Department of Social Services

Human Resources Administration
Department of Homeless Services

Dignity Centered Service:
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed Care Social Service Delivery

Participant Guide

Contents

About the Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is dedicated to ensuring that all New Yorkers are healthy, housed, and financially secure to live safe and self-determined lives. DSS is committed to providing all employees, clients and individuals who interact with our agencies a safe, healthy, inclusive, affirming and discrimination-free environment. At DSS, we value equity, inclusion and dignity for all. As we strive for excellence, we recognize that our differences make us stronger.

The New York City Department of Social Services is committed to achieving a more equitable social welfare system by addressing racial equity and the embedded biases that impact decision-making processes within and across DSS, Human Resources Administration (HRA), and Department of Homeless Services (DHS) systems.

About This Program

The goal of the Anti-bias Trauma Informed (ABTI) Dignity Centered Service training is to expand DSS-HRA-DHS staffs' awareness and knowledge of how individual and structural bias, racism, and trauma influence behavior and decision-making in the workplace. You will be engaged in small and large group activities utilizing critical thinking skills to identify issues related to power, race and bias; recognizing institutional, structural and individual barriers; exploring the impacts of trauma; identifying opportunities for self-care; and reinforcing the utilization of trauma-informed care principles.

Support Resources

We recognize that the concepts in this course can be difficult to talk about. The topics we will be covering can trigger our personal and vicarious trauma reactions, stirring up strong feelings. We invite you to pay attention to your reactions and stop the training for a short time if you need to get some fresh air, clear your head or seek support from the resources below.

- Your Supervisor
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
  - www.nyc.gov/eap
  - Phone: 212.306.7660
  - Email: eap@olr.nyc.gov
  - EAP counselors are available Monday to Friday (8 a.m. to 7 p.m.)
- NYC Well
  - NYCwell.cityofnewyork.us
  - 1-888-NYC-WELL
  - NYC Well is your connection to free, confidential mental health support. Speak to a counselor via phone, text or chat and get access to mental health and substance use services, in more than 200 languages, 24/7/365.

About This Training

This program includes a self-paced eLearning program and a virtual classroom session. The self-paced eLearning is focused on foundational concepts. The virtual classroom connects the concepts to your work at DSS-HRA-DHS and allows for further discussion and application. The schedule for the training is below.

Classroom Agenda		
Welcome and Introductions	30 minutes	Virtual Classroom
Dignity Centered Service eLearning	45 minutes	Self-paced eLearning
Race and Racism	2 hours	Virtual Classroom
Trauma-Informed Care	70 minutes	
Transforming DSS Service Delivery	45 minutes	
You Are the Change	30 minutes	
Conclusion	15 minutes	

The classroom facilitator will provide the complete schedule, including additional break times.

How to Use This Participant Guide

1. Save this workbook on your desktop. Select *File*, *Save As*, select *Desktop* as the location, and click the *Save* button.
2. When prompted in the eLearning, complete the associated activities in this document.
3. You can enter your comments directly in the PDF document. Be sure to save your work periodically. Optionally, print the workbook to use as a hard copy and write in it.
4. You will also refer to this document for handouts required during the classroom session.
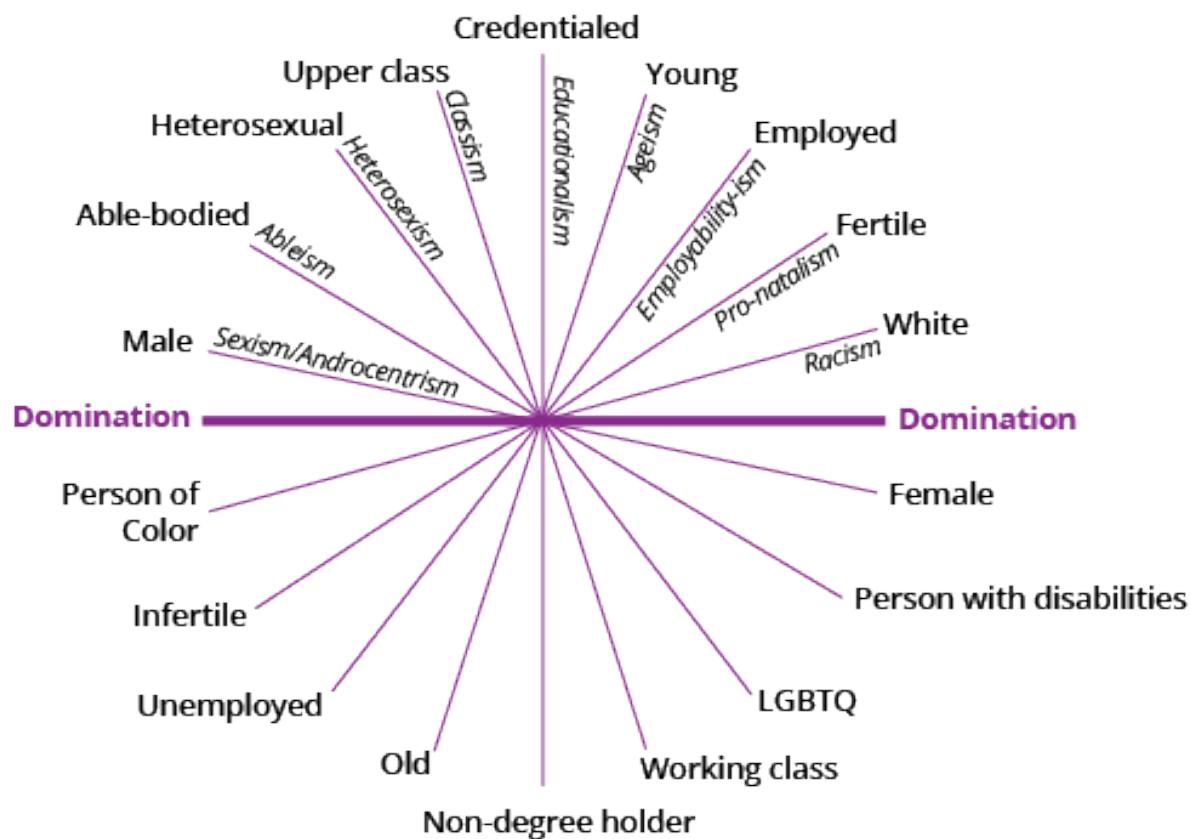
Reflection Time: Your Intersectionality Identity

Intersectionality is the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap or **intersect**, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. By considering the intersectionality of our identities, and the intersectionality of our clients, we are better able to see them as whole individuals with strengths and needs.

Inequity is not just a black-and-white issue.

Review the Intersectionality Wheel below and circle or highlight terms that you would use to describe your identity. Then, answer the questions on the next page.

Privilege

Credentialed
Upper class
Young
Heterosexual
Employed
Classism
Educationalism
Ageism
Able-bodied
Employability-ism
Fertile
Heterosexism
Ableism
Pro-natalism
White
Male   Sexism/Androcentrism
Racism
Domination ———————————————— **Domination**
Person of Color
Female
Infertile
Person with disabilities
Unemployed
LGBTQ
Old
Working class
Non-degree holder

Oppression

Consider your own concept of your own identity. Then, answer these questions to prepare for discussing the topic in the classroom.

1. What aspects of your identity are considered privileged?

_____

_____

_____

2. What aspects of your identity are considered oppressed or marginalized?

_____

_____

_____

3. How have these identities defined who you are?

_____

_____

_____

4. What is the role of intersectionality for DSS-HRA-DHS clients and staff?

_____

_____

_____

Reflection Time: Impacts of our History

In order to have a conversation about how racism and trauma impact the people we serve, it is important for you to be acquainted with the history that has produced some of our current systems. After learning more about the history that has produced some of our current systems, reflect on what you see as impacts that are felt today.
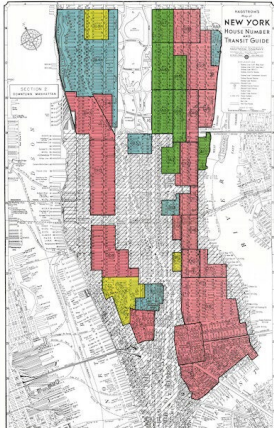
We cannot end homelessness until we win the war on racism.

Reflect on what you have learned, and then answer these questions to prepare for discussing the topic in the classroom.

1. What did you learn that surprised or shocked you about the history of racism and its impacts on housing today?

_____

_____

_____

2. What impacts have you observed in your own communities?

_____

_____

_____

NYC Department of Social Services

Human Resources Administration
Department of Homeless Services

Dignity Centered Service
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed
Care Social Service Delivery

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE

Reflection Time: Recognizing and Combating Bias

Biases arise when we have limited time to consider a full set of facts and information. Biases, then, can be considered shortcuts that undermine critical thinking and adversely impact decision making.

Biases often lead to inaccurate assessments based on faulty rationale.

Types of Bias

Type of Bias	Description
Affinity Bias	This common bias reflects that individuals may unconsciously prefer people who share qualities with them such as appearance, beliefs and backgrounds.
Attribution Bias	People unconsciously make judgments and assumptions based on age, race or gender, about why people behave in certain ways all the time, often attributing mistakes or circumstances as personal failings.
Confirmation/ Affirmation Bias	It's common for people to unconsciously only see information that confirms or supports what they already believe and ignore information that is non-supportive or contradicting.
Halo or Horns Bias	It's a bias when one trait, either good (a halo) or bad (horns), overshadows rational thought about an individual. For example, attractive people are, on average, thought to be more intelligent even though this isn't true.

NYC Human Resources Administration Department of Homeless Services Department of Social Services

Dignity Centered Service
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed
Care Social Service Delivery

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE

Anti-bias Approaches: Ways to Combat Bias

DSS-HRA-DHS are committed to taking an anti-bias approach in our work. We challenge prejudice, stereotyping, bias, and all of the "isms."

It is necessary for each individual to actively intervene, to challenge and to counter the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression.

	Approach	Description
	Take a risk	Notice when you feel negative reactions to individuals. Take courage to act on empathy and get to know someone or something new.
	Disrupt the default	Recognize assumptions you may be making. Seek out data and new information in order to combat bias.
	Speak out	Voice your informed opinion, point people to new, true, and valid information to help others combat bias.
	Question your assumptions	Where are these thoughts coming from? Learn to recognize your own biases.
	Analyze	Understand what is being said, as well as what is not being said, examine for truth and validity. Reason and logic will help you avoid relying on biases.
	Hold yourself and others accountable	Are what you are saying, doing and showing up as in alignment with the new, true and valid information?

Consider your experience of bias, and the impact of bias on DSS clients. Answer these questions to prepare for discussing the topic in the classroom.

1. What biases have you experienced in your personal life or in your work?

2. Have you experienced affinity bias?

3. What might the impacts of bias be on your work with DSS clients?

Reflection Time: Impacts of Stress and Trauma on Service Delivery

The clients served by DSS-HRA-DHS are most often experiencing active stress and trauma upon seeking assistance.

Trauma-Informed Care Principles	
Principle	**Description**
Safety	Ensuring the physical and emotional safety of your client.
Trustworthiness	Maintaining appropriate boundaries and making tasks clear.
Peer Support	Helping clients identify family, friends, coworkers, community organizations, religious institutions and other service providers that they can lean on and turn to for help.
Collaboration	Maximizing collaboration with your clients when possible, always allowing people their own decision making. This includes asking questions, finding out what your client really needs.
Empowerment, Voice, Choice	Prioritizing client choice and control. Providing clients with choices and options; prioritizing empowerment and skill building.
Cultural, Historical, Gender Issues	Recognize that intersectionality, race, ethnicity and past experiences **all** have an impact on the experience of an individual and take that into consideration.

Utilizing these Trauma Informed Care principles can help mitigate the impacts of stress and trauma.

Think about what you have learned about trauma, stress and trauma-informed care principles. Then, answer these questions to prepare for discussing the topic in the classroom.

1. What types of reactions have you observed in clients that may be due to stress and trauma?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How do you think a trauma-informed approach to service delivery will help these clients?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. How have you addressed your own stress and trauma reactions with self-care?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Classroom Handouts

The Waiting Room

1.

2.

3.

4.

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Department of
Homeless Services

Dignity Centered Service
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed
Care Social Service Delivery

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE
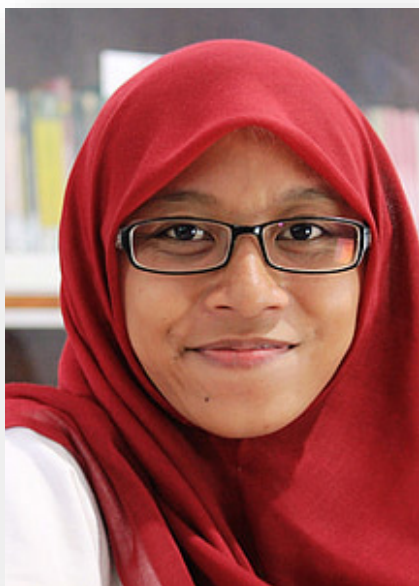
The Waiting Room Breakout Group Questions

Imagine that this person is in a DSS shelter waiting room. In your group, create a story about this individual by answering the following questions.

1. Who is this person/people?

2. Why are they in the shelter waiting room?

3. What is their profession?

4. What is their family heritage?

5. How many languages do they speak?

6. What is their level of education?

NYC | Human Resources Administration / Department of Homeless Services / Department of Social Services

Dignity Centered Service
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed
Care Social Service Delivery

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE

Marie, DHS Shelter Case Study (Client)

Marie, a mother of two (an infant and a toddler) has been waiting in a Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) Intake Center for shelter placement for five hours. This is the second day she has spent more than three hours at the PATH Intake Center as she was turned away the day prior. Everything she owns is in two large garbage bags as well as one diaper bag for her infant and toddler.

Marie (DHS Client)

- Identifies as Afro Latina
- Has two children under the age of 3
- Has spent 5 hours in a PATH Intake Center
- Lost almost all her belongings in a house fire

Upon receiving placement, she is told she must catch a bus that is about to leave. This bus will take her and the children to their shelter. In an effort to not miss the bus, Marie is rushing. One of her large garbage bags rips, spilling her children's toys and some clothing. Marie is nervous about leaving them behind because they are the only toys her children have left.

She looks to the bus driver who is nearby for assistance, but he tells her there is nothing he can do for her because he doesn't want to touch other people's belongings. He reminds Marie to enter the bus through the back door. Marie, desperate to ensure her children have a place to sleep and not miss the bus, does as the bus driver says.

Marie is nervous about the location of the shelter because it is close to where the news has reported a cluster of COVID-19 cases in the city. Marie has severe asthma. She is also concerned about how her children will sleep tonight in a new environment without their favorite toys to comfort them.

They finally arrive at the DHS shelter at 10 p.m. and are ushered into a line to wait for their room assignments. After waiting for an additional 45 minutes, Marie gets to the desk where Amanda (the only intake person on duty tonight) begins to ask her a list of registration questions. Amanda makes no eye contact, nor does she introduce herself. Marie tries to answer Amanda's questions as quickly as she can, but Amanda looks visibly frustrated. During this exchange, Marie's infant begins to cry.

Amanda asks Marie for several documents. Marie explains that she does not have them because they were lost in the fire. Amanda becomes even more visibly frustrated and gives Marie her room assignment. Marie mentions her bag that was broken and her lost belongings. Amanda tells her she can't help with that since she wasn't there and tells her to come back down in the morning to meet with her case manager. Marie begins to tear up and rushes up to her room with her children, wondering how they'll get sleep tonight.

Client Case Study Questions

1. How do stress and trauma show up at the onset of engagement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Who else might be experiencing stress or trauma?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you notice any physical or emotional signs of trauma for Marie?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. How might race impact an initial touchpoint between client and staff?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Amanda, DHS Shelter Mirror Case Study (Staff)

Amanda is working another double this week. Due to changes in COVID-19 guidelines, a double means she is working a 16-hour shift. Even though it is well past 9 p.m., she has yet to have her lunch break. Needless to say, Amanda is exhausted, hungry and frustrated.

She has been experiencing an increase in folk giving her strange looks and yelling at her during her commutes to work and, upon arriving at work, clients have requested to speak to "someone else" because they think she will give them COVID-19.

Amanda (DHS Staff)

- Identifies as a Chinese woman in her late 50s
- Has worked for DHS for over 20 years
- Has been doing doubles for months
- Is working alone and has a chronic condition

Amanda has been waiting for her co-worker to arrive to relieve her so she can take a break before the next bus of clients arrives, but the co-worker is late.

She now realizes that it doesn't matter because the next bus has arrived. This means that food and a break are at least another 45 minutes away. People begin to get off the bus and form a line in front of Amanda's desk to be checked in and receive their room assignments.

As the line gets longer, Amanda's hunger increases and so does her agitation. She is annoyed because she has had to explain yet again that there is no one else for folks to talk to; she is the only person working right now.

In an effort to get to her break sooner, she begins to go through the questions more quickly. Marie is almost to the front of the line. At this point in the day, Amanda has completely stopped introducing herself or saying hello. She is rushing through the intake questions she's required to ask before giving folks their room assignments. She figures they are as tired and eager to be done with the process as she is.

Amanda asks Marie for her identification paperwork. Marie doesn't respond but instead gives Amanda the folder of paperwork the staff person at PATH told her to bring. Amanda doesn't look up or take the folder but instead repeats her question, asking, "Do you have any state issued ID?" Marie begins to speak but her voice isn't very loud, and Amanda can't really hear her. Marie begins talking about a bag that ripped when she was rushing to get the bus and continues to talk about the toys and clothes she had to leave behind.

Frustrated, hungry and tired, Amanda interrupts Marie and says, "I wasn't there and I don't know what happened to your belongings. I guess I can call over there, but I can't make any promises. Come back down tomorrow and follow up."

Amanda finishes Marie's intake, hands her a set of keys and room assignment and says, "If you think you need any other benefits, come back down in the morning. I'll still be here."

Staff Case Study Questions

1. What is her experience? What stress does she encounter?

_____

_____

_____

2. What were the systems-level breakdowns?

_____

_____

_____

3. Thinking about trauma-informed principles, what could you do to improve the outcome for Marie and Amanda?

_____

_____

_____

Transforming Values

Traditional Values	
Traditional Value: **Either/Or Thinking** Creates the illusion that there are only two choices and you must pick one. Conveys the belief that efficiency looks the same for everyone.	**Traditional Value:** **Secrecy Mode** Information is power. Only certain people are allowed access to information. Secrecy destroys trust.

Transforming Values	
Transforming Value: **Both/And Thinking** Acknowledges that multiple realities exist and are valid. Solutions-oriented.	**Transforming Value:** **Transparent Communication** Provides access to timely information. Values process and people over time. Allows for mistakes and recovery.

Traditional Values	
Traditional Value: **Scarcity Worldview** A belief in limited resources, time and space. Shuts down innovation.	**Traditional Value** **Individual Action** Isolated activities increase competition, creating a redundancy of activities.

Transforming Values	
Transforming Value: **Abundant Worldview** Acknowledges that there are enough resources, time and space. Promotes creative and responsible use of resources.	**Transforming Value:** **Cooperation & Collaboration** Promotes buy-in into common vision/mission. Values all perspectives through difference. Promotes accountable, respectful community.

Action Planning for Change

When trying to shift organizational policies and practices, it's important to start from where you are and have a clear path of transformation.

Please complete the action planning sheet as it relates to how you plan to cultivate spaces that are more equitable. We will review together as a collective and offer feedback. Please click on the link in your chat box prior to entering your breakout room. You will see an alternate window pop up on your screen entitled "CUNY School of Professional Studies Act on Empathy." Once in your breakout rooms, only one participant will have to complete the form (we ask all of you to open it just to confirm access). In your breakout rooms, designate a person to complete and submit the form on behalf of your group, and be sure to select your group number from the drop-down box within the document. Once you have submitted the form, you can return to the larger group and we will be sharing your action items with the group.

Current Organizational Practice → Desired Organizational Practice → Barriers to Transformation → Support Needed → Personal Commitment

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Dignity Centered Service
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed
Care Social Service Delivery

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE

Self-Care Wheel

SELF-CARE WHEEL

Physical
- Self housing
- Eat healthy
- Turn off cell phone
- Take vacations
- Bubble baths
- Exercise

Psychological
- Self-reflection
- Therapy
- Journal
- Self-awareness
- Aromatherapy
- Paint

Emotional
- Affirmations
- Find a hobby
- Cuddle with a pet
- Practice Forgiveness
- Cry
- Laugh

Spiritual
- Self-reflection
- Go into nature
- Play with children
- Take yoga
- Pray
- Sing

Personal
- Get out of debt
- Make a Vision Board
- Short and Long-term Goals
- Spend time with your family
- Just relax

Professional
- Take time for lunch
- Plan your next career move
- Learn how to say NO
- Set boundaries
- Take a class

Additional Resources

The Department of Social Services Diversity and Equity Office:

DSS Diversity and Equity Office will be charged with developing agency-wide policies on diversity and inclusion and ensuring that we are laser focused on the multiple factors that can impact diversity and equity in the workplace as well as in the services we provide. The Diversity and Equity Office is empowered to develop and deliver innovative solutions to increase diversity across DSS-HRA-DHS through the creation of agency initiatives that address staff engagement, recruitment, and advancement as well as partner with all our programs in efforts to incorporate equity-informed practices into our service delivery.

*Email **DSSDiversityandEquityOffice@dss.nyc.gov***
for more information about Equity trainings and resources.

