

ODHS Equity Glossary

April 2023



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Welcome to the ODHS Equity Glossary, a resource for moving toward the Equity North Star

Striving for equity at ODHS and in our communities requires us all to commit to lifelong learning about our histories and how we can best understand and respect each other — no small task! Additionally, it can also involve a lot of new and unfamiliar terms and concepts, which only adds to our learning curve.

The Oregon Department of Human Services Equity Glossary is a resource for everyone across the agency who shows up to help move their teams and programs toward the [Equity North Star](#). As we build relationships and collaborate to become a more equitable organization, having shared language and understanding can lead to more meaningful dialogue and outcomes.

How to use the glossary

Whether you're working with an Oregonian, leading a workgroup, attending a training or writing policy, or anything in between, we hope the glossary will help you integrate equity into your daily work. You may also find it particularly useful in the following focal areas, which align with and support our efforts toward the Equity North Star: [RiSE](#), [Building Well-being Together](#), [Trauma Aware ODHS](#), [Service Equity](#), and [Community Engagement](#).

Please keep in mind that, in equity and social justice, language often shifts and changes over time as our collective understanding deepens. We also have many different perspectives and personal preferences in how we describe our experiences, cultures and identities. This glossary is a great starting place, but there may be times when you need to rely on your own or other people's expertise, trusted resources or preferences; we encourage you to do so.

For these reasons, this document is a work in progress. We invite your ongoing feedback to help us continually improve and update the glossary. You can provide feedback on the [feedback form](#) or [email us directly](#).

The [ODHS|OHA Writing Style Guide](#) is another excellent resource to help you communicate with equity in mind. [Trauma Aware ODHS](#) and [Tribal Affairs](#) are also working on glossaries and writing style guides to support our collective work.

Building a more equitable world is going to take all of us. We thank you for all you do to work toward a better ODHS for each other and the people we serve.

Acknowledgement

The twelve [ODHS Employee Resource Groups \(ERGs\)](#) provided invaluable help to create this glossary. They are experts in the experiences and languages of their unique communities. We thank them for their insight and partnership.



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ableism

Beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with real or perceived physical, intellectual or psychiatric disabilities. Ableism can occur at the interpersonal, community or systemic level. It often assumes people with disabilities need to be “fixed,” and nondisabled people are superior to people with disabilities. Ableism may be directed toward or affect people with apparent and nonapparent disabilities.

(Source: [#Ableism](#))

Ableism includes people making inaccurate or negative assumptions about people with disabilities’ abilities, skills and characteristics. It can result in people with disabilities having fewer or being denied rights and opportunities. Ableism tends to preserve nondisabled people’s power.

accessibility

When a person experiencing an equity barrier can get the same information, engage in the same interactions and receive the same services as equally and easily as someone without that barrier.

Note: Examples of accessibility measures include but are not limited to the following:

- Plain language for various education levels
- Translation and interpretation into or from other languages
- Physical access for people in wheelchairs, with limited mobility or with children in strollers
- Assistive communication technology such as screen readers, mouse alternatives and magnification for people with disabilities, and
- Holding events in places and at times that people can easily access.

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affirmative action

Employers' good faith efforts to address past and/or present discrimination and systemic oppression through specific, results-oriented procedures. These procedures may go beyond equal opportunity laws that simply ban discriminatory practices. Affirmative action is usually associated with employment practices. However, it also applies to college admissions and government contract decision processes.

Note: For more information, go to ODHS's Affirmative Action Plan on the Human Resources OWL at <https://dhsoha.sharepoint.com/teams/Hub-DHS-HR/>.

ageism

Bias or discrimination based on stereotypes and beliefs about people of any age, their roles and expected behaviors.

Note: Federal legal protections against ageism are for people 40 years or older, while Oregon state legal protections are for those 18 years or older.

agender

An adjective used to describe a person who does not identify as having a gender or with any gender in particular. Agender people fall under the broader non-binary and transgender gender identity categories.

"Agender" is also known as "neutrois," "gender neutral" or "genderless."

(Source: [What Does It Mean to Be Agender?](#))

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ally/allyship

An active supporter of or active support for the rights of a minority or marginalized group by people who are not members of the group.

Note: Whether actions constitute allyship is best determined by the person or community affected by the oppression or marginalization being addressed. Allyship may include:

- Developing self-awareness of one's own identities
- Educating oneself on histories of oppression
- Understanding one's own privilege and power
- Educating or engaging with people who share your dominant identity to dismantle oppression
- Encouraging inclusion and respect
- Listening to and uplifting the voices of people with marginalized identities
- Following the requests and advice of activists from marginalized communities, and
- Consistently reducing your own contributions to oppressive actions or systems.

anti-Black racism

Exclusion, discrimination or prejudice against Black people that reflects the belief that Black people are inferior to other racial groups. Anti-Black racism appears in interpersonal, institutional and structural levels of racism and can be explicit or implicit. It affects other marginalized communities of people, including non-Black or mixed racial and ethnic communities affected by colorism.

Note: It is particularly necessary to name anti-Black racism when addressing issues such as COVID-19 and police use of force that have disproportionately high negative impacts for Black people.

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anti-oppression

The strategies, theories, actions and practices that actively and consistently challenge systemic oppression in one's daily life and in social justice work. It seeks to recognize the oppression in society, ease its effects and eventually equalize the power imbalance in our communities. Oppression operates at different levels, from interpersonal to institutional to cultural; anti-oppression must also work at all levels.

anti-racism

Active process of identifying and challenging racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices and attitudes. The goal is to redistribute power to bring about equity.

aromantic

An adjective used to describe a person who experiences no or little interest in or desire for romantic relationships. Aromantic people may still experience sexual attraction.

asexual

An adjective used to describe a person who experiences any of the following:

- Little or no sexual attraction
- Attraction but no need to act out that attraction sexually, or
- Sexual attraction that is different from how others experience it.

Many people who are asexual may still experience romantic attraction.

“Asexual” is also known as “ace.”

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bias, implicit bias, unconscious bias

Negative or positive associations and prejudices people hold about others based on their perceptions about race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability or other aspects of identity.

These biases may be overt; however, they may be implicit or unconscious, meaning the person is not aware they are making associations. They may unconsciously express these learned stereotypes when interacting with others.

bigender

An adjective used to describe a person who identifies with both male and female genders, or even a third gender.

bisexual

An adjective used to describe a person who has the potential to be physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way or to the same degree.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

Black Lives Matter

A political and social movement protesting against incidents of police brutality and all racially motivated violence against Black people. Black Lives Matter also advocates for policy changes supporting Black liberation from systemic oppression. Black Lives Matter is a decentralized, grassroots effort that spans regions, demographic groups and media.

Note: The U.S. Office of Special Council concluded that Black Lives Matter terminology is not inherently political; thus, it is acceptable to use Black Lives Matter terminology and symbols in the ODHS workplace.

cisgender

An adjective used to describe a person who is not transgender. “Cis-” is a Latin prefix meaning “on the same side as”; thus, it is an antonym of “trans-.” A cisgender person is a person whose gender identity is aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

colonization

Some form of invasion, dispossession and conquering of a people. To colonize is to take over or impose one’s values, attitudes and beliefs on another. The invasion does not need to be military. It can begin — or continue — as geographical invasion in the form of agriculture, urban or industrial trespassing. The result of physical colonizing is original inhabitants’ loss of vast amounts of lands. It is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of colonization is the institutionalized creation of privilege for certain groups, which then creates inequities. The colonizer and colonized relationship is by nature inequitable and benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

(Source: [Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice](#))

color-blind racial ideology

A form of discrimination or way of thinking about race in which an individual claims to ignore others’ skin color completely; therefore, that person believes they are treating all racial groups equally. However, colorblindness often perpetuates discriminatory practices by allowing people to ignore circumstances that cause racial disparities. The ideology also implies that people who hold this view believe all racial groups enjoy the same treatment and opportunities within their society.

(Source: [Color Blind Racism Ideology & Examples](#))

colorism

The practice of favoring lighter over darker skin. This preference can be seen within any racial or ethnic group.

community engagement

A collective process by which people address shared concerns and propose solutions to shared problems. It results in equitable and positive social change.

Meaningful community engagement requires agencies to act with intentionality, humility, curiosity and respect. This process gives affected communities access to full information and the ability to influence the outcome. It allows clear transparency and accountability to be incorporated into decision-making processes. This engagement is essential to ensure implementing, developing and integrating emerging and best practices that dismantle systemic and institutional racism and other oppressions.

critical race theory (CRT)

A movement that critically examines the role of race and racism in society. It theorizes that the social construction of race was and is used to create and maintain a hierarchical system of power based on race. This system gives power and privilege to white people over Black people and other people of color.

CRT also recognizes that race intersects with other identities such as disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. CRT acknowledges that the legacy of slavery, segregation and imposition of second-class citizenship on Black Americans and other people of color continues to permeate the social fabric of the United States.

cultural appropriation

The theft or use of cultural elements — including symbols, art, clothes, language, customs, etc. — for one's own use, commodification or profit. It often occurs without respect for its value in the original culture. It results from the assumption of a dominant culture's right to take another's cultural elements. Cultural appropriation is often a byproduct of colonization.

cultural assimilation

The process by which a nondominant or minority group or culture comes to resemble a society's majority group or dominant culture. It can also mean fully or partially assuming the values, behaviors and beliefs of another group.

cultural humility

A lifelong commitment to self-reflection about differences in cultures and to self-awareness of one's own beliefs and cultural identities. It includes an active commitment to reducing power imbalances between cultures.

