

**A Comprehensive  
Culturally Responsive  
Glossary:  
Concepts to Increase  
Awareness Towards  
Health Equity**

**PTTC Network  
Building Health Equity  
& Social Justice  
Working Group**

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**PTTC**

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# Acknowledgement

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## **About the PTTC Network Building Health Equity & Social Justice Working Group:**

The PTTC BHE & SJ working group exists to improve the quality of services provided by the substance misuse prevention workforce in order to reduce health disparities and achieve health equity so that all individuals receiving prevention services feel acknowledged and respected.

**“If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.”**

**– African Proverb**



# Glossary Purpose

**Words have power**; their multiple meanings can lead to confusion and hostility among many. For instance, we have learned the difference between “POC” and “BIPOC” and why it matters to use the right language. “POC” suggests for all people of color, this generic term **lacks the acknowledgement and understanding** of the separate struggles people of different ethnicities face. “BIPOC” puts the **individual first** helping to **highlight the injustices** faced by Black and Indigenous people. “BIPOC” stands for “Black, Indigenous, and people of color.” (<https://www.healthline.com/health/bipoc-meaning#short-answer>)

**Cultural responsiveness** emphasizes the importance of including and supporting all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or language proficiency. Use of **inclusive, bias-free and non-stigmatizing language** is essential to engaging and supporting communities and ensuring prevention efforts are culturally responsive. It is essential to have a **shared understanding of terms** supporting prevention professionals and community coalitions, so that we can **eliminate the various forms of discrimination and prejudice** in our society.



# Our Goal and Call to Action

Our goal is to incorporate **anti-racist, bias-free, non-stigmatizing, and inclusive terminology** into the framework of prevention programs. To do this we provided this educational tool on cultural responsiveness that can be incorporated as a guide into your prevention efforts. **Diversity and inclusion** in the prevention workforce is **both ethical and imperative**. Preventionists must not only be aware of the knowledge presented throughout this factsheet but be able to practically apply the information given.

As you create programs, information resources, collaborate with key partners, and develop presentations, look to inquire the information below into your work. With the practical application of this terminology, prevention professionals can help guide their organizations towards a **culture of awareness on healthy equity**. The national PTTC Building Health Equity & Social Justice Working Group proposes the following call to action for all prevention professionals.

## Our Call to Action

- **Develop understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion**
- **Integrate a cultural humility lens into prevention efforts**
- **Make a commitment to being anti-racist**
- **Prioritize programs to be community-based, intentional, diversified, and culturally supportive and responsive**
- **Reach out, collaborate, and form relationships with culturally diverse organizations**
- **Recognize that words have power and ensure all materials reflect non-stigmatizing, bias-free language**



# Selected Resources

For further information on the included words and their meanings, see the below resources.

- [DC Fiscal Policy Institute Style Guide for Inclusive Language](https://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Style-Guide-for-Inclusive-Language_Dec-2017.pdf)

[https://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Style-Guide-for-Inclusive-Language\\_Dec-2017.pdf](https://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Style-Guide-for-Inclusive-Language_Dec-2017.pdf)

- [CDC: Health Equity Style Guide for the COVID-19 Response: Principles and Preferred Terms for Non-Stigmatizing, Bias-Free Language](https://ehe.jhu.edu/DEI/Health_Equity_Style_Guide_CDC_Reducing_Stigma.pdf)

[https://ehe.jhu.edu/DEI/Health\\_Equity\\_Style\\_Guide\\_CDC\\_Reducing\\_Stigma.pdf](https://ehe.jhu.edu/DEI/Health_Equity_Style_Guide_CDC_Reducing_Stigma.pdf)

- [Racial Equity Tools](https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary)

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>



# Glossary

## **Affirming Diversity**

Recognition of the intersectionality of gender identity, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, and human abilities. As Goduka (1996) described, affirming diversity is “[t]he ability to recognize, justify, respect and be receptive to diverse natures” (p.68).

