

Vocabulary for conversations about race, gender, equality, and inclusivity

Content based on the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at the University of Arizona

Ally	An ally is someone who acts to challenge institutionalized bias and prejudice. Allies educate themselves, and speak and act in a way that is purposefully supportive of a marginalized group, including people of color, people in the LGBTQI+ community, and people with disabilities.
Bias: Implicit v. Explicit	<i>Explicit</i> bias is conscious, purposeful bias <i>Implicit</i> bias is subconscious bias, learned unconsciously via society Everyone has natural implicit and explicit bias; it's part of being human and what shapes our actions and attitudes.
Bigotry v. Prejudice	<i>Bigotry</i> can be defined as intolerance towards individuals or beliefs. <i>Prejudice</i> can be defined as an opinion that is not based on reason or experience. Prejudice usually refers to a prejudgement that someone has based on race, class, nationality, sex, etc.
Cisgender	Identifying with the gender identity assigned at birth
Cultural appropriation v. Cultural appreciation	Cultural <i>appreciation</i> is when elements of a culture are used while <u>honoring</u> the source they came from. This involves respect and value for the culture. Cultural <i>appropriation</i> can be defined as selecting certain aspects of a culture, and ignoring their original significance and belittling it as a trend. (Eg. "you're my spirit animal". Spirit animals are a deeply spiritual concept for many Indigenous people)
Cultural humility	Cultural humility is the ability to maintain a commitment to respecting the value in and personal beliefs of others.
Institutional/Structural Racism	The normalization and legitimization of historical, cultural, institutions (laws & regulations) that routinely advantage whites while producing harmful outcomes for people of color.
Gaslighting	Using denial, misdirection, contradiction, and misinformation to attempt to destabilize a victim and delegitimize the victim's beliefs. Gaslighting can be directed at an individual or group. Eg: "I don't think that was racist" or "Are you sure that's what happened?"
Gender v. Sex	<i>Gender</i> refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of a person. <i>Sex</i> refers to the biological and physiological characteristics of males and females.
Gender Non-Conforming	Not exclusively identifying with one specific gender

Indigenous/American Indian	Indigenous peoples of the United States are commonly known as Native Americans, American Indians, or Alaska Natives. Indigenous refers to the concept of a culture that has not migrated from its homeland, and was not a settler or colonial population.
Marginalization	The treatment of a person or group as insignificant or peripheral. Socially, marginalization involved leaving such people/groups out of decision making that will impact them in positive or negative ways.
Social Justice	Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society
Transgender	Identifying with the opposite gender assigned due to one's sex
White Privilege	White privilege refers to societal privilege that benefits white people over non-white people in some societies, <u>particularly</u> if they are otherwise the same social, political, or economic circumstances. Privilege can also be attributed to people of certain sexes, genders, or sex/gender-related identities.

Sentence stems for a safe-space discussion:

- I think
- I feel
- I wonder
- I'm not sure about
- What do you mean when you say
- I disagree because
- Instead of saying "...", I'm more comfortable saying "..."

Concepts we can always keep in mind when conversing:

- **It's important to talk about differences: it's valuable to see race, culture, and ethnicity.**
- Always put *People* first!
Eg: "People of color", "People who are Black", "People who have disabilities", "People who are marginalized", "People who were enslaved"
- Sometimes we are talking specifically about people who are of a specific race or culture, like African Americans, or Latinx, but we cannot assume a person's race by the color of their skin. When you are not sure, "people of color" is an acceptable term.
- Avoid comparing racism, prejudice, and bigotry to being bullied or an idea like "no one likes to be judged"
- We are talking about a shared experience, but we should also celebrate individual ideas and viewpoints. No person can speak for, represent, or hold all of the same opinions as others who share part of their identity
- Racism is a systemic issue.
 - If you look the other way or deny that these systems exist, you are part of the problem. You can know in your heart that you don't hate anyone but still contribute to their oppression.

- No individual is personally responsible for what white people have done or the historical decisions of the American government, but you ARE responsible for whether you are currently upholding the systems that elevate white people over people of color.
- When someone hits a sore spot and you realize you've said, done, or felt something that you didn't realize could be insensitive, avoid rationalizing your actions and *resolve to do better*.

"I'll [author Angela Watson] give you an example that happened to me a couple weeks ago.

You know how it's a trendy thing to talk about spirit animals? As in, "Oh, such and such celebrity is my spirit animal" or "that laughing baby gif is my spirit animal!" It's a common expression in popular culture meant to convey that a person or thing resonates with you.

I've used that expression on occasion...until I read the Twitter feed of someone who identifies as an indigenous person. She explained that having white people appropriate the term spirit animal is super offensive, because spirit animals are a deeply sacred aspect of a culture which has been almost completely erased by a white nation state. So to have white people—or anyone, really—trivialize something that means so much in her culture, a culture that has a long history of being devalued, censored, and systematically wiped out, is hurtful to her.

My gut reaction upon hearing this was to think, *'Oh. Crap. I have totally said that and had no idea it could be offensive. Ugh. That's embarrassing. Well, at least now I know not to ever do it again.'*

Additional resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKEPOkxUDyA> strategies (actionable)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iknxhxEn10> what white people can do to move the race conversation forward

Racism is about contributing to or looking the other way in the face of acts or systems that marginalize people of color.