

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*(Definitions and resources sourced from Racial Equity Tools.org)*

### **ALLY:**

- Someone who makes a commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.
- Allies commit to reducing their own complicity in oppression of those groups and they invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

**ANTI-RACIST:** Someone who is supporting antiracist policy through their actions or expressing anti-racist ideas. This includes the expression or ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity. (See Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*, Random House 2019)

**ANTI-RACISM:** Working to actively oppose racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviours and impacts.

**BIPOC:** Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. This term is widely used in North America. In Canada, it can also be IBPOC, placing Indigenous people first (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour). (See [decolonizingchristianity.ca](http://decolonizingchristianity.ca))

**BLM:** Black Lives Matter is a political movement to address systemic and state violence against African Americans. It has grown beyond the United States and there are BLM movements in Canada and beyond. (see "[Herstory](#)")

**COLONIZATION:** A form of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as a geographical intrusion in the form of agriculture, urban and industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

**CULTURAL APPROPRIATION:** Theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification, or profit—including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for their value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant (i.e. white) culture's right to take other cultural elements.

**DECOLONIZATION:** The active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonized nations' own indigenous culture. "Decolonization demands an Indigenous framework and a centering of Indigenous land, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous ways of thinking." (per Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang).

**DISCRIMINATION:** The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

**ETHNICITY:** A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

**IMPLICIT BIAS:** Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves.

**INSTITUTIONAL RACISM:** Refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for white people, and oppression and disadvantage for people of colour.

**MICROAGGRESSION:** The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

**PEOPLE OF COLOUR (NOT COLOURED):** Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-white racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term "people of colour" (not to be confused with the pejorative "coloured people") since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not white, to address racial inequities.

**PREJUDICE:** A pre-judgement or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of a certain group to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

**PRIVILEGE:** Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.) Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because they are taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

**RACIAL JUSTICE:** The systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

**TONE-POLICING:** It is a tactic used by those who have privilege to silence those who do not by focusing on the tone of what is being said rather than the actual content. It can be policing BIPOC for using tones that are "too angry" when talking about racism or celebrating them over other BIPOC for using tones that are considered more soft, eloquent and

soothing. In both cases, BIPOC are expected to cater to the white gaze—the white supremacist lens through which people with white privilege see BIPOC—and the comfort level of a person’s white fragility when talking about racism.

(See Layla F. Saad, *Me and White Supremacy*)

**WHITE FRAGILITY:** As defined by Robin DiAngelo in her book, *White Fragility*, it is “a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

**WHITE PRIVILEGE:** Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.