siyakhula
students

TALKING

TRANSFORMATION

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

SIYAKHULA

Siyakhula means "we grow". This transformation competencies development program aims to equip students and staff to become a more connected and enabling Higher Education community. *For more information on the Siyakhula workshops available to students and staff kindly contact: bgusha@sun.ac.za.*
Making the "invisible" visible
The purpose of this glossary is to facilitate a basic understanding of language used to describe and validate different identities and experiences.

DISCLAIMER

This is not an academic and definite grounded dictionary but rather a resource to be used as evidence for why it is important to interrogate our own language.
This pack was compiled by a group of staff and students at Stellenbosch University. The Transformation Office accepts no responsibility or liability in part or whole for misrepresentations, omissions or shortcomings. The list of terms is not exhaustive but an ongoing project; critique and new insights are welcomed to inform and influence change at Stellenbosch University.

 THIS SYMBOL IS USED TO INDICATE FURTHER READINGS, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

ALLYSHIP

An ally is not a member of a marginalized group but is aware of their privilege in comparison to that of the group and supports, respects and advocates for the rights of the marginalized group.
They are active in dismantling the system that affords them that privilege through educating members of their own privileged group, consciously seeking to take up less space and engaging in restitutive acts.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The view that individuals experience oppression in different ways and in degrees of intensity.
Cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersections of systems in society. Intersects can include race, sexuality, gender, class, disability, and ethnicity (K Crenshaw, 1989).

INTERSECTIONALITY:
Seminal article: Mapping the Margins:
Intersectionality, Identity politics and violence
against womxn of colour by Kimberle Crenshaw.

RACISM

Any attitude, action or inaction, which subordinates a person or group because of their race/color/ethnicity. Racism is the systemic mistreatment experienced by people of colour.

MODERN RACISM

Moves away from old fashioned racism as merely laws that separate and violate people of colour but refers to institutional structural power dynamics. It uses non-race related reasons to continue to exclude and is therefore a new form of racism. Examples of modern racism include condemning cultural values, avoiding contact, denying differences or helping in unhelpful ways.

MICRO-AGGRESSIONS

Micro-aggressions are brief everyday slights, insults, humiliations and degrading messages sent to people who are marginalised. They are often subtle, ambiguous and unrecognized. An example of this is excessive complementing of the achievements of a black womxn as if this is not the norm.

Microagressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation, Derald Wing Sue (2010)

OTHERING

The process of making distinctions between groups based on socially constructed differences (i.e. race, gender, nationality, physical ability, ancestry, culture, religion and sexuality). This includes any action by which an individual or group becomes mentally classified in somebody's mind as "not one of us".

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

The dominant ethos; the deep-rooted sets of norms, assumptions and values that spread through most of the environments in institutions on a daily basis (Steyn, 2000).

WHITE PRIVILEGE

Institutional and social (rather than personal) set of unearned benefits granted to white people.This includes having greater access to power, services, opportunities, and resources and therefore, giving white people greater social capital and mobility even if on an individual basis they might face economic or other hardships.

OTHERING:
A reflection on the process of establishing an anti-discrimination policy: University of the Witwatersrand, October 2015

INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

The internalisation of conscious or unconscious attitudes regarding inferiority by the targets of systemic oppression.
Although target groups cannot oppress themselves in the way they have been oppressed, they can practice internalized hate against themselves or their own oppressed communities.

STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION

Structural oppression occurs when established laws, customs, and practices systematically reflect and produce inequities. It is the ways in which history, culture, ideology, public policies and behaviours interact to maintain a hierarchy – based on race, age, religion, class, sexuality, and other group identities.

SYMBOLIC OPPRESSION

Symbolic oppression refers to symbols, whether they be statues, road signs or names of buildings that uphold and perpetuate systems of domination.

GENDER NON-BINARY

An umbrella term for gender identities that do not fit in the binary categories of man or womxn.

