

KEYTERMS GLOSSARY

This is not a comprehensive list of the terms we will use in our sessions, nor are these definitions complete or fixed; they are working definitions, drawn from a variety of generally accepted sources with a J.E.D.I. lens for you to build on as you advance in your knowledge of the field.

A

ACCULTURATION

The process of balancing two cultures while adapting to the prevailing norms in society. Jews in diaspora have adapted and acculturated to host societies for thousands of years.

ACTIVISM

The policy or action of campaigning to bring about political or social change.

ALLYSHIP

An ongoing process of building relationships on mutual trust and solidarity, with the acknowledgement of difference and implicit biases.

ANTI-BIAS

A personal, emotional and intellectual practice that enables people to recognize difference and inequities, develop language to describe prejudice, and understand that discrimination and prejudice are harmful to everyone. Focuses on the actions and thoughts of individuals rather than larger systems of power.

ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

An approach meant to challenge a variety of social and communal biases.

ANTI-RACISM

A spiritual, emotional and intellectual practice that teaches people to recognize the importance of going beyond “not racist;” to doing the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for change across politics, education, and social interaction to combat racial inequality.

ANTISEMITISM

Anti Semitism is the oldest of isms rooted in certain perceptions of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. This form of hate goes back to Pharaoh. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

ASHKENAZI

A Jewish person of Central or Eastern European descent or one who has adopted the cultural and/or religious practices of this group. Ashkenazi is often mistakenly equated with caucasian or white people. One can be a Person of color and Ashkanazi.

ASHKENORMATIVITY

The practice of centering Ashekenazi people, customs, and observance as “the norm” of American Judaism, thereby creating, intentionally or not, intra-group prejudice.

B

BIRACIAL

A person who self-identifies as having parents of two different races. Some individuals use the terms “biracial,” “multiracial,” and “mixed race” interchangeably.

BELONGING

A feeling, a sense, an affinity toward a place or group of people. When one has a sense of security, support, acceptance and a part of flourishing Jewish communities that are engaged, educated, welcoming, inclusive, safe, active, healthy, caring and connected. In order for people to feel like they belong, the environment (in this case the workplace) needs to be set up to be an equitable, diverse and inclusive place.

BIPOC (BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR)

A racial category of the 21st century linking all American people of color in order to highlight each group’s relationship to American racism, whiteness and white supremacy. The term specifically names Black and Indigenous peoples because these two groups have been most impacted by White supremacy.

C

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

A method of building relationships by engaging and empowering people with a strengths-based perspective. Building relationships with the purpose of increasing the influence of people or groups historically underrepresented in community, policies and decision making that affect their lives. Community organizing is both a tactic to address specific problems and issues, and a longer-term engagement and empowerment strategy. Longer-term objectives of community organizing are to develop the internal capabilities and to increase the decision-making power and influence of underrepresented groups.

CIVIL RIGHTS

A set of human rights that guarantees equality and protection under the law, regardless of race, religion, or other protected characteristics. Historically, the “Civil Rights Movement” referred to efforts toward achieving true equality for African Americans in all facets of society, but today the term “civil rights” is also used to describe both the advancement of equality for all people and equity, or providing equal access to remedying previous harms and getting people the support they need.

CIS/CISGENDER

A person whose gender identity corresponds to their biological sex assigned at birth.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

An approach to confronting America’s history of white supremacy by acknowledging that things that happened in the past still impact us all in the present. Namely, racial power still exists in our government,

public policies, and institutions and that white supremacy is an integrated cultural phenomenon still plaguing America. Many Jews do not align with critical race theory because some CRT scholars typecast all American Jews as white, flattening the rich mosaic of what it means to be Jewish and removing the thousands of years of persecution and antisemitism.

CREED

A set of guiding beliefs, principles of faith or aims which guide the behaviors of a person.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Using traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture. The term is used negatively when a dominant culture appropriates from a group historically viewed as inferior. For example, American Jews wearing Native American clothing on the holiday of Purim.

D

DIASPORA

The dispersion of a people from their original homeland; often used to refer to the Jewish community outside of Israel; also used by many cultures and societies who view themselves as in exile.

DISCRIMINATION

The unequal treatment of a person based on their differences. Discrimination is based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, or other characteristics.

