



Gloria Cordes Larson Center for Women and Business

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary

Ability: Symbolizes or categorizes people based on how they navigate society—physically, emotionally, psychologically, and/or mentally.

Ableism: Discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior.

Access: One's ability to know, find and/or use the tools and resources that will allow them to live whole and healthy lives.

Accessibility: The quality of being possible to get into, use, make use of.

Accomplice: All accomplices are allies, but not all allies are accomplices. While an ally is willing to stand in support of a marginalized voice, risk is rarely involved. An accomplice uses the power and privilege they have to challenge the status quo, often risking their physical and social wellbeing in the process.

Ageism: Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination towards others or oneself based on age.

Ally (Allyship): A person who works actively to create equitable environments that affirm diversity and inclusion. The term was originally used to communicate straight allyship with LGBTQ+ communities. The term is now used more broadly and can refer to white allies for individuals who advocate for racial justice and male allies for men who advocate for women's equality efforts.

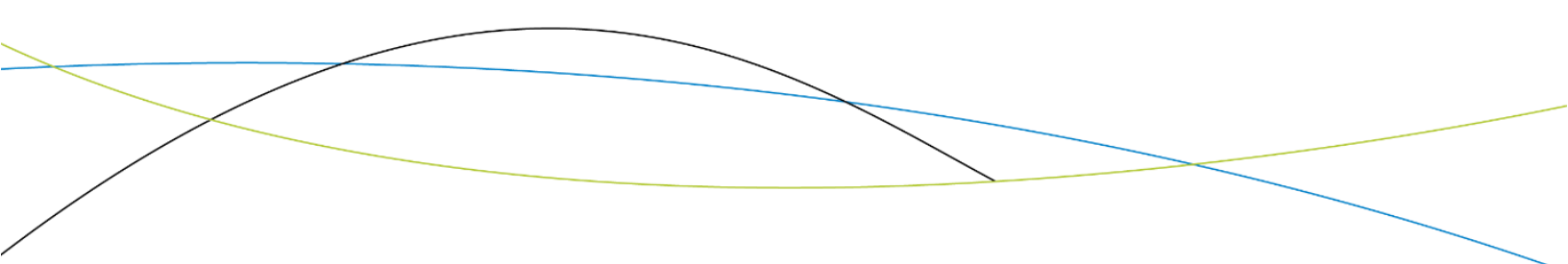
Antiracist: idea that suggests that racial groups are equals in their apparent differences – that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group. Antiracist ideas argue that racist policies are the cause of racial inequities.

Ascription of Intelligence: Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on their race.

Bias: Prejudice; an inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

Bystander Effect: The concept that when a group witnesses an incident, individuals are less likely to respond.

Cisgender: A gender identity term used to describe people who identify as the gender/sex they were assigned at birth.



Class: Widely used metrics for accountability. Prioritizes one’s position in the economic hierarchy that is determined by wealth, income, education or access to education, and geographic background.

Code-Switching: The process of alternating between two or more languages or dialects— including body language and other non-verbal cues—depending on the social setting.

Cognitive Diversity: The wide variety of ways employees think about and solve problems. It recognizes the spectrum of styles by which individuals acquire knowledge.

Color-Blind Ideology: References a pretense that a white person does not see color or race.

Coming Out: The process by which an individual tells people in their life about their gender and/or sexual orientation; often referenced as “being out.”

Confidence Gap: The difference in confidence that often exists between men and women and impacts women’s ability to succeed or thrive in their careers.

Covert Sexism: Subtle, hidden, or invisible sexism that is built into social and cultural norms.

Culture: Learned and shared values, beliefs, languages, and customs of a social group.

Disability: A condition or function judged to be significantly restricted, in reference to the social systems that make it harder to function with a particular impairment rather than the impairment itself.

