

Intersectional Feminists of OIST Club Bylaws

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of the club

The Intersectional Feminists of OIST (IF OIST) club aims to create a safe space to talk about topics related to harassment, inequality and discrimination, especially around gender, in a vulnerable way and to accompany, lift each other up, and honor each other's experiences. Furthermore, the IF OIST club also aims to create initiatives to promote gender equality and to harness a richer and more respectful campus culture.

1.2 Values

The central values of this group are to harness a safe and empowering space that prioritizes:

1. Communication

- Choose nonviolent communication
- Listen and allow space for other to express
- Examine your and others' shortcomings compassionately

2. Solidarity

- Respect and value everyone's differences
- Nurture diversity and **intersectionality**
- Work towards building trust
- Speak up to protect the values of the group

3. Responsibility and Integrity

- Act courageously
- Practice self-awareness and introspection
- Hold yourself and others accountable
- Own your mistakes and learn from them
- Exercise shared leadership

1.3 Description of Activities

The activities of the club are not limited to what is described below. The club aims to and is open to expand its activities as much as possible considering the capacity of the club and its members.

- General club meetings
- Organization and preparation for events on March 8th (International Womens' Day)
- Interactive activities
- Talks from club members or invited speakers

2. Membership

The process of joining the club begins with contacting the club via its official email or contacting existing members directly. People interested in joining the club must attend a meeting at least once, after which they will be provided with a copy of the bylaws and invited to the communication channel formalizing their membership.

Membership of the club means being able to attend and call for meetings, vote on initiatives and changes to the bylaws, and gaining access to the IF OIST Microsoft Teams page where regular updates are posted, and a record of meetings and events organized by the club are kept.

If a member would like to exit the group, they should email the official email address requesting to be removed from the group. They will lose access to the IF OIST Microsoft Teams page and will not be able to vote on club initiatives.

Members are considered inactive after one year without attending a meeting or after leaving OIST. Inactive members will still have access to the IF OIST Microsoft Teams page but will not be able to vote on club initiatives. Inactive members become active members after attending one meeting.

3. Standards of Conduct

The club will act according to the codes and rules as stipulated below. As a horizontal feminist group, each member is responsible for regulating their own behavior and promoting the same for others.

3.1 Non-discrimination and Inclusivity

IF OIST club is an inclusive, cooperative group that aims for recognition, awareness, and respect for individuals of various backgrounds and perspectives. Inclusive behavior as defined by the club includes showing respect, value, and acceptance to each member regardless of background, race, age, religion, gender identity/expression,

physical appearance, ethnicity, nationality, sexual/romantic orientation, sexual characteristics, neurodiversity, or disability to foster a sense of mutual support. Furthermore, IF OIST aims to exercise an intersectional feminism, and it **doesn't** stand for racism, transphobia, gender binary views, sex-work shaming, or any other form of discrimination.

3.2 Health and Safety

To ensure that group interactions nurture a safe space, members are encouraged to not describe potentially triggering topics or events, unless required by the activity. In that case, a content note must be provided before the onset of any activity and/or at the beginning of the sentence. The same guideline applies to any communication within online chats or meetings. (see 4.5 for in-meeting details)

3.4 Confidentiality

Topics, experiences and reports discussed during meetings and online group chats are strictly confidential unless stated otherwise. Invasion of privacy, including taking photos without consent, is prohibited. Records such as meeting minutes containing sensitive or personal information will be anonymized before shared on the MS Teams channel and if requested explicitly during the meeting, can be kept confidential to the members of the meeting or redacted.

3.3 Communication

To ensure that we cultivate a safe space, we require members to have special consideration to the way they communicate with one another during meetings and online group chats, prioritizing respect, spirit of curiosity and open-mindedness. IF OIST encourages members to speak openly considering the following points:

- **Be assertive** — Feel empowered to set any communication or physical boundaries you need to.
- **Be respectful** — Respect the boundaries of other members. It is appropriate to challenge an idea; it's not acceptable to attack a person. Avoid aggressively pushing your own interests, products, or causes.
- **Listen first, then speak** — Give people directly affected by any issue or topic the chance to share their ideas before you jump in with your own thoughts. If you want to contribute, signal to the chair with your hand, they will make a note of it. (no need to leave the hand lifted, we might pressure speakers)
- **Keep to the topic** — Avoid deviating from the conversation to satisfy your own interest.