(Source: Yeager, Katherine A., and Susan Bauer-Wu. 2013. [Cultural Humility: Essential Foundation for Clinical Researchers](#). Applied Nursing Research 26 (4): 251-256)

culturally responsive services

Services designed to show full respect for and relevance of the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse people and communities being served. Cultural responsiveness describes the capacity to respond to the unique issues and characteristics of diverse communities. It may take into account language, cultural approaches, strengths, perspectives, experiences, values and norms. The intended outcome is services and programs that are welcoming, accessible, appropriate and effective for all eligible intended recipients.

(Source: [Lawinsider.com](#))

culture

A social system of meaning and custom a group of people develops to ensure its adaptation and survival. Cultures are distinguished by a set of norms that shape their values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

data justice

Supports communities using data to elevate their voice and reveal the systemic inequities they experience. It requires understanding that data are not neutral or objective; instead, they are the products of unequal social relations.

(Source: [Using REALD and SOGI to Identify and Address Health Inequities](#))

decolonization

Cultural, psychological and economic freedom for Indigenous people with the goal of achieving Indigenous sovereignty — the right and ability of Indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, ways of being, and political and economic systems.

(Source: [What is decolonization, why is it important, and how can we practice it?](#))

demographic data

Social categories used to describe specific segments of the population and to group them based on shared characteristics. Examples of demographic categories are age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, disability, income, education level and marital status.

Data are facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

By analyzing demographic data, one can learn the needs and characteristics of certain social and geographic groups. One can also evaluate if a particular experience affects groups differently, and if they are receiving ODHS services in an equitable way.

Note: Go to [Race, Ethnicity, Language and Disability \(REALD\)](#) and [Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression \(SOGIE\)](#).

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disability

A physical, intellectual or psychological condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities may or may not be apparent to others and may be permanent or temporary conditions.

discrimination

The unequal treatment of an individual or members of various groups. These groups may include characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, national origin, citizenship status, a combination of those identified, and/or other categories.

disparity

A noticeable and usually significant difference, often used to describe an inequitable social or economic condition.

Note: Examples include a racial disparity in hiring, a health disparity between the rich and the poor, or an income disparity between men and women.

disproportionate, disproportionality

Related to the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a group of people compared to its percentage of the total population. (Source: [National Conference of State Legislatures](#))

Note: An example of disproportionality is that in 2018 in the United States, Black people made up 12 percent of the population but 33 percent of those who were incarcerated, showing Black people were incarcerated at a disproportionate rate. White people were also incarcerated at a disproportionate rate but were underrepresented: They made up 63 percent of the adult population but were only 30 percent of those incarcerated. (Source: [Black imprisonment rate in the U.S. has fallen by a third since 2006](#))

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diversity

The range of human differences, recognizing that everyone and every group is valued.

It broadly includes but is not limited to race, ethnicity and gender identity as well as age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language and physical appearance. It also includes different ideas, perspectives and values.

dominant culture

The culture that most successfully establishes its norms, values and preferences as the standard for the entire society. This occurs even though multiple cultures may exist within a society of a specific political, social or economic entity. Dominant culture is shaped and influenced by those with more access to power and resources (that is, decision-making, wealth, public platforms for communication). It can affect which language, religion, values, rituals and social customs are considered normal or preferred.

Dominant culture is established and upheld through intentional, explicit mechanisms (such as policy or legal enforcement) and through informal mechanisms (such as perceived threat to one's social status or reputation).

employee resource group (ERG)

An officially chartered workplace group organized around shared cultural identity or identities. It supports historically underrepresented employees and/or underserved client populations.

These voluntary, employee-led groups help foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices and objectives.

equity

A term acknowledging that all people or all communities are not starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity provides different levels of support based on an individual’s or group’s needs to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity differs from equality, which involves everyone receiving exactly the same treatment regardless of their needs and situation. Equity strives for the distribution and redistribution of power and resources to communities and people most harmed by systemic and individual acts of racism and oppression.

equity framework

A basic structure or approach for achieving equity within a particular system, organization or community.

ethnicity

A social construct that arranges people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as current or ancestral geography, religion or spirituality, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, or a shared sense of group membership.

gay

An adjective used to describe a person who is physically, sexually or romantically attracted to people of their same gender. This is often used as an umbrella term, but it is used more specifically to describe men who are attracted to men.

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gender binary

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A concept or belief system that categorizes gender as only man and woman or male and female.

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This idea that one's sex or gender is assigned at birth aligns with traditional social constructs of masculine and feminine identity, expression and sexuality. Today, numerous scientific fields have confirmed that both sex and gender exist as a spectrum. (Also go to gender identity, nonbinary and gender non-conforming.)

