

SOCIAL JUSTICE DEFINITIONS

Prejudice: A judgment or belief that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. Prejudices are learned and can be unlearned.

Discrimination: The unequal allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society based on individual membership in a particular social group; reinforced by law, policy, and cultural norms that allow for differential treatment on the basis of identity.

Social Power: Access to resources that enhance one's chances of getting what one needs in order to lead a comfortable, productive and safe life.

Oppression: When an agent group, whether knowingly or unknowingly, abuses a target group. This pervasive system is rooted historically and maintained through individual and institutional/systematic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice, resulting in a condition of privilege for the agent group at the expense of the target group.

(DISCRIMINATION + SOCIAL POWER = OPPRESSION)

Privilege: Unearned access to resources (social power) that are only readily available to some people because of their social group membership; an advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by one societal group above and beyond the common advantage of all other groups. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it.

Socialization: The process by which a human beginning at infancy acquires the habits, beliefs, and accumulated knowledge of society through education and training (by family, friends, culture and systems/institutions).

Target or Oppressed Identities: Social groups that are negatively valued, considered to be inferior, abnormal, or dependent and given limited access to resources and social power.

Agent or Privileged identities: Social groups that are positively valued considered superior, independent, or "normal" and have access to resources and power.

Collusion: Ways that members of agent and target groups think and act, often unconsciously, that support oppressive systems and maintains the status quo.

Ableism: The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress people who have mental, emotional and physical disabilities.

Ageism: The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress young and elderly people.

Source: Adams, M., Bell, Lee Anne, Griffin, Pat (1997). Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice. Routledge New York, London

Definition of Diversity Adapted From Gardenswartz, L. & Rowe, A. (1994) Diverse teams at work: Capitalizing on the Power of Diversity. Chicago: Irwin Professional Publishing

Religionism: The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress non-Christians, which includes Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Classism: The institutional, cultural, and individual set of beliefs and discrimination that assigns differential value to people according to their socio-economic class; and an economic system which creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet.

Heterosexism: The belief that heterosexuality is the only normal and acceptable sexual orientation. Now encompasses the individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) people

Homophobia: An irrational fear of or aversion to homosexuality or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) people. This is how we use to refer to the oppression of LGBTQ people and now we consider it heterosexism.

Racism – The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress people of color (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians).

Sexism – The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress women.