DISABILITY

Any health condition resulting in cognitive or physical impairments and activity limitations, including mental or emotional conditions that may not be visible.

DIVERSITY

The range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, abilities or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs. Diversity is intersectional. Like a letter in the Torah, we do not control how diverse humanity is, we just are. As a global people, the Jews are one of the most socially diverse groups in the world, not only through geographical origin, but on ideas, beliefs, and even how we practice Judaism. This was modeled throughout the Torah.

E

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

The systemic and structural rules, regulations, and corporate/government decisions that result in the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on communities of color.

EQUITY

A measure of fair treatment, opportunities, and outcomes across race, gender, and class, achieved when racial identity no longer predicts life outcomes. Equity is creating a culture of belonging and rectifying poor policies, behaviors, cultural norms, and communications that assume all people are the same or want the same thing. Equity is intentionally recognizing and addressing the ongoing needs of the individual, creating social norms around person centered approaches integrated into the fabric of organizational and community life. Equity is mental health, it's how we give, it is about the receiver, not the giver. Equity is Tzedakah, need based, "According to what one is lacking you shall give - וְכִי יִרְשָׁא וְרִסְחָמָהּ - לֵי (Deuteronomy 15:8)"

ETHNICITY

A social construct describing a sense of belonging with a group of common national characteristics, cultures and traditions.

ETHNIC STUDIES

The interdisciplinary study of the social constructs of race and ethnicity and the impact of social power on racial and ethnic groups.

EXILE

Forced absence from one's country or home of origin.

EMPOWERMENT

Authority and power given and instilled into ones being through the support of others. Empowerment is the ongoing effort of becoming stronger and more confident in leading a life of self-determination for individuals and communities. Those who empower others empower themselves and those who disempower others ultimately disempower themselves.

G

GENDER

A biological, social and cultural term traditionally associated with being a man or woman, as well as a self-defined identity.

GENDER IDENTITY

A personal conception of oneself as male, female, both, or neither.

GENDER EXPRESSION

The way that a person expresses their gender, typically through clothing, speech, or behavior.

H

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Patterns of discrimination that impact a person's ability to rent or buy housing based on the biases of the people controlling the housing market and specific land for sale.

HOMOGENEITY

Sameness; a lack of diversity, a state of culturally flattening people into the falsity that all people are one kind.

I

IDENTITY

The qualities, beliefs, personality, looks, and/or expressions that make a person or group different from others.

IDENTITY POLITICS

A political and social power organizing approach for groups of common interests, histories of oppression and marginalization to leverage collective power and influence social change.

IMPLICIT BIAS

Associations that all people unknowingly internalize due to upbringing in society and family of origin based on class, race, religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. Also known as unconscious or hidden bias.

INCLUSION

The intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that every individual from all backgrounds is able to fully participate in all aspects of a community or workplace. Inclusion does not mean to be welcoming but to ensure that decisions are not made on behalf of groups without the representation of those groups at the table making the decisions together. Inclusivity and loving those who are different from you is the 431st of the 613 commandments. Ahavat HaGer, Loving those who are different from you! And a biblical mandate to be One nation under God, that no person should be a god over others, and to Love your neighbor like yourself (Leviticus).

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

The ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for racial groups.

INTERNALIZED RACISM

When a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that create the dominating group's power.

INTERPERSONAL RACISM

Racism that occurs between individuals: public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias and bigotry between individuals such as calling someone a racial slur, telling racist jokes, attacking them out of racial bias, etc.

INTERRACIAL

Relationships across more than one race. E.g., an interracial family.

INTERFAITH

Relationships across more than one religion or members of different religions.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The way that one's many social and cultural identities create unique intersections, challenges and opportunities.

J

JEWISH PERSON OF COLOR (JOC)

An American term of the 21st century to describe the racial and ethnic diversity of Global Jewry. This term is used widely and without a shared understanding to identify Jews whose family origins are originally in African, Asian, or Latin-American countries, essentially non-european descent.

JUSTICE

The intention and ongoing pursuit of a moral and just society that ensures all peoples are treated fairly and adequately when met with harm and considers the persons most affected when offering restitution. A chassid, one who is righteous, works towards justice regardless of whether they will live to see the outcomes of their labor, but for the sake of all humanity.