## **Anti-racism**

The practice or work of actively combatting racism, racial prejudice, and racial discrimination and instead promoting change that supports racial justice and racial equality (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015).

## **Anti-racist**

As Kendi (2019) defined, an individual who is anti-racists is someone “who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea,” (p. 13) or “one who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equal and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity,” (p. 24).

## **BIPOC**

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

## **BIWOC**

Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color

## Colorblindness

When an individual claims they can't see or differentiate people by the color of their skin, therefore denying pieces of their identity and their lived experience. Gordon (2005) highlighted that this occurs on both an individual (person to person) and systemic level (does not recognize privilege and discriminatory practices). As Gordon (2005) stated, colorblindness perpetuates "existing power relations and reinscribes White privilege" (p. 140). Colorblindness presents a challenge and disregards efforts towards being racially aware and increasing equity for people of all races (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015).

## Cultural Appreciation

Actively seeking to learn, understand, and respect a culture that is different from your own, while honoring and celebrating those differences. As Labrecque (2005) described, this process includes an active awareness as to not deepen a cultural stereotype and "by which culture is valued," (p. 89).

## Cultural Appropriateness

The process of tailoring messages and actions to sensitively match cultural norms and expectations of a specific population. As Kreuter and colleagues (2003) described, this process includes identifying and describing "cultures and/or subcultures within a given population, [understanding] how each relates to health behavior, and [applying] this knowledge in planning and development activities" (p. 134).

## Cultural Awareness

Active awareness of the ways that one's cultural background impacts who they are and the way they interact with the world. Fong and colleagues (2016) wrote, "[u]nderstanding one's own cultural values, preferences, characteristics, and circumstances and seeking to learn about those of their clients" (p. 84).

## Cultural Bias

Interpretations and assumptions one makes based on their own perception of cultural norms and are not supported by objective measures. Ostroot and Snyder (1985) wrote this about cultural bias, “manifested in the tendency for members of a particular culture to be optimistic or pessimistic, confident or cautious in evaluating their social and physical environment and in revealing these evaluations to others” (p. 243).

## Cultural Competence

The ability to sensitively interact and work with individuals from a cultural background that is different than your own. Cai (2016) proposed this definition, “Cultural competence includes cultural awareness, sensitivity, knowledge, and skill” (p. 272). Henderson and colleagues (2018) described an example of this in the healthcare system, “[u]sing one’s understanding to respect and tailor healthcare that is equitable and ethical after becoming aware of oneself and others in a diverse cultural encounter,” (p. 599).

## Cultural Humility

As described by Foronda and colleagues (2016), it is a process used in every interaction with every person marked by “openness, self-awareness, being egoless, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals” (p. 213). This process requires individuals to be aware of power dynamics or imbalances that may be at play in a situation. Cultural humility requires an awareness of the values and structural factors that affect people and how these values and factors impact how they navigate and experience their environment (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015). Practicing cultural humility means reflecting on one’s own culture and actively listening to the needs and experiences of those being served in the community.

## Culturally Responsiveness

The active practice of cultural awareness. As Ching and colleagues (2019) described, this practice is marked by continuous engagement in self-reflection and ongoing learning focused on how to “redress power balance, commit to an authentic relationship, be open to other cultures,” (p. 4) as well as acknowledging one’s own biases or preconceived notions (Ching et al., 2019).

## Discrimination

As defined by the Center for Racial Justice Innovation (2015), this is the “[t]reatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a social category, usually used to describe unjust or prejudicial treatment on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, immigration status, national origin, or religion” (p. 27).

## Diversity

Diversity includes and involves individuals with varying demographics, values, and lived experiences based on “race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, physical, or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity” (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015). Importantly, the Baltimore Racial Justice Action (2016) made this statement: “Diversity is silent on the subject of equity. In an anti-oppression context, therefore, the issue is not diversity, but rather equity,” (webpage).

## Equality

The belief in and process of creating equal opportunity in relation to the conditions of peoples’ lives. “It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability” (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018).

## Equity

The presence of fairness, impartiality, and social justice for individuals and communities. For example, in the healthcare system, equitable practices “focuses attention on the distribution of resources and other processes that drive a particular kind of health inequality—that is, a systematic inequality in health (or in its social determinants) between more and less advantaged social groups, in other words, a health inequality that is unjust or unfair” (Braveman & Gruskin, 2003, p. 255). As the Center for Racial Justice Innovation (2015) declared, “Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support and sustain social justice,” (p. 27).

## Implicit Bias

Unconscious associations, biases, and stereotypes based on characteristics such as age, race, or gender, that lead to unfair evaluations or judgements of individuals and communities (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017). Also referred to as unconscious bias, the Center for Racial Justice Innovation (2015) defined implicit bias is “attitudes that unconsciously affect our decisions and actions,” (p. 28).

## Inclusion

The process in which individuals with varying identities and cultural backgrounds have equal access to information and are “valued, welcomed, and empowered to participate fully in the life and decision-making processes within an organization” (Nave, 2019, p. 15). Inclusion is more than diversity as it “involves authentic and empowered participation, with a true sense of belonging and full access to opportunities,” (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015, p. 28).

## Land Acknowledgement

The acknowledgment of the indigenous people who originally inhabited land prior to the colonization by European settlers and the acknowledgment of the lasting impacts of colonization (Nave, 2019). This type of acknowledgement also recognizes the long-lasting relationship between “indigenous peoples and their traditional lands,” (Nave, 2019, p.12). McKay and colleagues (2020) stated this about making a land acknowledgement: “demonstrates organizational commitment to creating relationships with Indigenous Nations based on respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. Acknowledgment of historical and contemporary contexts of forced removal in relation to health disparities is a necessary first step to the attainment of health equity” (McKay et al., 2020, p. 905).

## Microaggressions

As defined by Olou (2018), microaggressions are “small daily insults and indignities perpetrated against marginalized or oppressed people because of their affiliation with that marginalized or oppressed group,” (p. 168). Racial microaggressions are those perpetrated against people of color. Microaggressions are cumulative, harmful, and often get dismissed.

## Multicultural

The acceptance, respect, and affirmation of differences in order to allow people from varying cultural backgrounds to live together. As Erbas (2019) wrote, something described as multicultural “advocates the teaching of all components associated with cultural groups so as to build a nationwide or a global society” (p. 25).

## Privilege

Refers to the systemic and interpersonal advantages in obtaining social goods and services and avoiding stressors that one has based on factors such as race, gender, socio-economic standing, sexual orientation, and religion. Black and Stone (2005) proposed that privilege is a special benefit, entitlement, or something granted as opposed to earned and often “utilized for the advantage of the recipient and the exclusion or disadvantage of others” (p. 244).

## Race Consciousness

As Brewer and colleagues (2013) wrote, race consciousness is “the frequency with which one thinks about his or her own race,” leading to increased awareness of stigmatization and discrimination (p. 1346).

## Race Neutral

An effort towards equal opportunity for everyone, on individual and systemic levels. Sniderman and colleagues (1996) wrote about being race neutral, “in the sense of being explicitly justified on universalistic, non-racial grounds. Justified on the moral principles that go beyond race” (p.36).

## Racial Equity

A continuous and intentional process aimed at equitable living “whereby people of color have an equal opportunity to live a healthy and dignified life” (Redwood & King, 2014, p. 40). Racial equity is one part of racial justice.

## Racial Justice

Going beyond anti-racism, it is the “systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all...It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.” (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015, p. 31-33).

