resources, services or opportunities to thrive.
Disproportionality	Caused by disparities, some in society at large, and some in public institutions.
Racial Healing	Healing from the damage caused by our subjection to the construct of race/ism. Healing can occur personally, physically, socially, systemically, and economically. e.g. 'Once I understood how race/ism was crafted and operates, I began to heal from it's lies that I had internalized.'
Racial Ignorance	The presence of false or mystified beliefs and the absence of understandings, feelings, and moral judgements regarding racial structures. Racial ignorance is a cognitive accomplishment grounded in practices, both explicit and tacit, of knowing and non-knowing that results in misinterpretations of racially consequential historical processes, organizational workings, and interpersonal interactions. Racial ignorance allows various forms of racial injustice and racial oppression to be seen as normal or natural, and therefore should not be challenged or contested. Dominant groups make rational investments in not understanding things related to race, racism, and racial domination. At the same time, oppressed racial groups may suppress their understandings to avoid discomfort, social tensions, or re-living personal trauma. As an ongoing practice, racial ignorance requires dedication and ongoing effort in societies saturated with evidence of racism to avoid the counternarratives, resistance, and suffering of oppressed racial groups.
White Space	Social situations and organizational practices which had been designed by white people for themselves, often to advance their own collective interests and to maintain domination. White institutions have often been established with the expectation that people of color would be excluded, and often most explicitly in its formative history. Indeed, history shows that all major institutions in the United States are found to have been institutionalized as white spaces. White spaces relieve the psychological burden of uncomfortably invoking or reproducing exclusionary practices against people of color since these spaces require no such enforcement. When white spaces are naturalized as for white people, it legitimizes the enjoyment of exclusionary spaces and gives permission to remain racially ignorant about racism. Indeed, white spaces alleviate the constant efforts

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	needed to sustain one's racial ignorance. Instead of racism based in one's individual action, racial oppression is delegated to organizational apparatuses ("rules" "traditions") that obscure the broader racial domination upon which the maintenance of white spaces depends.
White Fragility	White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to White Fragility.
BIPOC or POC	Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color
Whiteness	Defined socially and legally by a common sense understanding of being a member of the white race, which serves to elevate white people over people of color. It's identified as the normal and centric racial identity, granting access to opportunities and privileges.
White Silence	When people with white privilege stay complicitly silent when it comes to issues of race.
White Centering	White centering is the centering of white people, white values, white norms and white feelings over everything and everyone else, especially the feelings and causes of the POC you're supposed to be helping. Whiteness is so used to taking up space in all spaces, that when it is restricted or a boundary is put in place to center and protect POC, it's reaction is often one of white fragility, tone-policing, white superiority, white exceptionalism or straight up violence. Rather, we must listen and elevate the voices of people who are living racialized lives. e.g. Instead of using a meeting or conference to share your newly found knowledge in regards to race and racial inequities in schools, pass the mic, invite and pay a POC who is more well-versed and knowledgeable to do it for you.

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White Exceptionalism	The belief that you as a white person are exempt from white supremacy; that you are one of the "good ones" and this work doesn't apply to you.
White Apathy	White apathy is a feeling of apathy (indifference, unconcern, lack of interest) about racism by white-privileged people.
Cultural Appropriation	The stealing of cultural practices, spiritual traditions, hair and fashion styles, speaking styles and more. Cultural appropriation happens when there is an imbalance of power and privilege—a dominant culture appropriates from a marginalized culture. It upholds the white supremacist ideology that white people can take what they pick and choose from POC without consequence. It is collecting the parts of blackness and brownness that appeal to you while discarding actual black and brown people.

These definitions are informed by the numerous sources referenced in *What LIES Between Us – Fostering First Steps Toward Racial Healing* and linked supplemental resources, including;

- Gerardo Marti, Professor of Sociology at Davidson College

- California Newsreel's Race - The Power of An Illusion

- Racial Equity Institute's Racial Equity Workshop Phase 1: Foundations in Historical and Institutional Racism

- SAGE Journals Sociological Theory

- Oxford Bibliographies Sociology

- Racial Equity Tools Glossary

- James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, "The New Racism, Part II: The Sociologist's Toolkit: Justifying Racism Through Language"

- Heal Our Communities

- Layla F. Saad, *Me and White Supremacy*

- Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility*