

DEFINITIONS AND KEY TERMS

DHN RACIAL EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE

WHAT IS RACE?

Race is a social and power construct based on physical features, created to justify enslavement and colonization, and maintain white supremacy. It is not a biological fact. The construction of race creates an artificial hierarchy which dehumanizes and creates unequal outcomes for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).

Ethnicity and race are not synonymous. Ethnicity is a social construct which divides people into smaller groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of history and ancestral geographical base, group membership, values, behavioral patterns, and language. Ethnicity can focus on national or cultural traditions and is distinct from race, which focuses on physical attributes. Members of the same ethnicity can be of different racial groups, and people can belong to more than one ethnicity. Ethnicity is also not monolithic.

RACISM

Racism is a system of oppression based on race. The three components of racism are **racial prejudice backed by social and institutional power, a system of advantage based on race, and a system of oppression based on race.**

In order for racism to function, all three components must occur simultaneously. They often interact with and reinforce each other. Racism involves one group (in the U.S.: white people) having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the individual beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

RACIAL EQUITY

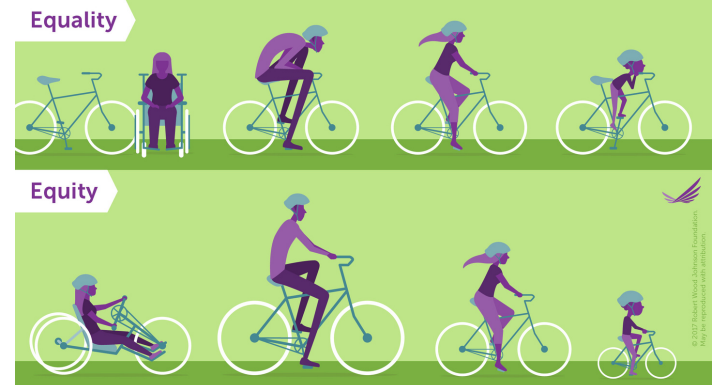
Racial equity is both a goal as well as a practice that when centered leads to equal outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) relative to their white counterparts. Racial equity responds to structural racism and its consequences, and must center the needs and leadership of BIPOC.

Racial equity is outcome focused and is achieved when BIPOC are supported in ways that help account for, as well as repair and restore, the impacts of the structural racism and historical trauma they encounter. Targeted investments provide racially equitable opportunities for BIPOC that lead to equal outcomes -- including and not limited to socio-economic measures, wealth inequality, housing and homeownership, health status, food insecurity, among BIPOC and their white counterparts, and eventually to optimal outcomes for each community regardless of race.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EQUALITY AND EQUITY?

Equity is about creating the conditions so that people from non-dominant groups have both the space to assert their power and the resources to enjoy equal outcomes. There are different types of equity – racial equity, class equity, etc. Because equality does not account for different circumstances and needs or the impact of historical discrimination, equality alone cannot lead to fair or optimal outcomes for non-dominant groups compared to dominant groups.

Laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provide equality, while policies such as affirmative action provide equity.



A picture illustrating the concepts of equality, equity and justice. Courtesy of Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities, by City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), Ottawa

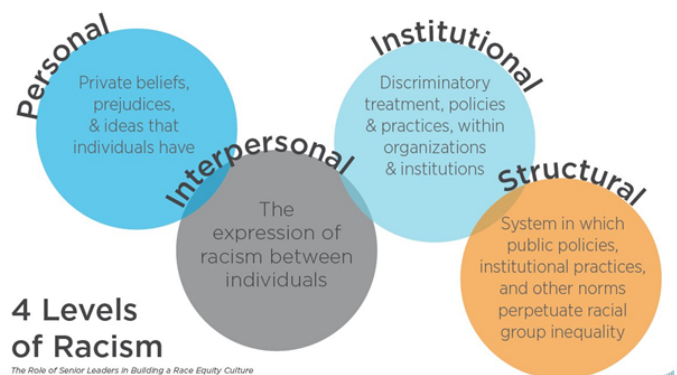
WHITE SUPREMACY

White supremacy is a widespread political, economic and cultural SYSTEM, whereby continents, nations and people who are Black, Indigenous, and of Color (BIPOC) are exploited and oppressed by white people and nations for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege for white people, institutions, and nations.

White supremacy includes conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement. With white supremacy existing in all of our systems, “whiteness” is presumed as the standard, and anything non-white is considered out of the norm, different, or “other.” See the full White Supremacy definition for examples of White Supremacist culture.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality looks at the way multiple forms of oppression including but not limited to racism, sexism, and classism. The overlapping inequities caused by these systems create compounding challenges for individuals oppressed by these systems. For example, a Black woman in poverty does not experience gender inequalities in the same way as a white woman in poverty, nor racial oppression in the same way as a Black man. Furthermore, exposing multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression. While white women experience sexism relative to their white male counterparts, they can still play a role in oppressing women and men of color.



The Role of Senior Leaders in Building a Race Equity Culture
Kerrien Suarez Director at Equity in the Center