L

LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, aromantic. The plus represents other sexual identities not specifically included in the acronym. Like other social categories around race, acronyms adapt to the decade they are being used in.

M

MICROAGGRESSION

Everyday verbal, behavior, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional based on implicit biases, that communicate and create hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward a person. Studies show repetitive microaggressions can lower one's quality of life and its longevity.

MICROASSAULT

Explicit, overt and intentional discriminatory actions by verbal or nonverbal attack against someone's identity with intention to hurt the victim. For example, "do you like watermelon because you're black?" and quickly stating afterward "oh, I was just joking."

MICROINSULT

Often characterized by subtle nonverbal or verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness and insensitivity that demean a person's heritage or identity. For an example, "you don't act Black," or "you might be gay, but you hold yourself so well."

MICROINVALIDATION

Verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person's identity. For example, "I think you might be overreacting," "well, you might be particularly sensitive to race, but they didn't mean it that way," or even giving credit to someone with greater social standing when the product was created by someone with less social standing.

MIZRACHI JEWS

A panethnic racial, and religious categorization of the descendants of Jewish communities in the Middle East, Central and South Asia, North Africa, now mostly in Israel and the United States.

MULTI-RACIAL

Of two or more races.

N

NON-BINARY

Outside of the gender binary; neither a man nor a woman.

O

OPPRESSION

People with more social power putting pressure and hardship on those with less social power. Oppression is often described as the combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that discriminates against some groups and benefits other groups. Oppression is closely connected to the "isms.

P

PRONOUNS

Preferred words to refer to people in place of names that can be gendered or non-gendered, for example he/she/they/ze.

PEOPLE OF COLOR (POC)

A mid 20th century term referring to non-white racial groups.

PREJUDICE

A pre-judgment or opinion that is formed before facts are known or disregarding facts that contradict it. Bias is closely linked to prejudice, and prejudice in action is discrimination.

PRIVILEGE

A false idea that some have the right to access the privileges of society under the law, due to position or social group memberships. Though all humans are created equal, where we live, what we believe and the color of our skin still matters in accessing those privileges.

R

RACE

A socially constructed category grouping people who share physical or social traits.

RACISM

A complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race that can be measured, and thoroughly traced back to the enslavement of Africans in North America.

REPARATIONS

The act of rectifying.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by crime and conflict. Rectifying past harms, engaging in the ritual act of Teshuva and Tikun Olam.

RACIAL, ETHNIC & RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial, ethnic and religious group. For example, "I am a African (black) American Jew who practices ashkenazi customs."

S

SOCIAL MOBILITY

The ability of individuals, families, or groups to move through a system of social hierarchy or stratification. This form of mobility offers certain privileges not otherwise possible for other groups.

STRUCTURAL RACISM

The overarching system of racial bias across institutions, organizations and communities that reinforce social hierarchies, typically putting people of color at disadvantage and solely benefiting people of European descent.

STEREOTYPE

A perception or belief held about a person or group based on generalizations.

SEPHARDI

The descendants of Jews who lived in Spain and Portugal.

SYSTEMIC RACISM

Systemic racism is the complex ways in which history, public policies, institutional practices and cultural representations interact to maintain racial hierarchy and inequitable outcomes and social disparities for individuals, institutions and communities based on race.

T

TRIBALISM

Human behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one's own group and rooted in psychological-social development.

TRANS/TRANSGENDER

An umbrella term for someone whose gender identity does not match their sex or gender assigned at birth.

TOKENISM

Making only a symbolic effort towards inclusion especially by focusing on a small number of individuals from underrepresented groups to give the appearance of equality. If one is not in a relationship with the person being invited, or if the person is invited to present solely because of their identity and not for their expertise, that is tokenization.

W

WHITE SUPREMACY

The root of American racism, Nazi Germany and global caste systems, this term is centered upon the belief that white people are superior to all other humans, on eugenics and racial purity and that the "white (aryan) race" should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-whites.

WHITENESS

The way that white people, customs, and culture operate as "normal" in American society and become the standard by which all other groups are judged.

HEBREW TERMS

Note: Many Hebrew words do not translate precisely into English. The following definitions are provided within the context of the J.E.D.I. curriculum and its objectives.

