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EDUCATION

CORE CONCEPTS OF RACIAL EQUITY

Equity is defined as "the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair." The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.

Systematic equity is a complex combination of interrelated elements consciously designed to create, support, and sustain social justice. It is a robust system and dynamic process that reinforces and replicates equitable ideas, power, resources, strategies, conditions, habits, and outcomes.

Inclusion is the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and numerical representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.

Racial justice is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity, or the community in which they live. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond "anti-racism." It's not just about what we're against, but also what we're for. A "racial justice" framework can move us from a reactive posture to a more powerful, proactive, and even preventive approach.

Race is a socially constructed system of categorizing humans largely based on observable physical features (phenotypes) such as skin color and ancestry. There is no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.

The concept of **racism** is widely thought of as simply personal prejudice, but in fact, it is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities. At the **micro level, or individual level, of racism** are internalized and interpersonal racism. At the **macro level of racism**, we look beyond the individuals to the broader dynamics, including institutional and structural racism.

Internalized racism describes the private racial beliefs held by and within individuals. The way we absorb social messages about race and adopt them as personal beliefs, biases, and prejudices are all within the realm of internalized racism. For people of color, internalized oppression can involve believing negative messages about oneself or one's racial group. For white people, internalized privilege can involve feeling a sense of superiority and entitlement, or holding negative beliefs about people of color.

Interpersonal racism is how our private beliefs about race become public when we interact with others. When we act upon our prejudices or unconscious bias—whether intentionally, visibly, verbally, or not—we engage in interpersonal racism. Interpersonal racism also can be willful and overt, taking the form of bigotry, hate speech, or racial violence.

Institutional racism is racial inequity within institutions and systems of power, such as places of employment, government agencies, and social services. It can take the form of unfair policies and practices, discriminatory treatment, and inequitable opportunities and outcomes. A school system that concentrates people of color in the most overcrowded and under-resourced schools with the least qualified teachers compared to the educational opportunities of white students is an example of institutional racism.

Structural racism (**or structural racialization**) is the racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. Since the word "racism" often is understood as a conscious belief, "racialization" may be a better way to describe a process that does not require intentionality. Race equity expert John A. Powell writes: " 'Racialization' connotes a process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race… 'Structural racialization' is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors."

Systemic racialization describes a dynamic system that produces and replicates racial ideologies, identities, and inequities. Systemic racialization is the well-institutionalized pattern of discrimination that cuts across major political, economic, and social organizations in a society.
Public attention to racism is generally focused on the symptoms (such as a racist slur by an individual) rather than the system of racial inequality.

Like two sides of the same coin, **racial privilege** describes race-based advantages and preferential treatment based on skin color, while **racial oppression** refers to race-based disadvantages, discrimination, and exploitation based on skin color.

Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality, in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, equality aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things.

EQUALITY   vs.   EQUITY

The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014). *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide: Embracing Equity: 7 Steps to Advance and Embed Race Equity and Inclusion Within Your Organization.* Baltimore, MD: The Anni E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide/

Powell, 2008 - North Carolina Law Review - "Structural Racism: Building upon the Insights of John Calmore"