



Temple  
Emanu-El

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### **Color Blindness and Color Consciousness:**

**Color Blindness:** A color-blind society, in sociology, is one in which racial classification does not affect a person's opportunities. Such societies are free from differential legal or social treatment based on their race or color.

**Color Consciousness:** A theory stating that equality under the law is not enough. It rejects the concept of fundamental racial differences, but holds that physical differences such as skin color can and do negatively impact some people's life opportunities.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- Does color blindness as a practice protect people of color from discrimination? Why or why not?
- How does your race impact you? What are the benefits to naming these dynamics?
- How can implicit bias and color consciousness work together to combat racism?

### **Implicit Bias:**

**Implicit Bias:** Subconscious attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes that influence our understanding, actions, and behavior when interacting with various identities. Implicit bias lies below the surface, but may influence our behaviors.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- What are some examples of how implicit bias manifests itself in life?
- What is a time where you have encountered your own implicit bias?
- What are some ways we can interrupt our bias as a daily practice?

### **Redlining:**

An illegal practice in which a mortgage lender denies loans or an insurance provider restricts services, often because of the racial characteristics of the applicant's neighborhood. The term is named for the red marks on maps used to outline mixed-race or African-American neighborhoods. This legacy affects not only economic status but also health and wellbeing. A 2020 study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee, and the University of Richmond finds that the practices of redlining, segregation and disinvestment result in chronic disease and premature death in high-minority neighborhoods.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- How do our past legalized racist practices, even if abolished on paper, effect populations of color today?
- Even though redlining as an open practice is illegal, how can it effect people on a psychological level by activating implicit bias and internalized racism?
- How does past redlining still impact communities of color?

### **Systemic Racism:**

Derrick Johnson, president of the NAACP, calls systemic racism "systems and structures that have procedures or processes that disadvantage African Americans." Wikipedia defines the term as "the formalization of a set of institutional, historical, cultural and interpersonal practices within a society that more often than not puts one social or ethnic group in a better position to succeed, and at the same time disadvantages other groups in a consistent and constant manner that disparities develop between the groups over a period of time."

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- What systems or structures have you been a part of that might be contributing to systemic racism?
- What are ways you have benefited from the color of your skin in your life (e.g. schools attended, neighborhoods you've lived in?)

### **White Fragility:**

White fragility, also the name of an important book by Robin DiAngelo, is the discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice. While it is normal to feel upset when confronted with uncomfortable truths and perspectives, white fragility supports racism because it shifts the power dynamic in an insidious way. The conversation becomes less about what the person of color experienced, but the white person's reaction, and, in so doing, is an attempt to undercut the validity of the person of color's experience.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- Have you experienced white fragility? In what way?
- What are some tactics you can adopt to combat white fragility when you see it happening in real time?
- Before you react, ask yourself, "Are these feelings of white fragility? What would happened if I chose to continue listening and put aside my initial feelings of defensiveness?"