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gender expression

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External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, voice, and/or behavior. For many people, there is a "mismatch" between what society expects from their gender and how they choose to present.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

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gender identity

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A person's internal, deeply held knowledge of their own gender. Everyone has a gender identity. For many people, their gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (known as cisgender). For transgender people, their gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Many people have a gender identity of man or woman (or, for children, boy or girl). For other people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of the two genders in the gender binary and they may be non-binary or another gender identity. Gender identity is not visible to others. You cannot look at someone and "see" their gender identity.

Examples of gender identities include transgender man or woman, cisgender man or woman, non-binary, agender, bigender, intergender, pangender two-spirit, genderfluid and gender queer.

Since gender is a social construct, gender identities vary among different societies and can change over time.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

gender non-conforming

An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. For example, gender-nonconforming people may also identify as transgender, non-binary, agender, gender fluid, gender queer, gender anarchist or as other gender identities.

genderfluid

An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity or gender expression varies over time.

genderqueer

An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity or gender expression falls between or outside of male and female.

“Genderqueer” is also known as “third gender.”

health disparities

Differences in health outcomes and their causes among groups of people (such as by race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, geography and economic class). An example of a health disparity is that the rate of diagnosed diabetes is 66 percent higher among Hispanics/Latinos than among non-Hispanic whites in the United States.

(Source: [Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month!](#))

health equity

Making sure everyone has a chance to be as healthy as possible. Their health outcomes are not affected by their economic class, race, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, geography or other aspect of their identity.

health inequities

Systemic, avoidable, unjust and unfair differences in health outcomes and mortality rates across population groups. These differences are rooted in the social, economic and environmental conditions in which people live, work and play.

heteronormativity

The biased belief that heterosexuality is the preferred or normal mode of sexual orientation. It assumes there is a gender binary, and sexual and romantic relations are most fitting between people of the opposite sex.

heterosexism

The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or asexual, based on the belief that heterosexuality is the norm. This means heterosexism is based on the idea that romantic and/or sexual relationships and feelings between a man and a woman are acceptable, and all other relationships or feelings are unacceptable or outside the “norm.”

heterosexual

An adjective used to describe a person whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to people of a sex different than their own. Also known as “straight.”

homophobia

Fear, dislike, hatred of or prejudice against people based on their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or non-conforming gender expression. Homophobia occurs in a broader heteronormative social context that systematically disadvantages LGBTQIA2S+ people and promotes and rewards anti-LGBTQIA2S+ attitudes.

inclusion

The value and practice of authentically and intentionally bringing traditionally excluded people and/or groups into processes, activities, leadership and decision/policymaking in ways that share power.

Indigenous

A broad term describing any group of people that relates to the earliest known inhabitants of a place. This especially applies to a place colonized by a now-dominant group. The term can encompass many Tribal cultures around the world.

inequity

An injustice or unfairness.

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institutional racism

A system in which policies and practices established within an institution or organization create different, inequitable outcomes for different racial groups.

intergender

An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity is between the binary genders of female and male and/or a combination of gender identities and expressions.

internalized oppression

When someone internalizes (believes or makes part of their self image) the discriminatory or oppressive myths and misinformation society communicates to them about their group. When people from targeted groups internalize myths and misinformation, it can cause them to feel (often unconsciously) that, in some way, they are inherently not as worthy, capable, intelligent, beautiful, good, etc. as people outside their group. Internalized oppression may also lead people to intentionally or unintentionally maintain or participate in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that contribute to the dominating group's power.

“Internalized oppression” is also known as “internalized inferiority.”

(Source: adapted from Donna Bivens, [Racial Equity Tools: Internalized Racism](#))

internalized racism

The situation that occurs in a racist system when an oppressed racial group supports the supremacy of the dominating group. This happens when the racial group maintains or participates in the attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power.

Note: Internalized inferiority and internalized oppression also occur within other marginalized communities, such as people with disabilities, the LGBTQIA2S+ community, women, etc.

(Source: Donna Bivens, [Racial Equity Tools: Internalized Racism](#))

internalized white superiority

The beliefs, thoughts and assumptions of white people and cultures that they are better than other racial groups.

intersectionality

A concept developed and introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain the specific harm Black women face by being both Black and female. It involves studying and examining how people experience inequity, oppression and privilege based on their multiple socially constructed identities (gender, race, class, disability, sexual orientation, age, etc.). A person might experience oppression because of their gender identity and simultaneously carry privilege because of their race.

It looks at the way racism interacts with patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia, ageism, ableism and other forms of oppression to affect individual people uniquely. It suggests that social justice efforts need to take an intersectional approach in order to achieve justice for all.

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intersex

An adjective used to describe someone born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. Intersex traits greatly vary, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response and/or secondary sex traits.

Someone who is intersex may not know they are intersex because there are no outward signs of such; a doctor may have surgically altered those differences at birth without their parents' knowledge or permission. It is estimated that up to 1.7 percent of the population has an intersex trait and approximately 0.5 percent of people have clinically identifiable sexual or reproductive variations.

justice

The process required to move us from an unfair, unequal or inequitable state to one that is fair, equal or equitable, depending on the specific context.

This transformative practice relies on the entire community to respond to past and current harm. Through justice, we seek proactive enforcement of policies, practices and attitudes that produce equitable access, opportunities, treatment and outcomes for all, regardless of identity or social group membership.

language discrimination

Refers to the unfair treatment of a person based on whether they speak a language other than English and/or how they speak, such as accent, size of vocabulary, phrasing and not using socially accepted language. It can involve a person not having access to information because documents they receive are not written in their language or are written at an advanced English reading level.

lesbian

An adjective used to describe the sexual orientation of a person who is female, feminine or non-binary whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adjective), a gay woman, queer or in other ways.

LGBTQIA2S+

An umbrella term that brings together a range of diverse identities. This acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or gender expansive, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit; the + represents people who identify as part of a sexuality, gender or sex diverse community but who do not identify with one of these specific identities.

Note: This acronym and its definition can change over time.

(Source: [Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity](#))

marginalization

The social process of a person, group or concept becoming or being made secondary, insignificant or less powerful within a society or group.

Marginalized people are partially or totally excluded from rights, opportunities and resources normally available to others.

medical versus social model of disability

Two different and opposing sets of beliefs that explain social attitudes and actions toward disability.

The medical model of disability sees people with disabilities as “broken” and needing to be “fixed” with cures and prevention. It tends to emphasize power over rather than empowerment of people with disabilities. The social model sees the social and physical environment as the barrier or disabling factor that needs to change.

microaggression

The everyday verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, indignities and insults that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages. These messages can be intentional or unintentional and target persons based solely on their marginalized group membership.

The term “micro” contrasts with explicit and direct aggression or harmful words or actions. However, micro does not mean the impact on the recipient is small or minimal.

misgender

To intentionally or unintentionally refer to a person as a gender that does not align with their gender identity and/or gender expression.

misogyny

The discrimination or mistreatment of women based on prejudice against, fear or dislike of, or contempt or hatred for women.

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model minority myth

A theory used to describe the perceived situation of a racial or ethnic minority or immigrant group being particularly successful. Politicians and the popular media began using the term in the mid-1900s. However, it is a myth because it does not discern differences between individuals and sub-groups (national origin, race or ethnicity) within a broader culture or take into account different historical and political contexts that affect social groups.

The myth has also been described as a wedge between racial and ethnic communities. By assigning privilege or status to one, it prevents mutual empowerment and organizing across racial lines among communities that may have similar political, social and economic interests.

In particular, “model minority” is often applied to Asian Americans who, as a group, are often praised for apparent success across academic, economic and social domains. People viewing them as a model minority typically contrast Asian Americans with other groups’ perceived lack of achievements.

The term has harmful impacts on multiple racial and ethnic communities. It falsely treats Asian Americans as the same and erases existing disparities among various Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The model minority myth is also rooted in and a tool for anti-Black racism. It puts forth the idea that hard work and strong values can lead to success for any person or group in the United States within a short period of time. It thus denies the present-day impact that enslavement, the Jim Crow era and ongoing and current anti-Black racism have on Black people and communities.

non-binary

An adjective used to describe someone's gender identity or gender expression when they feel their gender cannot be defined within the dominant, male/female gender binary. Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond simply identifying as either a man or woman. They may use one or more additional terms to describe their gender identity or expression.

normalization

A process whereby behaviors and ideas are made to seem “normal” and easily taken for granted. This occurs through repetition, ideology, propaganda, etc.

(Source: [Normalization \(sociology\)](#))

objectification

The act of treating a person as an object or a thing. This action deemphasizes their humanity.

oppression

The abuse of power and prolonged unjust treatment or control of one group over another. This form of injustice occurs when one social group is marginalized while another is privileged. It is maintained by many tangible and intangible mechanisms including normalized social norms, social constructs, stereotypes, bias, individual behavior, laws and policies.

othering

A process whereby people and social groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group.

(Source: [A Dictionary of Gender Studies: othering](#))

outing

The act of publicly revealing (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity without that person’s consent. A large portion of the LGBTQIA2S+ community considers this inappropriate and potentially dangerous.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

pangender

An adjective used to describe a person who is comprised of all or many gender identities and gender expressions.

pansexual

An adjective used to describe a person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions to any person, regardless of gender identity.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

passing

In the context of gender identity, when someone, typically a transgender person, is perceived as the gender they know themselves to be, the gender by which they want to be seen, instead of the sex they were assigned at birth. The person may, for example, be a transgender man who is perceived as the man they know themselves to be.

