You just look like you’ve got a tan.
Do you have hair under your hijab?
Do people eat insects in your country?
I just don’t see colour.
I don’t think of you as black.
Accountability
In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and goals to which they are responsible.

To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process. Accountability demands commitment.

Aliy
Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognise their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Aliyes understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.

Allies commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

Anti-black
Anti-Blackness as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalising Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socio-economic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies.

Anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism.

Anti-Muslim racism/Islamophobia
Anti-Muslim racism is the expression of systemic discrimination against Muslims and those racialised as Muslims. It is the marginalisation of these subjects in daily life through education, policing, border agencies, health, the courts, politics, and countless other areas which touch them.

With a long history, in large part steeped in discourses of Orientalism, anti-Muslim racism (alternatively called “Islamophobia”) can be seen on both the level of the personal and structural. With the personal, we can see it in physical attacks in public, disproportionate referrals to the Prevent scheme, and various prominent cases of bullying and intimidation of Muslims by individuals across the political spectrum.

These individualised accounts of anti-Muslim racism can see echoes in the structural nature of it. While the current political climate displays a more barefaced, hateful sentiment against Muslims (seeing them as the perpetual dangerous outsiders), “liberal” anti-Muslim racism has an equally long history and has shown itself through foreign expeditions (in large part justified on the grounds of Muslims needing Western salvation), wholesale criminalisation through the media, and an aggressive push towards “liberal values” which Muslims always fall short of embodying.

Despite the violent words and acts inflicted upon Muslims on a daily basis, resistance to this is very much alive. Activists across the world have mobilised to combat racist immigration policies, the far-right, mainstream politicians invested in demonising Muslims, and stand in solidarity with the oppressed and listen to them in their struggle.

Anti-racism
Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualised approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviours and impacts.

Anti-activist
An anti-activist is someone who is supporting an anti-racist policy through their actions or expressing anti-racist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequality.

Black Lives Matter
Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.


BME/BAME
BME and BAME tend to be used in a lot of British research and policy on race and diversity. BAME stands for Black and Minority Ethnic and it includes people who might face discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion, tradition and cultural practices.

BAME stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. The addition of the “A” makes sense in the UK considering that people of Asian descent make up a big chunk of the total minority ethnic population. However, as racial categories evolve, who knows which other letters will be pasted onto the acronym.

While both terms are politically correct and officially recognised, there are nonetheless imperfect acronyms.

For example, the word “minority” can be frustrating due to its connotations of weakness and powerlessness. In fact, some groups that constitute a “minority” in certain regions and countries actually constitute a majority in other regions or around the world as a whole – on a global scale, people racialised as white are actually the minority populations, but they are granted the “majority” status in Scotland.

Moreover, BME and BAME can be problematic because they focus on ethnicity as well as race. That means a white Norwegian person will be considered included in the two acronyms and so will a black Nigenian person – even though their racial experiences will obviously be very dissimilar.

Collusion
A political movement to address systemic and state violence against African Americans. Per the Black Lives Matter organisers: “In 2013, three radical Black organisers—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman. The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. [Black Lives Matter] members organise and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”


Colonisation
Colonisation can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalised after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalised inequality. The coloniser/colonised relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the coloniser at the expense of the colonised.

Ongoing and legacy colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. For example, white supremacy as a philosophy was developed largely to justify European colonial exploitation of the Global South (including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrinining cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonising and coloniser nations).
#callitracism

Critical Race Theory

The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional law.


Decolonisation

Decolonisation may be defined as the active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonised nation’s own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically and also applies to personal and societal psychic, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression.

Discrimination

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

Ethnicity

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese Asian; Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White).

Implicit Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals’ attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals’ stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behaviour that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.

Individual Racism

Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.

Examples:
- Telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of whites over other groups.
- Avoiding people of colour whom you do not know personally, but not whites whom you do not know personally (e.g., white people crossing the street to avoid a group of Latina young people, locking their doors when they see an African American family sitting on their doorstep in a city neighbourhood; or not hiring a person of colour because “something doesn’t feel right”).
- Accepting things as they are (a form of collusion).

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and disadvantages for people of colour.

Examples:
- Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as “red-lining”).
- City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of colour.

Internalised Racism

Internalised racism is the situation that occurs in a racial system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group’s power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements.

Decision-making - Due to racism, people of colour do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control their lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we may not support each other’s authority and power – especially if it is in opposition to the dominating racial group. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of colour who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.

Resources - Resources, broadly defined (e.g. money, time, etc.), are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. Internalised racism is the system in place that makes it difficult for people of colour to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving “everybody.”

Standards – With internalised racism, the standards for what is appropriate or “normal” that people of colour accept are white people’s or Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them.

Naming the problem - There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of colour and blames the disease – emotional, economic, political, etc. – on people of colour. With internalised racism, people of colour might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatised violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support.

SOURCE: Donna Bivens, Internalised Racism: A Definition (Women’s Theological Center, 1995).

Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

Examples:
- Public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias, and bigotry between individuals

Microaggression

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalised group membership.


Oppression

“The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:

“The oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others, the target groups take in and internalise the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them), genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalised, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialised to play their roles as normal and correct. Oppression = Power + Prejudice.”

SOURCE: “What Is Racism?”
White Supremacy

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Colour and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of colour as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and “undeserving.” Drawing from critical race theory, the term “white supremacy” also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

SOURCE: "What is Racism?"

Whiteness

The term white, referring to people, was created by Virginia slave owners and colonial rulers in the 17th century. It replaced terms like Christian and Englishman to distinguish European colonists from Africans and indigenous peoples. European colonial powers established whiteness as a legal concept after Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin colour and continental origin. The creation of ‘whiteness’ meant giving privileges to some, while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority. Whiteness itself refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of colour. This definition counters the dominant representation of racism in mainstream education as isolated in discrete behaviours that some individuals may or may not demonstrate, and goes beyond naming specific privileges (McIntosh, 1988). Whites are theorised as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialisation and the individual and collective consciousness formed within it. Whiteness is thus conceptualised as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e. skin colour alone). Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people.


As definitions and meanings can change over time, please use "The Anti-Racist Educator" glossary and Race Equity Tools for the latest updates.
Offensive questions, stereotypes and ‘jokes’ have a lasting impact on individuals, affecting their mental health, career progression and overall welfare at university.

It’s time to stop sweeping these microaggressions under the rug. Call racism out for what it is and challenge unacceptable behaviour.

It’s time to take a stand.

#callitracism

Call it racism | Challenge racist behaviour | Change racist structures