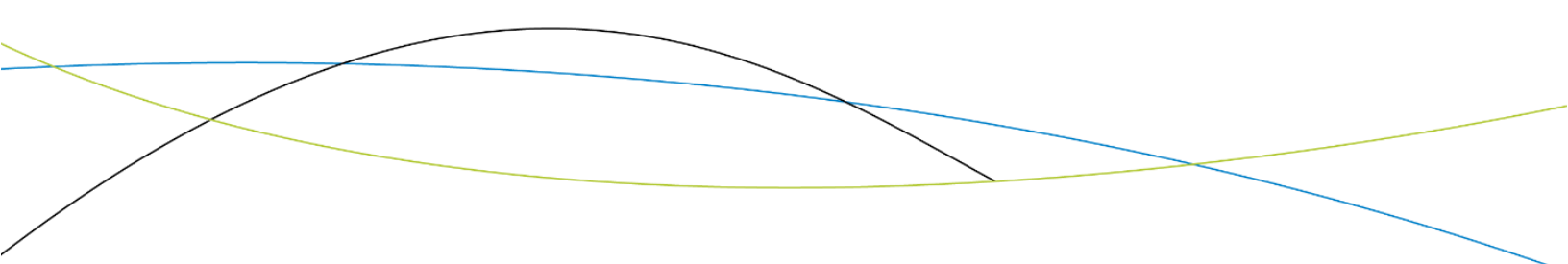
Discrimination: Unfair treatment and actions based on prejudice including violence, threats, slander, and exclusion.

Diversity: Differences in race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, class, disability status, size, sexual orientation, personality type, communication style, education, and life experience, among many other aspects of identity that are present within, among, and between people.

Dominant Group: Advantages and power benefiting an identity group derived from the oppression of other groups. This group may have superior rights and resources in society.

Equality: Treating everyone the same way, often while assuming that everyone also starts out on equal footing or with the same opportunities. Contrasted with equity.

Equity: Recognizes that everyone in an organization does not start at the same place and ensures equal access to opportunity for all employees.



Ethnicity: A socially or politically constructed group based on cultural criteria, such as language, customs, and shared history.

Gaslighting: Psychological manipulation that creates doubt in victims of sexist or racist aggression, making them question their own memory and sanity. This tactic is designed to invalidate someone's experience.

Gender Expression: Refers to how people express their gender identity. Everyone expresses their gender identity in different ways; for example, in the way they dress, the length of their hair, the way they act or speak and in their choice of whether or not to wear makeup.

Gender Identity: One's innermost concept of self as man, woman, a blend of both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Heteronormativity: Bias in favor of opposite-sex relationships and against same-sex relationships that assumes heterosexual relationships as the default and the norm, thereby positioning homosexual relationships as abnormal.

Homophobia: The irrational fear, dislike, hatred, aversion, intolerance, and ignorance of homosexuality and of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit and queer (LGBTQIA+) individuals.

Identity Denial: Making people of color feel precluded from another important group identity by ignoring the intersectional aspects of one's identity.

Implicit bias – outside of awareness, learned early on, and drive behavior.

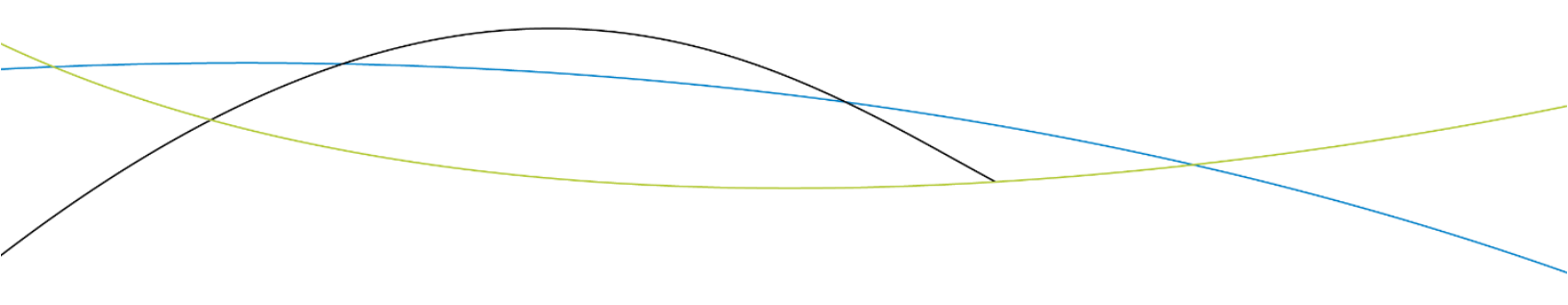
Inclusion: Broad concept that refers to the extent to which individuals from underrepresented groups feel valued and represented within all levels of an organization.

Inclusive Workplace: A working atmosphere where all people—regardless of identity—feel a sense of belonging, are able to contribute fully, and thrive.