The term is also used to refer to the experience of light-skinned people who are mixed race white and another race passing as white in society.

patriarchy

A society, system or group in which men and masculinity dominate women and femininity. It can show up in both private and public spheres such as home and sports, and in political, religious and social institutions. Patriarchy is deeply connected with cissexism and heterosexism because it holds up and enforces the gender binary.

people of color

Political or social (not biological) identity among and across groups of people racialized as non-white. The term “people of color” is used to acknowledge that many races experience racism in the United States. The term includes, but is not synonymous with, Black people.

The term uses language that puts the person before the life experience, circumstance and physical or mental health condition. It describes what the person has, not who the person is. The basic idea is to use a sentence structure that names the person first and the condition second.

Examples include “people with disabilities” rather than “disabled person” or “disabled,” or “person experiencing houselessness” rather than “homeless” or “houseless” to emphasize they are people first. People-first language aims to avoid dehumanizing or objectifying people.

However, some communities — including many autistic, transgender, Deaf and blind people — prefer identity-first language. The best approach is to observe and use the language a person or community uses to describe themselves.

plain language

Communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. It includes writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience.

(Source: [What is plain language?](#))

Writing in plain language can benefit people of different learning styles, educational levels, cognitive abilities and people that don’t speak English as their first or primary language.

Note: For ODHS information on writing in plain language, go to <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/me3835.pdf>.

prejudice

A preconceived opinion or assumption (about something or someone) rooted in stereotypes, rather than in reason or fact. This leads to favorable or unfavorable treatment or bias toward another person or group of people — literally a “pre-judgement.”

privilege

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to all members of a dominant group, such as white privilege or male privilege.

Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because the systems that foster privilege and oppression work to make this privilege seem “universal” while denying how it marginalizes other groups. Nevertheless, it continually puts those who have privilege at an advantage over those who do not have it. Privilege may include additional perks or benefits or the absence of barriers that other groups commonly experience.

pronoun

In the context of gender identity, the words a person chooses for others to use when referring to them in place of their name (that is, ze/ hir/hirs, ey/em/eirs, they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, she/they/theirs, he/they/theirs, etc.). It is important to respect the specific pronouns each person identifies with as consistent and true to who they are and not regard the pronouns as optional.

queer

A term people often used to express a spectrum of identities and orientations counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or people who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities.

This term was previously used as a slur, but it has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQIA2S+ movement. Many people commonly use the term to identify themselves and to refer to a broader community. However, it should generally only be used to refer to specific people if they self-identify as queer.

It can also be used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their orientations (sexual and/or romantic), gender identity and/or relationship dynamic (that is, whether they have one partner and are monogamous or have multiple partners and are polyamorous, etc.).

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race

A social construct accepted by people in society that groups people based on skin color and other apparent physical differences without any other scientific basis for genetic or biological difference. There is no evidence that the groups we commonly call “races” have distinct, unifying genetic identities. In fact, there is ample variation within races. Ultimately, there is so much ambiguity between the races, and so much variation within them, that two people of European descent may be more genetically similar to an Asian person than they are to each other.

This social construct was created and used to justify social and economic oppression of people of color. Although it is a social construct, it has real impacts on the reality and quality of both those experiencing racial privilege (white people) and racial oppression (Black, Indigenous and people of color).

(Sources: [How Science and Genetics are Reshaping the Race Debate of the 21st Century](#) and [Race is a Social Construct, Scientists Argue](#))

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Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Disability (REALD)

An effort to increase and standardize Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Disability (REALD) data collection in health and human services entities. Oregon community leaders initiated the demographic data standard, spearheaded by the Asian Pacific American Network and the Oregon Health Equity Alliance. REALD was introduced to solve the problem that previous demographic data categories had been overly broad, which sometimes overlooked whole groups of people most affected by health inequities and ineffective service delivery.

The REALD standards became law when HB2134 (2013) passed; it became part of ODHS policy in 2020. The system is based on local, state and national best practices and is informed by community input and rigorous academic research. Besides the legal requirement to implement REALD in all ODHS and OHA data systems that collect demographic information, REALD matters because it identifies avoidable inequities due to implicit bias, racism, ableism and lack of language access. REALD also addresses unique inequities that occur at the intersections of race, ethnicity, language and disability.

In 2021 a similar law (HB 3159) was passed to include sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGIE) questions in demographic data collection standards.

Asking REALD and SOGIE questions will help ODHS understand the experiences of many communities more clearly and help reach the agency's Equity North Star vision of making sure all who live in Oregon can achieve well-being. Both the REALD and SOGIE data standards support data justice.

For ODHS REALD information, go to <https://dhsoha.sharepoint.com/teams/Hub-ODHS-OEMS/SitePages/REaLD-Data-Standards.aspx>.

racialization

The complex process that groups people together as members of a particular “race” and subjects them to different and/or unequal treatment.

Race is a social construct with no biological distinction. White people are also racialized; however, they may not see themselves as part of a race because white people and institutions have historically racialized other races.

racism

The systematic marginalization of targeted racial group members who hold less sociopolitical power than dominant groups and/or are racialized as non-white. This is done to uphold white supremacy.

