

Common Definitions

(some modeled from People's Institute for Survival and Beyond)

-privilege (white privilege): unearned advantages granted to members of a group by prejudicial and powerful social, institutional, and cultural systems that allocate resources and designate value.

-racism: race prejudice + institutional power (=misuse of institutional and social power).

A system of oppression maintained by institutions and cultural "norms" that exploit, control, and oppress People of Color groups in order to maintain a position of social and material supremacy and privilege for white people, (particularly the powerful and wealthy elite.)

-oppression: prejudice + institutional power (=misuse of institutional and social power).

Historical, entrenched, adapts to maintain its hold over time. That system continues to grant power to people with certain privileges in four main areas:

- The power to make and enforce decisions
- The access to resources, broadly defined
- The ability to set and determine standards for what is considered appropriate behavior
- The ability to define reality and have other people accept it

-whiteness: being white and having white privilege. A constructed racial identity that has solidified in the U.S. over time and which has worked to maintain racist systems for access to resources and power. Having been racialized and socialized to live life as a white person in the context of US racism. This involves having learned a "white" worldview, a sense of entitlement, and internalized racial superiority over People of Color. Whiteness is a social group identity and a shared experience of people racialized white by our current racial classification system in the U.S. Being conscious of my whiteness (and where it places me in a racist system) means I claim responsibility for working to dismantle both my own learned racism and the racism that operates in society and institutions (in an anti-racist way).

white supremacy: our current of social and institutional, and cultural power and control that maintains benefits for white society, keeping whiteness at the center, and continues to oppress and otherize People of Color groups. White supremacy doesn't just mean KKK members or the conditions under historical Jim Crow law, but the current systems that continues to define and maintain supremacy for whiteness in the U.S. (and on the global level as well, through Western imperialism.)

Things White Folks Should Keep in Mind

-Race is a construct with tremendous power; it has shaped (U.S.) systems and society and our own identities and lives. (Racial categories in the U.S. have nothing to do with biology but everything to do with the creation of a hierarchical order that exploits and oppresses People of Color groups in order to privilege white people.)

-Racism is entrenched (almost) everywhere: race and racism are historically and group and individual identities. Racism is a form of physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and cultural violence that hurts People of Color and it hurts us as white people (though in different ways).

-White people have been racialized white: We as people called white have all experienced a process of socialization into our white identity, or racialization. Meaning, we've subconsciously and consciously learned messages about what it means to be a white person, and how to fulfill the roles society gives white people.

-Action: We all share a passion and a deep need to work towards racial justice. We are, in our own lives, doing some kind of action and work... We can do our work better if we are being intentionally conscious of how our white identities (whiteness) and white privilege are influencing our work and relationships.

-Better Together: We can be more effectively and intentionally anti-racist if we engage in learning about history and current issues having to do with racism, and if we engage in becoming more self-aware. We can do this better together than separated and in an individualistic way.

-Collective Liberation: Our humanity is bound up with that of People of Color, the liberation of People of Color means our liberation as well, and we have a great stake in working together to liberate our society and world from racism and other oppressions.

Additional Resources

Some Organizations:

- Undoing Racism: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond: <http://pisab.org/>
- Interaction Institute for Social Change: <http://interactioninstitute.org/workshops>

General:

- Video: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race
http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/11/jay_smooths_ted_talk_on_how_he_learned_to_stop_worrying_and_love_discussing_race.html
- Colorlines.com: a daily news site produced by a multiracial team of writers whose daily reporting and analysis serves as a leading voice on a broad range of issues including politics, immigration reform, the economy and jobs.
- Documentary: RACE the Power of an Illusion http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm
- A series on Detroit history and oppression <http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/author/bfp/>

#Occupy Reads

- Whiteness and the 99% <http://www.bringtheruckus.org/?q=node%2F146>
- Seven Occupy Wall Street Racial Justice Roadblocks
<http://www.peopleofcolororganize.com/featured/general/seven-occupy-wall-street-racial-justice-roadblocks/>
- What does healing look like to all the white people talking about unity in the occupy movement?
<http://bodiesofstory.wordpress.com/2011/10/27/what-does-healing-look-like-to-all-the-white-people-talking-about-unity-in-the-occupy-movement/>
- Occupy Wall Street's Race Problem
<http://prospect.org/article/occupy-wall-streets-race-problem#.TqdQ9RsxOOZ.facebook->
- #OccupyRacism: In Solidarity with #OccupyWallStreet
<http://www.awarela.org/2011/10/06/occupyracism-in-solidarity-with-occupywallstreet/>
- Addressing Oppression, Racism and Privilege in the Occupy Movement
http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/addressing_oppression_racism_and_privilege_in_the_occupy_movement
- Reflections on Organizing towards Collective Liberation at Occupy NOLA
<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2011/ph191011.html>
- Occupying Wall Street Together: People of Color Matter in the Movement
http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/occupying_together.html

Reads & Resources on White Privilege:

- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
<http://nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf>
- Resources from "Challenging White Supremacy"
<http://www.cswsworkshop.org/resources/WhitePrivilege.html>
- The Center for the Study of White American Culture: <http://www.euroamerican.org/>
- Book: Accountability and White Anti-racist Organizing
<http://www.amazon.com/Accountability-Anti-racist-Organizing-Bonnie-Cushing/dp/1934390321>
- Solidarity Institute (focused on White solidarity organizing): <http://www.solidarityinstitute.org/>