Inclusive Leader: A leader who intentionally welcomes and incorporates the contributions of all within an organization to encourage teams to voice different perspectives.

Institutional Racism: A pattern of social institutions—such as governmental organizations, schools, banks, and courts of law—giving negative treatment to a group of people based on their race.

Intrapersonal Bias: Intrapersonal communication is the communication you have with yourself, either spoken, written, or thought. So intrapersonal bias is the feelings of belittling or putting yourself down compared to others and societies standards.



Intergroup Bias: Intergroup bias refers generally to the systematic tendency to evaluate one's own membership group (the in-group) or its members more favorably than a non-membership group (the out-group) or its members.

Interpersonal Bias: Interpersonal affect, a like-dislike relationship between a supervisor and his/her subordinate, has traditionally been conceptualized as a source of bias in performance appraisals.

Intersectional Gender Equity: Access to rights, responsibilities, and opportunities that are no longer impaired by historical acts of exclusion based on intersecting and inseparable identities such as gender, race, orientation, class, disability, and more.

Intersectionality: Describes the unique ways race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability, status, and other social and demographic identities come together to inform peoples' lived experiences. For more information on Intersectionality, read the CWB's curated research report, *Intersectionality in the Workplace: Broadening the Lens of Inclusion*.

Latine/Latinx: Latine or Latinx are gender-neutral forms of the word Latino, created by gender non-binary and feminist communities in Spanish-speaking countries.

Likeability Penalty: The double standard that men are expected to be assertive and confident, but women are criticized when acting the same, especially in performance reviews.

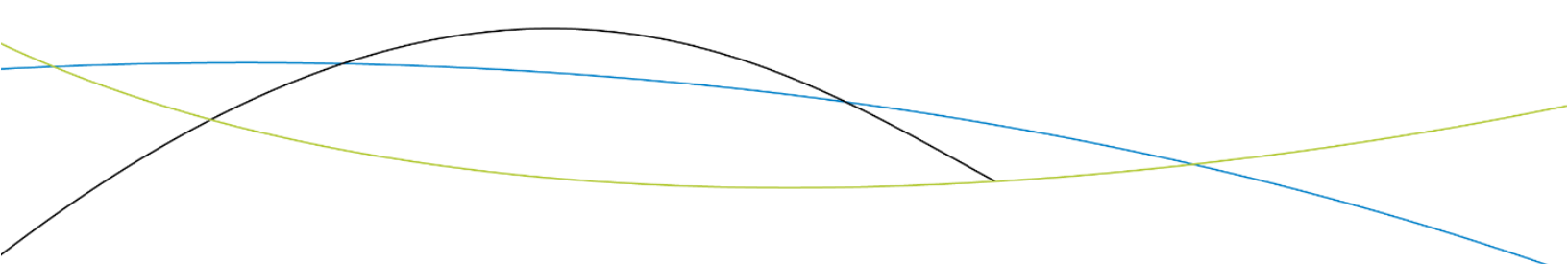
Mainstream: Organizations, systems, people, etc. that represent the prevailing or dominant values and practices of a society with little or no focus to operate from the worldview of culturally specific communities.

Male Ally: A man who utilizes his privilege to advocate for and support women, along with initiatives and processes that advance gender equity. Also see Ally. For more information on Male Allyship, read the CWB's curated research report, *Men as Allies: Engaging Men to Advance Women in the Workplace*.

Marginalized Identities: Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political, and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.

Microaggression: Subtle and normally unintentional slight—resulting from unconscious bias—that undervalues or demeans a person.

Microinequity: The pattern of being overlooked, underrespected, and devalued because of one's race, gender, or ability.



Microassault: Often conscious, explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.

Microinsult: Often unconscious behavioral/ verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity, and demean a person's ethnic, racial, gender, or other identity.

Microinvalidation: Often unconscious verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of an individual based on their identity. Often occurs in the context of racial bias.

Minority Spotlight Effect: Making people of color feel uncomfortably aware of their group identity by singling them out.

Misogyny: Hatred or entrenched prejudice against women.

Model Minority: An identity group inaccurately perceived as particularly successful, often in the context of education, career, or financial success. Asian Americans are often the targets of this myth, being characterized and stereotyped as more successful than other identity groups.

