

White Privilege Glossary

Racism:

Individual, interpersonal, cultural, institutional and systemic practices that discriminate against/create differential consequences for people of color and advantage white people. Racism = prejudice + power. Prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory acts against people based on their actual or perceived racial status, and the relationship and accumulation of those attitudes and acts over time, has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation. Systems that perpetuate racial inequity no longer need racist actors or to explicitly promote racial differences in opportunities, outcomes and consequences to maintain those differences.

Example 1: When I have been stopped by police officers (which I can think of 3 times in the last 23 years) I have NEVER worried about being pulled over for some incidental reason (I was always clearly doing something wrong), it never even crossed my mind to be scared of the police officer, I considered them a protective part of the community doing their job. For POCs, they might be pulled over for something I would never be pulled over for, an out of date registration sticker, a bulb out (I drove a technically totalled car to work for 1 years, with no right front light!) or some drummed up excuse for driving while black or brown. Has never happened to me. And once I do get pulled over I don't have to worry about being hurt or killed.

*Example 2: "Preference visas" sponsored by employers and certain kinds of family members are not equally available. Filipinos and Mexicans typically wait in line outside the United States **more than twice as long as people from other countries**. Filipino siblings of adult U.S. citizens are currently waiting 24 years and Mexicans are waiting 16 years, compared to 12 years for nationals of other countries.*

White Privilege:

Advantages that white people in Western societies benefit from that non-white people do not experience. White privilege denotes both obvious and less obvious passive advantages that white people may not recognize they have, which distinguishes it from overt bias or prejudice. These include cultural affirmations of one's own worth; presumed greater social status; and freedom to move, buy, work, play, and speak freely.

Example 1: Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

Example 2: I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

Microaggression:

A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)

Example 1: An Asian American, born and raised in the United States, is complimented for speaking "good English." (Hidden message: You are not a true American. You are a perpetual foreigner in your own country.)

Example 2: A Latino student reports that people often raise their voices, simplify their sentences, or slow their speech when speaking to him. He responds by withdrawing or being silent (Hidden message: A person from another country or someone who is learning English is defined as less intelligent or less capable).

Kim: Entitlement:

Entitlement is about occupying (more than your fair share of) territory/space: geographical/physical space, emotional space, social space, cultural space and about then feeling "invaded" when the space you constantly take up/occupy is penetrated by someone who isn't usually there, or whom you unconsciously perceive as undeserving or not belonging.

Example 1: Physical space: As an older white woman, I sometimes find myself unconsciously planting myself wherever I feel most comfortable, even when I am blocking others. I recently did this at the Safeway, and only realized it when my daughter pointed out that I was standing in the middle of the aisle, blocking the way.

Example 2: Social space: If given half a chance, I will dominate just about any conversation. I have to remind myself constantly to be quiet and let others speak up.

Centering:

The term "centered" or "community of color-centered" is defined as intentionally focusing on people of color, to physically and mentally shift, and pivot from the default habit of centering and prioritizing whiteness.

Example: One Rapid Response Network member told us that she signed up for the training to "stick it to Trump," rather than to be in solidarity with immigrants at risk of detention and deportation. This is an example of not centering the immigrant community.

Example: If a Person of Color calls out a white person for touching their hair, or asking them to explain Black Lives Matter, or telling them they got into college because they are a minority, white people should center the experience of the POC, and not become defensive. It's not about your feelings; it's about the fact that you violated someone.