## Racism

A number of various practices, which are embedded in societal and cultural institutions or structures as well as the human psyche, which position individuals and communities as inferior based on characteristics such as race, class, gender, or ethnicity, (Seikkula, 2019). Oluo (2018) defined racism as “any prejudice against someone because of their race, when those views are reinforced by systems of power,” (p. 26). The Center for Racial Justice Innovation (2015) described racism as a “historically rooted system of power hierarchies based on race— infused in our institutions, policies and culture—that benefit White people and hurt people of color,” (p. 33).

## Social Justice

The pursuit of equity through actions of reform and the awareness of social oppression. Nemetchek (2019) wrote that social justice is “[a] fundamental human right to be protected,” and “a moral obligation demonstrated by action, and results in change that improves the health of individual lives and populations both locally and globally by recognizing and confronting injustice, oppression and inequity, while promoting participation, opportunity, justice, equity, and helping relationships” (p. 247-248).

## White Centering

A term defined by Saad (2020) as “the centering of whiteness and white people, white values, white norms, and white feelings over everything and everyone else. The believe, whether conscious or not, that whiteness is ‘normal’ and BIPOC are ‘other,’” (p. 229).

# Additional Resources Developed within the National Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network

## **Building Health Equity and Inclusion: Resource List**

- <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/global-pttc/cultural-responsiveness>
- Developed by the Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network's Building Health Equity & Social Justice Working Group, this site contains numerous resources to help individuals understand the impact of culture and identity in prevention efforts.

## **Tips for Ensuring a Culturally Competent Collaboration**

- <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/northeast-caribbean-pttc/product/tips-ensuring-culturally-competent-collaboration>
- Developed by the Northeast and Caribbean Prevention Technology Transfer Center, this resource includes some tips for prevention stakeholders to begin a process of increasing the cultural competence of your collaborative efforts.

## **A Prevention Guide to Improving Cultural Competence: A Literature Review**

- <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/central-east-pttc/product/prevention-guide-improving-cultural-competency>
- Developed by the Central East Prevention Technology Transfer Center, this resource includes a literature review and resources to help prevention stakeholders improve cultural competence and capacity to serve minority and vulnerable populations.

# Additional Resources Developed within the National Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network

## **Structural Racism and Supporting People of Color: The Role of Prevention Professionals**

- [https://pttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/202101/Structural\\_Racism\\_and\\_Supporting\\_People\\_of\\_Color\\_-\\_Pacific\\_Southwest\\_PTTC.pdf](https://pttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/202101/Structural_Racism_and_Supporting_People_of_Color_-_Pacific_Southwest_PTTC.pdf)
- Developed by the Pacific Southwest Prevention Technology Transfer Center, this resource includes organizational action items that aim to help prevention professionals incorporate anti-racism practices and community outcomes into their work.

## **Connecting Prevention Specialists to Native Communities, Culture is Prevention**

- [https://pttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/201906/web%20version%20%20Culture%20is%20Prevention\\_0.pdf](https://pttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/201906/web%20version%20%20Culture%20is%20Prevention_0.pdf)
- Developed by the National American Indian and Alaska Native Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network, this resource was created to serve as an introduction to the overall framework of prevention specialists working with Native communities.

## **Connecting Prevention Specialists to Native Communities**

- <https://pttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/201905/Connecting%20Prevention%20Specialists%20to%20Native%20Communities-web.pdf>
- Developed by the National American Indian and Alaska Native Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network, this resource includes a tool called the Cultural Connected Scale that evaluates the degree to which individuals are connected to their root culture. It also explains the importance of cultural connectedness and how to promote it for substance abuse prevention specialists.

# Additional Resources Developed within the National Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network

## **Towards More Equity: Ways to Enhance Your Prevention Programming Resources**

- <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/northeast-caribbean-pttc/product/towards-more-equity-ways-enhance-your-prevention>
- Developed by the Northeast and Caribbean Prevention Technology Transfer Center, this set of tools were developed for prevention practitioners and community coalition members to effectively assess their strategies to engage community partners, as well as to develop a plan for increasing community engagement, in a way that will help to increase reach and impact on substance use by beginning with a focus on health equity.

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