Multiculturalism: A concept that acknowledges and appreciates racial and ethnic differences, as these differences impact our lived experiences; concept contrasts with colorblindness.

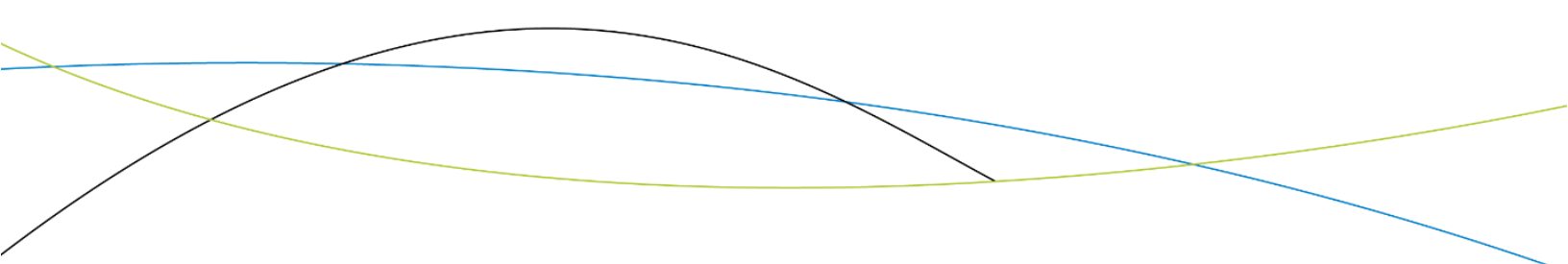
Myth of Meritocracy: A myth that represents a vision in which power and privilege would be allocated by individual merit, not by social origins. We imagine that jobs and promotions go to those who most deserve them, but they are dominated by social connections. Statements which assert that race plays a minor role in life success.

Neurodiversity: The concept that there is great diversity in how people's brains are wired and work, and that neurological differences should be valued in the same way we value any other human variation.

Non-binary: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Oppression: The systematic social phenomenon of prejudice and social power that manifests on a personal, institutional, and societal/cultural level. The result is the exploitation of one social/identity group by another for the benefit of the agent/oppressor group.

Performative Activism: Occurs when individuals share their knowledge about inequity with others but don't use their privilege and resources to make real change.



Performative Allyship: Similar to performative activism, this is a self-serving form of allyship where the focus is on the ally obtaining recognition for being an advocate while doing minimal or inauthentic work.

Privilege: Power and advantages benefiting a dominant identity group based on the historical oppression of other identity groups.

Pronouns: Pronouns can be used as a way to promote inclusion and recognize that someone is non-binary or wants to support those who are non-binary. Examples of pronouns an individual may use include She/Her/Hers, He/Him/His or They/Them/Theirs. Some individuals use other less common gender-neutral pronouns, such as Xe/Hir/Hirs, or use no pronouns at all. The phrase “preferred pronouns” is being phased out as it denotes that gender is a choice.

Psychological Safety: An environment where workers feel safe to speak up, make mistakes, and be themselves without fear of punishment or judgment.

Race: A socially or politically constructed group based on perceived differences in physical characteristics.

Racism: The marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people.

Racist: prejudice against or antagonistic toward a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

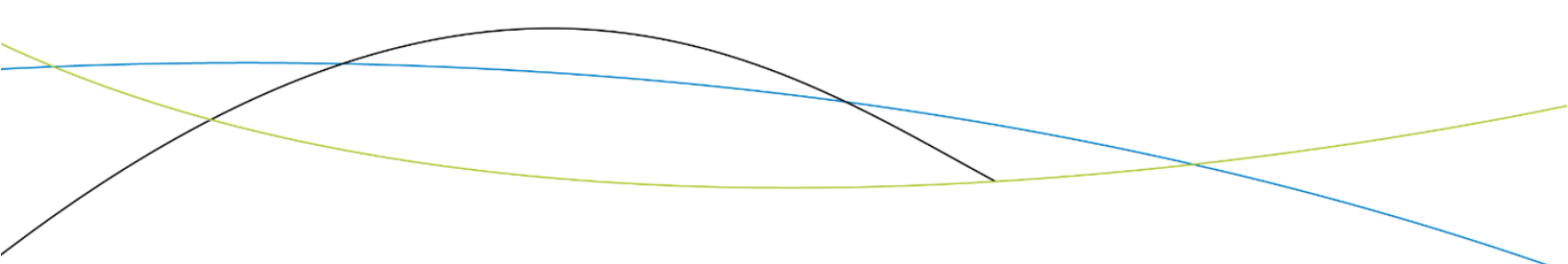
Racist Policy: any measure, in the form of written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, process, regulations, and guidelines that govern people which produce or sustain racial inequity between racial groups.