- **Assume best intentions** — It is easy to make a snap judgement about someone who challenges your ideas but assume that they are coming from a place of genuine curiosity and a desire for mutual improvement, unless they prove otherwise.
- **Don't offer unsolicited advice** — In a situation where you feel that you can offer advice or a solution to someone's experience, before offering input, check with the other individual to make sure they are open to one.
- **Challenge your own discussion habits** — If you are someone who typically speaks up first, try giving others a chance to speak first; if you are someone who tends to let others speak, we encourage you to challenge yourself to speak up and share your thoughts and ideas.
- **Don't speak for other people** — Speak for yourself, based on your own experiences. Don't presume to speak for others.
- **Don't perpetuate stereotypes** — Stereotypes are powerful tools of patriarchy, white supremacy and other oppressive cultural systems. Trying our best to leave them out of conversations allows us to connect more meaningfully.
- **Take responsibility for your impact, not just your intent** — If another member points out that some of your comments may not be in line with previous points, consider, acknowledge and apologize.

Note: The provided guidelines are mainly intended for official communication (including meetings and official channels described in Section 5.1.2), we expect members of the club to utilize them as a resource in any other conversations regarding or relevant to club activities outside of the official channels.

3.4 Individual Behavior

IF OIST encourages its members to prioritize the physical and emotional safety of all members, looking out for one another — which in some cases may include offering assistance if you feel in a position of being able to offer it.

The following behaviors are will not be accepted in any IF OIST meetings or channels:

- Sexism, LGBTphobia, racism, ableism, behavior or language that discriminates against a group or class of people.
- Comments on anyone else's body, unless comments are expressly invited.
- Abuse of power (including abuses related to position, wealth, race or gender).

- Sexual harassment of any kind, including unwelcome sexual attention and inappropriate physical contact.

IF OIST has a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech, harassment or threats. If your comments, in person or online, are in violation of our guidelines, we will use our best judgement to assume best intentions first and ask for clarification. If it is determined that you are not speaking or writing from a respectful place, we reserve the right to ask any member to pause conversation in accordance with Conflict Management and Resolution procedures (See Section 5).

4. Meetings and Proceedings

4.1 Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will take place once or twice a month.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

As a feminist collective, the organization of this club is horizontal, having each member able to organize and regulate themselves. This is reflected in the meeting's structure by having rotating and voluntary roles such as Chair and Secretary decided upon the start of the meeting. This gives any member a chance to explore a more active participation in the meeting without depositing sole responsibility for an extended period of time.

Present members may volunteer for either role before the start of the meeting. In the instance that multiple members volunteer for the same role, preference will be given to those who have not held the role before or have not held it recently. All members are expected to respect confidentiality of any personal information or experiences shared during the meetings.

4.2.1 The Chair

The responsibilities of the chair are as follows:

- Call to order
- Read out the following statement to start the meeting:
 - "IF OIST aims to exercise an intersectional feminism, and it **doesn't** stand for racism, transphobia, gender binary views, sex-work shaming, or any other form of discrimination. We will adhere to the communication standards outlined in the bylaws and assume everyone in the meeting has read them. We expect any personal information or experiences shared during the meeting to be kept confidential as we want this to be a safe environment for sharing."
- Introduce previously agreed upon topics for the agenda and call for additional topics from present members

- Lead and moderate discussion
- Open and conduct voting upon initiatives and disagreements among present members
- Pausing the meeting in the case of disrespectful behavior
- Utilizing the conflict resolution protocols
- Following up on conflicts

Members who volunteer for Chair are encouraged to make use of the Facilitation resources available in the club documentation.

4.2.2 The Secretary

The Secretary is selected at the beginning of each meeting by the same procedure for selecting the chair. The Secretary is responsible for keeping minutes as a record of the meeting as well as uploading the minutes onto the IF OIST MS Teams page. The responsibilities of the secretary are as follows:

- Take attendance
- Keep anonymity in minutes
 - o No names should be used in the meeting minutes, except for keeping attendance and assignment of tasks. All people referred to in the minutes should be referred to as “a member” or “an attendee” in the instance that the person is not a member. In the event any member to be distinguished in the minutes for clarity, they should be referred to with pseudonyms such as “Member A”, “Member B”, etc.
 - o No identifying information about members should be specified in the meeting minutes, including but not limited to gender, role in the OIST community (researcher, administrator, student, etc.), age, etc.
- Assign agreed upon tasks on the IF OIST MS Teams page after conclusion of the meeting
- Upload meeting minutes to the IF OIST MS Teams page

4.2.3 Administrator

The Administrator(s) are responsible for adding and removing members from official communication channels, including the Microsoft Teams page. Up to two Administrator(s) may be elected to indefinite terms, ending when they no longer wish to hold the position or when they are no longer Active Members, at which point new Administrator(s) will be elected. The responsibilities of the Administrator(s) are as follows:

- Add new members to the MS Teams page
- Remove inactive, former, or suspended members from the MS Teams page

4.3 Agenda

The basic agenda of IF OIST meetings is outlined below. Although meetings may vary in topic and nature, the following general agenda should be followed.