Racism differs from prejudice, hatred or discrimination because it requires one racial group to have systematic power and perceived superiority over other groups in society. Institutional structures and policies, cultural norms and values, and individual behaviors often support and maintain racism.

reasonable accommodation

Under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment or how things are usually done during the hiring process. These modifications enable an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to get a job; they also help them successfully perform their job tasks to the same extent as people without disabilities.

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reparations

Actions taken or compensation provided to a group of people for an abuse or injury, often by a government or other institution. Reparations attempt to repair or provide justice for gross and systematic violations of human rights.

Reparations can be symbolic as well as material. Symbolic reparations may include public acknowledgement of or apology for past violations. Material or economic reparations may include rehabilitation services that help victims overcome tangible and intangible impacts. They may also include cash payments, scholarships, services, land, other property or elimination of fees. They may also be used alongside prosecutions, truth-seeking and institutional reform.

restorative justice

A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by crime and conflict. It places decisions in the hands of those most affected by a wrongdoing. It gives equal concern to the rehabilitation of the victim, the offender and the surrounding community.

Restorative responses are meant to repair harm, heal broken relationships and address the underlying reasons for the offense. The responses offer a chance to build community and increase grassroots power.

Restorative justice emphasizes personal and collective accountability. Its beliefs and models come from diverse global Indigenous cultures and practices.

segregation

The act by which a person separates other persons on the basis of race, color, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin without an objective and reasonable justification.

(Source: [European Commission: Migration and Home Affairs: segregation](#))

service equity

A model that promotes health, safety and independence for all people. It does this by adapting services and policy to recognize, address and eliminate discrimination and disparities in how an organization delivers services to people.

sexism

Prejudice or discrimination based on one's sex or gender. Although sexism can affect anyone, it primarily affects women, transgender women and girls. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is innately superior to another.

sexual harassment

Unwelcome, unwanted or offensive sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

This includes but is not limited to sexual harassment in which a manager or other person in a position of authority suggests an employee will be given something, such as a raise or promotion, in exchange for a sexual favor.

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sexual orientation

Describes the gender or genders of the people to whom one is sexually and/or romantically attracted. Some common examples include heterosexual (straight), gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual and queer.

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)

An acronym honoring the fluidity of numerous and ever-expanding identities related to sexual orientation (SO), gender identity (GI) and expression (E). Similar to the REALD demographic standards' legislation, the Oregon legislature passed HB 3159 (2021) that requires SOGIE questions be added to the REALD data collection standards.

Significant historical evidence shows LGBTQIA2S+ folks living in Oregon communities face bias, prejudice and discrimination. Asking SOGIE questions will help ODHS see the experiences of people who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ more clearly and help reach the agency's Equity North Star vision of making sure all who live in Oregon can achieve well-being. Both the REALD and SOGIE data standards support data justice.

For ODHS specific information, go to <https://dhsoha.sharepoint.com/teams/Hub-ODHS-OEMS/SitePages/Gender-Identity-and-Expression-Resources.aspx>.

social construct

Something that does not exist in objective reality. Instead, it is meaningful only because people within the society or group accept that it has meaning. Examples include class distinctions and race.

social group

Two or more people who interact with one another, share similar characteristics and collectively have a sense of unity. Nationality, geographic region, neighborhood, sexual orientation, disability, age, spirituality/faith, gender and race are all examples of types of characteristics making up social groups.

social justice

A process, not an outcome, that does the following: seeks fair redistribution of resources, opportunities and responsibilities; challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; and builds community solidarity and capacity for collaborative action.

stereotype

Widely held beliefs, unconscious associations and expectations about members of certain social groups presumed to be true of every member of that group. Stereotypes are largely based on oversimplified, overgeneralized, anecdotal, or imprecise thoughts, opinions or judgments. They may also reflect commonly held bias and prejudice. They are typically negative, based on minimal information and highly generalized and/or inflammatory.

structural racism

How racial bias or service inequity among various institutions work together — intentionally or not — to disenfranchise and create very different outcomes for people of color from those in the dominant culture.

This involves the effects of many societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. The effects of structural racism are hard to pinpoint because they are cumulative and pervasive.

systemic ableism

A system of institutions, policies and societal values that disadvantage people based on social values of intelligence, physical abilities and mental abilities.

Systemic ableism relates to barriers such as attitude, communication, physical space, policy, programs, criminal justice, social and environmental issues, and transportation. Advocates define systemic ableism as a system that places value on people’s bodies and minds based on socially constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence and productivity.

systemic oppression

How history, culture, ideology, public policies, institutional practices, and personal behaviors and beliefs interact to maintain a hierarchy of power.

