

Creating Space: How affinity groups can support volunteers and influence organizational change

National Conference on Faith-Based Service

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Term	Definition
Ally	A person (usually from a privileged identity group) who stands up against oppression, and stands for the liberation of oppressed communities. Allies support the thinking and direction given by oppressed groups rather than making decisions on behalf of the group (which would represent/reinforce the current system of power and privilege).
Bias	Prejudice; an inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgement. Often, bias is something that one has without knowing it and individuals can be socialized to have a bias.
Cisgender	Individuals whose gender identity and expression line up with their birth-assigned sex.
Discrimination	Treatment or consideration based on perceived category status rather than individual merit; partiality or prejudice. The unequal treatment of persons of various groups, often on the basis of prejudice. The practice of treating people differently on the basis of race and/or ethnicity.
Dominant/privileged group	The identity group with the most socially given power and privilege. The group that, regardless of numbers, is best represented in decision-making, and has the most opportunities.
Intersectionality	An examination of how the individual experience is impacted by multiple axes of oppression and privilege. Variables include, but are not limited to: race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, religion, ability, education, sexual orientation, sexuality, class, first language, citizenship, age.
Oppression	The long-term injustices and inequalities that a whole identity group experiences to uphold the power and privileges of another identity group. Oppression is based on a history of prejudice that has been acted out and supported through institutionalized power (including laws), beliefs/ideologies, relationships between people, and the ways that people think of themselves as better or worse than people from other identity groups.
People of Color	A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latin and Native American backgrounds; as opposed to the collective "White" for those of European ancestry.
Power	Access to resources that enhance one's chances of getting what one needs in order to lead a safe, comfortable, and productive life.
Prejudice	A set of usually negative beliefs about a social group that leads individuals to prejudge people from that group or the group in general, regardless of individual differences among members of that group. Opinion or feelings formed beforehand, without knowledge, thought, or reason – preconceived notion/opinion or feeling either favorable or unfavorable.
Privilege	A right or benefit that certain people/groups have, and others don't. Privilege usually gives people power and resources they don't recognize they have, and did not earn. The more privileges a person has, the higher their social rank, and the more they are treated with value. Privileges are held up by institutions,

	beliefs/ideologies, and relationships between people. They include things that seem to be basic rights, but when other people are denied these rights, they become privileges.
Racial Microaggressions	Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.
Racism	Any attitude, action, or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their color. Privilege + Power = Racism
Targeted/oppressed group	The identity group that experiences oppression. This group, regardless of numbers, is usually poorly represented in decision-making, and has fewer opportunities.
Tokenism	Presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for participation without ongoing dialogue and support, handpicked representatives who are expected to speak for the whole (socially oppressed) group (e.g. 'tell us how women experience this issue'). Tokenism is often used as a band aid solution to help the group improve its image (e.g. 'we're not racist, look there's a person of color on the panel.')
White Privilege	Unearned advantages that white people acquire based on their European-American descent and/or physical appearance including higher expectations, benefit of the doubt, positive stereotyping, and preferential treatment.