Readiness Gap: A concept describing the difference between aspirations and actions related to creation of an inclusive organization; organizations often state that inclusion and belonging is important yet few are ready to effectively address it.

Oppression: Refers to the state of being subject to unjust treatment or control.

Sexism: The cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and devalue ways of being that are associated with women.

Social Justice: A concept referring to sexual desire and preference for emotional and sexual relationships with others based on their sex/gender; often implies that sexual object choice is an essential in-born characteristic, so may be problematic to some.



Stereotype: Blanket beliefs and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or judgment. They go beyond necessary and useful generalizations in that they are typically negative, based on little information, and highly generalized.

Structural Bias-Structural bias refers to the institutional patterns and practices that confer advantage to some and disadvantage to others based on identity.

Systemic Bias- Systemic bias is the inherent tendency of a process to favor outcomes. The term is a neologism that generally refers to human systems. Something described as “systematic” uses or follows a system, while something described as “systemic” is part of, or is embedded in, the system itself.

Systemic Racism: Systems and structures that have procedures or processes that disadvantage African Americans, Indigenous people, Latinx people, and people of color. (Also known as structural racism or institutional racism).

The Only: References the experience of being the only person of a particular group in an organization or team, such as the only woman, the only person with a disability, the only Millennial, etc. The experience can result in: increased discrimination; increased anxiety and pressure; fear of making mistakes; and confirmation of negative stereotypes.

Transgender: An adjective that describes someone whose gender identity does not correspond to the gender that they were assigned at birth, also referenced as trans. Note that to describe someone as “transgendered” is incorrect.

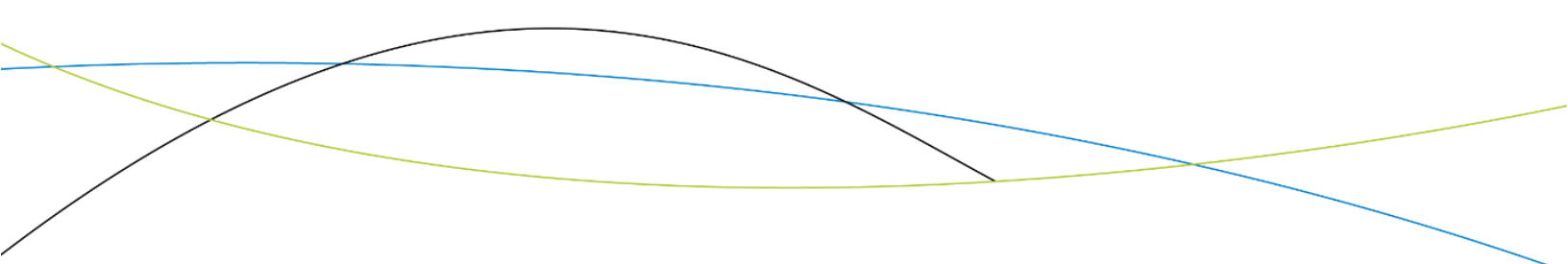
Unconscious Bias: Social stereotypes outside of a person’s conscious awareness; these influence decision-making and behavior in ways the person does not notice.

Underrepresented Groups: A group of people whose members are often disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by a dominant group.

Universal Design: the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.

White Fragility: The defensiveness, clumsiness, and anger that white people display when confronted with matters of race. It’s a state of mind that captures how little it takes to upset white people.

White Guilt: Can occur when white people learn about the systemic oppression against people of color, recognize unearned racial privilege, and acknowledged racist attitudes, resulting in a sense of responsibility for their attitudes and behavior or those of others.



White Supremacy: White supremacy is the systemic, institutionalized centering of whiteness. It refers to a multitude of characteristics that “institutionalize whiteness and Westernness as both normal and superior to other ethnic, racial, and regional identities and customs.”

Xenophobia: An unreasonable fear, distrust, or hatred of strangers, foreign peoples, or anything perceived as foreign or different.