CISGENDER

The gender identity of a person who continues to identify with the gender they were assigned to at birth. They are the "default" position in society and as such cis-gendered people have cis privilege. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender. "Cis" is a Latin prefix that means "on the same side [as]" or "on this side [of]". The prefix "cis" is often attached to other words pertaining to gender, sex and sexuality.

QUEER

A blanket term used to refer to members of the lgbtqia+. It is commonly understood as either non-heterosexual or non-cisgender. Depending on the user, the term has either a derogatory or an affirming connotation, as many have sought to reclaim the term that was once widely used in a negative way.

QUEERPHOBIA

An umbrella term used to describe the mistreatment, antagonism, hostility, victimisation, marginalisation, and othering of queer individuals and identities.

GENDER

Socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society arbitrarily considers appropriate for men and womxn.

GENDER IDENTITY

One's internal, personal sense of being a womxn* or man, boy or girl, androgynous, or non-binary. Gender is a massive non-linear spectrum and gender identity can differ or correlate with biological sex or sex assigned at birth.

GENDER EXPRESSION

The external display of one's gender, through a combination of signifiers like dress, demeanour, social behaviour, and other factors, generally measured on scales of masculinity and femininity.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING

Displaying gender traits that are not associated with societal expectations of a particular biological sex.

INTERSEX

Someone whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now considered outdated and derogatory. Often seen by mainstream society as a problematic condition or mutation when babies or young children are identified as intersex.

TRANSGENDER

Adjective used most often as an umbrella term, and frequently abbreviated to "trans". This adjective describes a wide range of identities and experiences of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Not all trans people undergo medical transition (surgery or hormones).

A NOTE TO PHOBIA

We've been intentionally moving away from using words like "transphobic," "homophobic," and "biphobic" because
1) they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears
2) for some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and using this language is disrespectful to their experiences
3) the use of the suffix "-phobia" implies that it is the fault of the phobia is the "trans" person because they cause the fear where in fact it is the source of the hate that is the problem.

CISSEXISM*

The system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and gender expression falls outside of cis-gender binary. This system is founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders & that one's gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex.
*Rather than TRANSPHOBIA

PRONOUNS AND MISGENDERING

Linguistic tools used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples are she/her/hers, he/him/his. In English and some other languages, pronouns have been tied to gender and are a common site of misgendering (attributing an incorrect gender to someone.)

The use of; they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs is given to those who identify as Non-Binary indviduals.

"X" in womxn, humxn, Mx:
The use of "X" in "womxn" and humxn are to linguistically show that womxn are not a sub-division of men as patriarchal society states nor can the collective word for people have the suffix "man".
These two words also include the identities of queer bodies. The "X" in Mx is to remove the gendering in the words Mr, Miss, Mrs.

PATRIARCHY

A system in which men are the primary authority figures central to social organization and the central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of resources. It includes the marginalization of womxnhood, femininity, non-masculinity, non-conformity. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and maintains female submission. Patriarchy can manifest itself socially, politically, culturally, religiously and economically.

CIS-HETEROPATRIARCHY

A system of power based on the supremacy and dominance of cisgender heterosexual men through the exploitation and oppression of womxn and the LGBTQIA+ community. This includes oppressive discrimination such as binarism.

SEXISM

Discrimination based on gender and sex as well as the attitudes, stereotypes, systematic, institutional, social, and the cultural elements that promote this discrimination typically against womxn.

RAPE CULTURE

It manifests in society and institutional cultures and refers to attitudes, beliefs, laws, behaviour and practices that normalize gender discrimination, non-consensual sex and sexual violence. Behaviour commonly associated with rape culture includes gender discrimination, sexism, victim blaming, sexual objectification, trivializing rape and denial of widespread rape.

VICTIM BLAMING

The reducing act that occurs when the victim(s) of a crime or violence is held responsible — in whole or in part — for the crimes that have been committed against them. This blame can appear in the form of negative social responses from legal, medical, and mental health professionals, as well as from the media, family and community.

