

Key Definitions

These definitions were co-created by members of the community, during the “Building Anti-racism and Anti-Islamophobia Advocates in Alberta’s Settlement Sector Workshop” (November 2016) – they represent revisions to more formal definitions. Following the definition, are simple examples of the concept *in practice*, as identified by participants.

ADVOCACY

The act or process of educating/ championing/ defending a cause that you strongly believe in to create social change.ⁱ

Examples

- “Facebook posts supporting Syrian refugees”
- Standing up for someone who is subjected to an injustice
- Providing community education on the benefits of inclusiveness

BIAS

A preconceived belief influencing attitudes and actions towards some people and ideas that usually results in unfair treatment.ⁱⁱ

Examples:

- Choosing to hire someone because they are from the same neighbourhood as you, even if they are not the most qualified for the job
- Assuming that dominant Canadian parenting standards are better than others

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

An evolving process that brings together a congruent and harmonious set of behaviours, attitudes, and policies to enable people to work effectively and inclusively in cross-cultural situations.ⁱⁱⁱ

Examples

- Adjusting content or implementation of a program based on a client’s cultural beliefs and values rather than expecting a client to abandon their beliefs in interest of the dominant norms
- “When we had Bhutanese clients who came in we had a worker from Bhutan. So we had an afternoon dedicated to asking her [the worker] questions about Bhutan. We did the same when the Syrian crisis happened and we arranged a staff meeting so that staff could ask any questions to the Syrian staff member”

DISCRIMINATION

A set of practices that unfairly treat a person or group differently than others based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender, ability, appearance, language, dress, culture, social status, religion, beliefs, opinion, etc.^{iv}

ⁱ Advocacy: “The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal” (Merriam-Webster, 2016a).

ⁱⁱ Bias: “A tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc., are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly” (Merriam-Webster, 2016b).

ⁱⁱⁱ Cultural competence: A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies, that come together as a system, agency, or among professionals, and enable that system, agency, or professional to work effectively in cross cultural situations.

^{iv} Discrimination: “The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people” (Merriam-Webster, 2016c).

Examples

- o “I had a person who had to leave their job because of the hours and the times they requested to have their breaks. At first the employer said it was ok, but then when the employer found out it was because they needed those times to pray they had push back from the employer. That created an uncomfortable situation in the work place and the person had to quit”

ETHNIC IDENTITY

A distinctive identity of shared characteristics felt, shared, or claimed by individuals or a group.^v

Examples

- o French Canadians retain strong ties as a unique ethnic group within Canada, therefore demanding recognition as such
- o A Canadian-born individual with Kurdish-immigrant parents identifies as Kurdish based on affiliation with their parents’ background and culture

ETHNICITY

Belonging to a group that shares common ethnic affiliation or qualities – such as a common national or cultural tradition, ancestry, values and/or beliefs.^{vi}

Examples

- o Filipino or Indian ancestry (regardless of race)
- o Aboriginal-Canadian

INTERSECTIONALITY

Interconnected identities and experiences – such as race, class, language and gender – that create overlapping discrimination and disadvantage for individuals and/or groups.^{vii}

Examples

- o A black woman wearing a hijab who has not had the opportunity for formal education can often be overlooked as having critical and valuable knowledge and skills to share based on her gender, appearance, and background
- o Systemic issues facing under-privileged groups – Aboriginal, people with disabilities, women – may be more severe for someone who is faces multiple sources of social disadvantage: i.e. an Aboriginal woman who has a physical disability

ISLAMOPHOBIA

An irrational and unfounded fear or prejudice towards Muslims.^{viii}

Examples

- o Fear of all people of the Muslim faith because of frequent media portrayals of terrorism linked to Islam
- o Anti-Muslim graffiti and posters in Calgary since the arrival of refugees from Syria

POWER

^v Ethnic identity: “A distinctive identity felt, shared, or claimed by individuals or a group, or ascribed to them, based on shared characteristics”. This often forms the basis for their subcultural and/or political differentiation from other groups in a society. “A salient aspect of identity for individuals from ethnic minorities” (Oxford Reference, 2016a).

^{vi} Ethnicity: “1: ethnic quality or affiliation <aspects of ethnicity> 2 : a particular ethnic affiliation or group <students of diverse ethnicities>” (Merriam-Webster, 2016d).

^{vii} Intersectionality: “The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage” (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2016).

^{viii} Islamophobia: “Islamophobia is an unfounded fear or prejudice directed towards Muslims” (Center for Race & Gender, 2016).

The ability to influence and/or control people, ideas or situations.^{ix}

Examples

- A counsellor is in a position of power over a client within an institutional context
- The media is trusted because it is supposed to be objective and unbiased
- Men have historically held privilege over women

PREJUDICE

Applying assumptions to a person and/or group based on a part of their identity (gender, race, age, ethnicity, etc.).^x

Examples:

- Racial profiling
- People of different nationalities refusing to live or together due to their historical roots/ rivalries

RACE

A social construct that groups people based on distinct characteristics, including skin colour, common language, ancestry, traditions, or behaviours.^{xi}

Examples

- Social constructions of difference based on having brown, white or black skin

RACISM

Racism is an unconscious or conscious attitude and/or belief that one group is better than another because of ethnicity or colour, and can be displayed in a variety of ways^{xii}.

Examples

- Making an assumption about someone's intelligence or level of English based on the colour of their skin

STEREOTYPE

A preconceived and oversimplified generalization about a person or community that may impact how they are treated^{xiii}

Examples

- "People who wear glasses are smart"
- "If you are Muslim you are associated with ISIS"

SYSTEMIC RACISM

^{ix} Power: "The ability or right to control people or things" (Merriam-Webster, 2016f).

^x Prejudice: "Any attitude held towards a person or group that is not justified by the facts. Prejudice includes negative and positive attitudes towards people solely on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, or sex" (Oxford Reference, 2016b).

^{xi} Race: Original definition: "1: A group of persons who come from the same ancestor 2: A people having a common language, culture, and body of traditions" (Merriam-Webster, 2016e).

^{xii} Racism: Racism is a belief that one group is better than another group because of race or color; it can be conscious or unconscious, and may be displayed in various different ways and happen on many different levels (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016a).

^{xiii} Stereotype: "A preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristic which typify a person, race, or community which may lead to treating them in a particular way" (Oxford Reference, 2016c).

Discrimination embedded within the policies, procedures, and practices of political and social institutions that reduces access to programs, services, and facilities for persons based on their ethnicity – reinforcing and perpetuating the privilege of the dominant ethnic group^{xiv}.

Examples

- Tendency for resumes with 'non-white' names to be discarded
 - Lack of diversity across organizational leadership
- People of colour overrepresented in the justice system

^{xiv} Systemic Racism: "Institutional racism or systemic racism describes forms of racism which are structured into political and social institutions. It occurs when organisations, institutions or governments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly, against certain groups of people to limit their rights" (Racism Norway, 2015).