Diversity Best Practices:

Diversity Best Practices is an organization for mid- to large-sized organizational diversity thought leaders to share best practices and develop innovative solutions for culture change. Through research, resources, publications and events, Diversity Best Practices offers organizational members information and strategies on how to implement, grow, measure and create diversity programs.

Link: http://www.diversitybestpractices.com/

Racial Equity Tools:

Racial Equity Tools is designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. This site offers tools, research, tips, curricula and ideas for people who want to increase their own understanding and to help those working toward justice at every level – in systems, organizations, communities and the culture at large.

Link: https://www.racialequitytools.org/home

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Dignity Centered Service
Racial Equity, Anti-Bias, and Trauma-Informed
Care Social Service Delivery

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE

NYC Commission on Human Rights:

The NYC Commission on Human Rights works with organizations to provide free workshops and trainings to educate staff and community members about their rights and obligations under the law. Due to the current climate in NYC and the rest of the U.S. and given that New York City is a standard-bearer for diversity and inclusion, we are introducing new workshops specifically tailored to issues concerning New Yorkers.

Link: http://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/events.page

Glossary

Bias	Bias is an individual's prejudice that is activated during quick decision making. (Example: People might show their bias by quickly dismissing or disagreeing with anyone who aligns with that opposing political view.)
Disparities	Disparities is a noticeable and usually significant difference or dissimilarity between individuals. (Example: Women on average earn 80 cents for every dollar a man does. For women of color the gap is wider.)
Diversity	Diversity includes qualities and conditions that are different from one's own and outside the group to which we belong yet are present in other individuals and groups. (Example: Language diversity at the workplace can introduce communication complications but can also provide benefits to the business.)
Equity	Equity is a state in which belonging to a particular social group does not determine an individual's level of success. Rather, all groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate gaps and improve the quality of their lives. (Example: The policy of affirmative action increases college enrollment opportunities specifically for minority groups.)
Inclusion	Inclusion is when people are invited to show up fully and their differences are understood as a part of their strength. Who you are is part of the value you're adding. (Example: A company decides to sponsor a disability awareness workshop for its employees.)
Inequities	Inequities are the differences in outcomes between groups that are rooted in unfairness and injustice. (Example: Two men commit the same crime, but one gets convicted and the other doesn't because he can afford to hire a better lawyer.)
Institutional Racism	Institutional Racism is the discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and differing levels of opportunities within single institutions, based on race. (Example: A school system where students of color are more frequently distributed into the most crowded classrooms and underfunded schools and out of the higher-resourced schools.)
Internalized Racism	Internalized Racism is an internalization of racial oppression by the racially subordinated that involves both conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy. (Example: A black ballerina assumes she will never become a principal dancer because most leads are given to a light-skinned ballerina.)
Interpersonal Racism	Interpersonal Racism is the expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact, and their private beliefs and prejudices affect their

interactions. (Example: Verbal and non-verbal behaviors that communicate exclusion, rejection, and disrespect.)

Intersectionality	Intersectionality is the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. (Example: A woman can identify herself as a Black female [ethnic background], English professor [profession], and mother [family structure].)
Prejudice	Prejudice is a preconceived judgment or opinion usually based on limited information. Stereotypes, omissions, and distortions of facts all contribute to the development of prejudice. (Example: Overweight individuals are perceived as being lazy.)
Race	Race is a social construct developed by Europeans in order to establish and maintain dominance over people of color. (Example: A DNA test can give you the information about where your ancestors are from, but that is not the same as telling you what your race is.)
Racism	Racism is a system of power or oppression based on race, producing an inherent superiority by a dominant racial group over a non-dominant racial group. (Example: Racial profiling by law enforcement that leads to Blacks being pulled over more often.)
Structural Racism	Structural Racism is a system by which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various and often reinforcing ways to perpetuate power disparities based on race. (Example: Minority women are 35 percent less likely to receive a job referral than white men.)

References

For more information on definitions of terms and concepts related to race and racism:

Racial Equity Tools Glossary
https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary

WK Kellogg Foundation Racial Equity Resource Guide
http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary

For more information on these historical events:

NPR, Fresh Air, "A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America"
https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america

Smithsonian Magazine, "The Racial Segregation of American Cities Was Anything But Accidental"
https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-federal-government-intentionally-racially-segregated-american-cities-180963494/

Washington Post, "Redlining was banned 50 years ago, but it's still hurting minorities today"
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/03/28/redlining-was-banned-50-years-ago-its-still-hurting-minorities-today/

Pew Charitable Trust, "Trends in income and wealth inequality"
https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/