

Handout #6
On Behalf of Our Children
Wisconsin Council of Churches

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Stereotype	A fixed over-generalized belief about a particular group or class of people.
Prejudice	A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. A set of negative beliefs, generalized about a whole group of people.
Privilege	The dominant group has greater access or availability to resources because of particular characteristics. The dominant group's way of thinking and living is seen as the norm against which all others are compared. Life is structured around those norms for the benefit of the dominant group, e.g., airplane seats and seatbelts are standard size; school classes are taught at a predetermined level, etc.
White Privilege	A right, advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by white persons beyond the common advantage of all others; an exemption in many particular bases from certain burdens or liabilities.
Discrimination	The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people.
Racism	Individual and institutional discriminatory actions from a combination of prejudice, privilege and power. To exact racism, one must have social power/privilege to (further) marginalize an individual or a group without that social privilege/power. This then becomes a system of institutional and systemic oppression.
Social Power	Access and availability to resources which enhance one's chances of getting what one wants and influencing others. Cultural and institutional standards are defined by those with greater social power (the dominant group).
Oppression	A system that locks the social power of groups into place. The dominant group controls the institutions that govern life— education, employment, legal system, government, housing, etc.; and the cultural standards—language, holidays, beauty, values, time, etc. The result is the exploitation of one social group by another, with benefits (real or perceived) for the dominant group.

Prejudice + Power + Privilege = Oppression

Example: Racial Prejudice + Institutional Power + White Privilege = Racism