FEMINISM

A movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression emphasizing the importance of learning about patriarchy. Understanding the way male dominance and sexism is expressed in everyday life by creating awareness of the ways womxn and queer individuals are oppressed in everyday life.

Task Team on End Rape Culture, Stellenbosch University, April 2016.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Refers to behaviour typically experienced as offensive, by means of which sexual approaches are made within the context of a relationship of equal/unequal power or authority. It is unwanted and may be experienced as an expression of power. It creates a hostile environment that impedes the individual's capacity to learn and/or work. Sexual harassment can include verbal, non-verbal, visual, physical and quid pro quo behaviours

UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION

Any act or omission – including a policy, rule or practice – that undermines people's human dignity or has the effect of preventing them from participating as equals in any aspect of University life on the grounds of their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, HIV/Aids status, socio-economic status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, birth or any other legally recognised prohibited ground of discrimination, or a combination of more than one of these grounds.

Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment, Stellenbosch University, 2016.

DISABILITY

A social construct that identifies any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered "typical" for a human being given environments that are constructed for and by the dominant or "typical" person. This includes a range of visible and invisible disabilities like mental illness.

ABLEISM

The discrimination against people with physical, psychiatric, emotional, sensory and developmental disabilities. This includes expression of hate, stigmatization, othering and stereotyping as well as the denial of access to housing, basic public facilities and job opportunities. This includes remarks that are making light of the everyday struggles of people with disabilities.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal Design means that products, environments, programmes and services are, as far as possible, designed to be usable by all persons to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

DISABILITY:
http://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary.html.

ANTI-ISLAMISM

Hostility towards Muslim people that presents as irrational fear, prejudice, contempt, stereotyping or discrimination. It includes assumptions that Islam is incompatible to modern western liberal democracy, that Islam does not share common values with other major faiths and that Islam is an archaic religion that inherently supports terrorism.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

The adoption or use of elements of one culture by members of another culture. It could involve taking or borrowing elements from a marginalized culture, religion or people. These traditions or symbols are usually taken as accessories and hardly provide traditional and historical context to them, thus trivialising religious or cultural symbolism and practices.

TRIGGER

Something read, seen, or heard that distress someone, typically as a result of arousing feelings or memories associated with a particular traumatic experience.

Trigger Warning: a statement at the start of a piece of literature, alerting the reader or viewer to the fact that it contains potentially distressing material.

COLONISATION

The extension of a nation's power over territory beyond its borders by the establishment of settler colonies in which indigenous populations are directly ruled or displaced. Colonizing nations generally dominate the resources, labour, and markets of the colonial territory, and also impose socio-cultural, religious and linguistic structures on the conquered population. The term colonialism may also be used to refer to a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote this system.

COLONIALITY

Refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, relationships and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in "common sense", in the self-image of people, in aspirations of self, and many other aspects of our modern experience (Maldonad-Torres 2007: 243).

DECOLONISATION

The meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism and colonial institutions that maintain the oppression and exploitation of minds, bodies, and lands of people of colour. It is evident that 'decoloniality' does not refer to a singular theory, approach or discourse, but rather to a "family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the modern age" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015).

In decolonial terms, Stellenbosch University is experienced as still largely representing the position of the oppressor (e.g. Luister Video 2015). It is thus crucial that any process aimed at decolonising Stellenbosch University and the curriculum takes place through dialogue and engagement, especially with those who still suffer the impacts of coloniality that pervade contemporary practices.

Task Team on the Decolonisation of the Stellenbosch University Curriculum, 2017.

TALKING

TRANSFORMATION

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

VISIT THE TRANSFORMATION OFFICE.
ADMIN A. NEXT TO THE IT HUB. 021 808 4010.

For further engagement and for any questions, contact:
Babalwa Gusha: Programme Coordinator @ bgusha@sun.ac.za
Tel: 021 808 4010