This allows the privileges associated with the dominant group and the disadvantages associated with the targeted group to endure and adapt over time. The hierarchy is based on race, class, gender, age, disability, spirituality/religion, sexual orientation and/or other social group identities.

targeted universalism

An approach to addressing social issues that identifies a common goal among different social groups but applies unique strategies specific to each group to achieve that goal. This approach is based on recognizing there are stark contrasts in access to opportunity between different groups of people as a result of structural racism and other forms of systemic oppression.

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transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender expression and/or gender identity is different from the cultural expectations of their assigned sex at birth. People who are transgender express their gender identities in many different ways. Some people use their dress, behavior and mannerisms to live as the gender that feels right for them. Some people take hormones and may have surgery to change their body so it matches their gender identity. Some people reject the traditional understanding of gender as divided between just “male” and “female,” so they identify as transgender or genderqueer, genderfluid or something else.

transition

The process a person undertakes to bring their gender expression and/or their body into alignment with their gender identity. It is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time; the exact steps involved in transition will vary from person to person. Transition can include:

- Social transition — telling family, friends and co-workers; using a different name; using different pronouns; dressing differently; starting or stopping wearing make-up and jewelry, etc.
- Legal transition — changing your name and/or sex marker on documents such as a driver’s license, passport, Social Security record or bank accounts.
- Medical transition — hormone replacement therapy and/or one or more surgical procedures.

(Source: [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 11th Edition](#))

transphobia

The fear, hatred, discomfort, disbelief or mistrust of people who are transgender. It is also a form of sexism that discriminates against people who are transgender. Transphobic attitudes are often marked by violence toward people who are transgender.

two-spirit

A term used within some Indigenous communities encompassing cultural, spiritual, sexual and gender identity. The term reflects complex Indigenous understandings of gender roles, spirituality, and the long history of sexual and gender diversity in Indigenous cultures. The definition and common use of the term Two Spirit may vary among Tribes and Tribal communities.

universal design

The process of creating products accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities and other characteristics.

white dominant culture

A description of how white people and their practices, beliefs and culture have been normalized over time and are now considered standard and universal in the United States among white people and people of color.

Note: For more information on how white dominant culture is formed and maintained, go to “dominant culture” and “white supremacy culture.”

white privilege

The set of social and economic advantages white people have by virtue of their race in a culture characterized by racial inequality.

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white racial frame

An overarching worldview through which race is viewed in historical and contemporary United States and other societies throughout the world. The white racial frame helps define what is normal, desirable and undesirable on racial matters. As the dominant racial frame, it has long legitimated, rationalized, motivated and shaped racial oppression and inequality in the United States.

The white racial frame simultaneously treats whiteness as invisible (or the lack of race) while normalizing or demonstrating preference for its ways of being or thinking. In regard to Black and Indigenous people and other people of color, it either renders them invisible or continually “others” them through negative stereotypes or other fallacies.

White racial framing is as much, if not more, subconscious as conscious. It is fostered explicitly and implicitly by white people and others with access to power, resources and the ability to influence institutions of cultural transmission (such as schools, universities, political organizations and media). The white racial frame shapes people’s actions and thinking in everyday experiences. While it may be more pervasive in the thinking of white people, the white racial frame can affect the way people of color view the world, whiteness and themselves.

(Source: [The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing](#))

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white supremacy

A historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white persons and nations of the European continent. This is done to maintain and defend a system of wealth, power and privilege.

In both historical and modern ideological movements and organizations (for example, the Ku Klux Klan), the term characterizes various belief systems with one or more of these key tenets: whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; white people have their own “culture” that is superior to other cultures; and white people are genetically superior to other people.

As a full-fledged ideology, white supremacy is far more encompassing than simple racism or bigotry. Most white supremacists today further believe the white race is in danger of extinction due to a rising “flood” of non-whites who Jews control and manipulate, and that whites need to take immediate action to “save” the white race.

(Source: [Anti-Defamation League, Challenging White Supremacy Workshop](#))

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white supremacy culture

Refers to the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning that most U.S. institutions embody. These standards may be inaccurately seen as mainstream, dominant cultural practices, indistinguishable from what we might call U.S. culture or norms. They have evolved from the United States' history of white supremacy. It can be hard to see because it is so normalized, which only adds to its powerful hold. White culture values ways of thinking, behaving, deciding and knowing that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, western tradition; it simultaneously devalues other ways of being or makes them invisible. People from dominant culture social groups as well as non-dominant social groups may uphold white supremacy culture because of its strong influence and ubiquity.

Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun identified 12 characteristics of white supremacy culture in organizations: perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, paternalism, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, progress is bigger/more, objectivity, and right to comfort.

(Source: [Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege: A Missing Link to Advancing Racial Equity](#))

xenophobia

Any attitude, behavior, practice or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants or perceived foreigners are inferior to the dominant group of people. It is reflected in interpersonal, institutional and systemic levels of oppression, and is a function of white supremacy.

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