AVODAH

Means service or servitude, it is about the intent of the work. Avodah is also what the rabbis call prayer. Ayzeh He Avodah Sh'ebelev? Zu Tefillah what is avodah, service? it is the inner workings of the heart and the ongoing connection we strive for.

B'TZELEM ELOHIM

The Torah begins with Adam and Eve to show we are all from the same source. That source is human form being created in the "image of G-d."

B MITZVAH/THEY MITZVAH

Gender neutral ways to refer to the Jewish coming of age ceremony.

CHESED

More than simply "kindness," it is often translated as "loving-kindness:" giving oneself fully, with love and compassion. Unlike tzedakah which is giving based on the needs of the recipient, chesed is about enhancing and adding goodness to the world, not because of need, but because of want. Chesed is rooted in a narrative of abundance.

CHIZUK

A form of power to instill and empower continued strength in self and others.

GEMILUT HASADIM

The giving of loving kindness; the specific action taken to be kind. often colloquially translated as loving kindness, is more accurately Gamal or gomel means to wean or to ripen. Gemilut Chassadim - One who is ripe with kindness, who is ready to go to bring kindness into the world, who feels prepared to take on what comes next.

GEVURAH

Gevurah sometimes translated as strength is actually one's ability to regulate the self. Ayzeh Hu gibur, Hakovesh et Yotzro. strength, power, the ability to recognize how that power can be within us to do good and how it presents in the world to corrupt.

KEHILLAH

The collective community; the ability to come together as a part of something bigger than just ourselves.

KAVOD

Respect; being tolerant of differences and treating others the way they want to be treated. Similarly the Hebrew word Kaved, speaks to gravity and the weight of the awe that accompanies meeting with a king or dignitary.

KOL HAKAVOD

All with such honor. Job well done.

KOACH

Koach, a strength and positive disposition and posture. Koach, also sometimes translated as strength, is really about confidence and a firm sense of being. hanoten layef Koach - Who gives strength to the weary.

L'DOR V'DOR

From generation to generation; the passing down of culture and ideas, of family experiences, of moral responsibility and the upholding of righteousness and justice.

LASHON HARA

"Evil tongue:" relating to the Jewish obligation to avoid hurtful language and to be careful about the words we use to describe others and others ourselves.

MITZVAH

Colloquially defined as a good deed or commandment, Mitzvah is about creating a connection point with the self, other and the Divine.

MESORAH

The link of tradition; the strength of the chain is found in every generation's ability to link and strengthen the ties of Torah and Tradition into the generational context we find ourselves in as a Jewish people. Mesorah is our moral and spiritual mandate, what has been passed from generation to generation (see l'dor v'dor).

MOR'IN

A singular gender neutral way to say teacher.

MOR'AH

F/Singular way to say teacher.

MOR'OT

F/Plural way to say teacher.

MOR'EH

M/Singular way to say teacher.

MOR'IM

M/Plural way to say teacher.

OLAM

Often translated as world, universe or planet. Olam shared a hebrew word with Elem, which means hidden, because as revealed as the universe (olam) is, it is simultaneously hidden (elem).

SHALOM

Harmony between two differing and conflicting realities. As a greeting Shalom is hello and goodbye and often translated as peace. Shalom also shares the same Hebrew word Shalem, meaning wholeness or to make payment, i.e, to complete and make a whole transaction.

TIKUN

Repair, To correct. To improve. Tikkun also means Amendment. like a Takanah. Rectify. Tikkun is reparations (see reparations definition). Alternatively, The Kabbalist say we each have tikkunim, fixings, rectifications, and reparations that we were sent into the world to heal and fragmenting to be unified.

TZEDEK

“Justice” or “righteousness;” that is, doing the right thing.

TZEDAKAH

Usually translated in English as “charity,” but distinct from the English meaning. Tzedakah is an act of justice, understood by Jews to be a duty. Additionally Tzedkah is need based (see definition for Equity).

TESHUVA

The word Teshuvah is usually translated as repentance. Teshuvah is better translated as “return” and signifies a return to the original state. Teshuvah consists of three ingredients: regret of misdeed, decision to change, and verbal expression of one’s sins. Technically, whenever one sins, one is mandated to do Teshuvah.