A Cheat Sheet for Policy Makers

THE LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

SOCIAL JUSTICE
WHAT WE MEAN...

A society in which all members have basic hu-
man rights and access to opportunities and in
which common good is valued

WHICH IS...

• Inclusive of all people including those with
disabilities, the elderly, the Indigenous, those
of all economic classes, genders, LGBT, peo-
ple of all races, ethnicities, and religions
• A recognition that we have not yet achieved this
goal

DIVERSITY
WHAT WE MEAN...

We value human difference. A society and its orga-
nizations that recognize the diversity of the people
that constitute that society is stronger, healthier and more
creative

WHICH IS...

• A belief that human diversity is important and adds
value and perspective
• Access to resources and opportunities are equally
accessible to all
• People making policy decisions that affect peo-
lies’s lives are representative of those whose lives
are affected
• A recognition that we have not yet achieved these
goals

INCLUSION
WHAT WE MEAN...

Making sure that all stakeholders impacted by a de-
cision have a voice in making the decision. In regards to inclusion, people with disabilities, ensuring that
barriers are removed and access is provided including
ramps, ASL interpreters, and other supports

WHICH IS...

• Having access to any necessary data and informa-
tion
• Helping identify what to measure and how to mea-
sure it
• Having viable to support changes, identify barriers, of-
fer solutions, and make decisions without negative repercusions

EQUITY
WHAT WE MEAN...

Each of us has what we need to succeed

WHICH IS...

• An opportunity that is not equal (for example, there is a wide variation in the quality of schools) and that some people fail because they are denied opportunities that others enjoy
• An understanding that everyone in society has
when some groups of people are denied access to
opportunities
• Individuals and groups who have historically
been given economic, social and political advan-
ces that have historically been given less may need more in terms of decision-making influence and access to resources and opportunities

IMPLIED BIAS
WHAT WE MEAN...

Extensive research shows that everyone has implicit biases, which consist of subconscious ideas and stereo-
types about various social groups. These biases can be positive or negative and unintentionally lead to dis-
 crimination

WHICH IS...

• An understanding that human beings are not objec-
tive
• We develop implicit biases from messages that cir-
culate throughout society
• Implicit biases are not an indicator of morality
• We cannot prevent having implicit biases but we can minimize the impact if we are open to seeing and challenging them

BIPOC
WHAT WE MEAN...

Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color

WHICH IS...

• Evolving language to describe the wide array of ethnic
homogeneity that does and does not fully match into the cu-
cultural category “White”
• A term for people of color which names Black and
Indigenous people first to highlight that they were the origi-
nal targets of legal racial discrimination in the U.S.
• Note: this term is not used by everyone within social
justice movements

CULTURAL COMPETENCE OR RELEVANCE
WHAT WE MEAN...

The ability to understand, appreciate, accommodate and engage with people across cultures

WHICH IS...

• Understanding your own culture and how it shapes your
perspective
• Recognizing that no one shows the same culture and perspective
• Respect for and willingness to include people from oth-
er cultures
• Becoming aware and curious about the cultural perspectives and approaches of others

DISCRIMINATION
WHAT WE MEAN...

Actions, policies, laws, or practices that have the effect - even if unintentional - of preventing the equitable distri-
bution of rights, resources, and opportunities

WHICH IS...

• Actions that occur at the individual, interpersonal, col-
group, and institutional levels of society
• Actions, practices and policies that have an unequal
impact on different groups
• Not including all stakeholders in decision-making
• A failure to consider who will be impacted and how

MICRO-AGGRESSION
WHAT WE MEAN...

Frequent and often unintentional everyday slights that are subtle expressions of racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, sexism, anti-Semitism, classism, ageism, and ableism

WHICH IS...

• A comment, behavior or assumption that expresses an
underlying prejudicial attitude toward a person be-
ing to an historically marginalized group

WHITE PRIVILEGE / WHITE SUPREMACY
WHAT WE MEAN...

Power structures that place white people at the top and provide unfair advantage at the group level

WHICH IS...

• A social order no one is alive today created but that con-
tinues to support all white people overall
• An assumption that white people’s interests and per-
spectives are ideal, universal and shared by everyone

SYSTEMIC RACISM
WHAT WE MEAN...

Centuries of on-going denial of equal treatment for peo-
ple of color in housing, education, healthcare, law, wealth
building, employment, and land rights

WHICH IS...

• So foundational to the laws, policies, practices, and
norms of the U.S. that it continues today without re-
quiring deliberate action
• Independent of the personal attitudes of individuals
• A system of inequity and oppression, but a system of
rights, in the individual, societal, and institu-
tional levels

ACCOUNTABILITY
WHAT WE MEAN...

Denouncing that harm was done
• Requiring the sovereignty, practices and resources of
Indigenous peoples and their right to exist

RACIAL JUSTICE
WHAT WE MEAN...

The legacies of racial discrimination continues to impact the present. Racial justice seeks to identify how it does so and
address what is necessary to correct and repair harms done

WHICH IS...

• An understanding that we cannot address persistent
racial inequality without considering how the past
informs the present, including how encouragement and
Indigenous genocides and forced removal were founda-
tional to the establishment of the U.S. and enched in
• Recognition that belief in inherent racial differences
can justifies past legal policies was not eradicated and
continues to influence today’s laws
• An exploration of racial inequality that does not blame people for the outcomes of inherent racial
discrimination
• The rolling of history from multiple perspectives

CRITICAL RACE THEORY
WHAT WE MEAN...

A field within legal scholarship that examines the role
race plays in past and present public policy, law, and
criminal justice

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
WHAT WE MEAN...

The sustainable treatment of the environment and equita-
bile distribution of its resources

WHICH IS...

• Prioritizing preservation of the earth and the wellbe-
ing of all of its inhabitants
• Industries taking responsibility for their impact on the
environment

HATE SPEECH
WHAT WE MEAN...

Public communication that expresses hate or encourages
violence toward an individual or group based upon race,
ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, ability, or sexual
orientation

WHICH IS...

• Speech, writing, gestures, conduct, or display that inci-
dates violence or discriminatory actions against someone
based upon membership in a group

INTERSECTIONALITY
WHAT WE MEAN...

A recognition that we are all members of multiple social
groups (race, sex, age, and class) and that those groups interact in complex ways that need to be consid-
ered

WHICH IS...

• A concept that emerged from research when Black
women’s claims in Title VII discrimination suits were successful despite being excluded from employment. Because white women were employed, courts did not see gender discrimination and because Black men were employed, courts did not see racial discrimination. Not understanding intersectionality functioned in law to argue
discrimination against black women

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