- Selection of chair and secretary
- Call to order by the chair
- Statement of the club values by the chair
- Introduction of every person present if any new member is joining for the first time
- Discussion of topics and activities brought into the meeting by members of the group with moderation by the Chair
- Adjournment

4.4 Safety

The club members must take precautions to ensure individual and group safety by providing notes or a description of the contents before any proposed activity. This will allow members to opt in (rather than opt out) participating. In the case that someone wishes to opt out of a conversation, it shall be made sure that this person can still be part of the meeting via alternative conversations with other group members and that they are not left alone or excluded from the meeting due to deciding to opt out. As mentioned previously, to promote a safe space, any personal details or experiences shared during discussions are expected to be kept confidential by the members.

Changes in meeting structure can be made to accommodate the members with individual needs. For example: for people with ADHD, a pause can be inserted in long meetings, so the focus is maintained. For autistic individuals, it is possible to choose rooms with less light, sounds and accept as a norm that they may attend the meeting with noise cancelling headphones.

5. Conflict Resolution Protocols

Given any rising conflict within any of the channels or meetings, all members are required to adhere to our communication and conflict management and resolution guidelines, prioritizing the respectful treatment and safety of all parties while assuming good-faith from all parties.

5.1 Standards of Conflict Management

Disagreement regarding club actions, initiatives, and formal activities occurring during meetings or through an official communication channel will be managed and resolved by group discussion and through a vote if appropriate.

During discussion, members are expected to keep in mind the group standards for conflict management, below.

- **Remind yourself of the standards of communication.** In instances of conflict, it is natural to become more defensive of your own views and less receptive to the opposing opinions, as well as to take discussion more personally if the issue is emotionally charged. Make sure to remind yourself of the standards of communication in situations of disagreement and be mindful of your actions and approach to the discussion.
- **Seek the viewpoints of others present.** Especially in instances of conflict or disagreement, many parties may not feel comfortable speaking up, especially if they do not have a strong opinion. Even in these instances, it is important to not only listen to the opinions and viewpoints of everyone present, but to seek them out. If you notice someone is not participating in discussion of a disagreement, ask them their opinion or if they have anything they want to share and encourage them to be forthcoming.
- **Admit in yourself and forgive in others differences of knowledge.** Many times, conflicts are complicated by differences in experience and knowledge about various topics. Especially in instances of disagreement, admit when you do not know something or are less familiar with an issue, and forgive this difference of knowledge in others. We will all learn from each other within the group throughout our activities and discussions.
- **Seek consensus when possible.** While some conflicts may not have solutions which satisfy everyone, members are expected to seek consensus and make appropriate compromises when possible. This does not mean taking a middle path which pleases no one, but rather to seek the points which parties agree upon and to take actions which work towards these goals.
- **Respect the decision of the group.** In instances in which it is appropriate to take a vote of present members following discussion (ie: matters concerning bylaws, official club actions), the decision of the group may not completely satisfy everyone. In these cases, members are expected to respect the majority decision and to keep in mind that their viewpoint has not been dismissed.

5.1.1 During meetings

During meetings, any member present, especially disagreeing parties, are encouraged to guide the discussion in adherence to the standards of conflict management. In the event that members present do not manage the discussion in accordance with the above standards (ie: soliciting the views of everyone present, proposing a vote when appropriate, etc.), it is the responsibility of the meeting chair to do so.

Additionally, during meetings, there may be members who are not present who should be involved in particular discussions, especially in the event they are an affected party.

In this case, it may be most appropriate to delay discussion to the following meeting and make sure all who wish to participate can be present. This should not result in the discussion being indefinitely delayed, but that the next available time for relevant parties should be scheduled at the earliest convenience.

5.1.2 Official communication channels

For disagreements arising in official communication channels, such as the Microsoft Teams page, all members, especially disagreeing parties, are encouraged to guide the discussion in adherence with the standards of conflict management.

While open discussion may take place through communication channels, it may be more suitable to hold the discussion in person, either for ease of communication of ideas or for seeking group consensus. Any member may propose to hold the discussion at the next meeting, and this should be honored unless there is a legitimate reason given discussion should continue in depth through other communication channels. In the case of holding discussions at the next meeting, it should be ensured that all interested parties can attend.

5.2 Response to disrespectful conduct

In order to create an open and safe environment for all members to discuss and work together, it is necessary to specify the response to any disrespectful conduct between members. This section refers to actions which are in violation of the bylaws, standards of communication, or are related to personal conflict between members, not for disagreements regarding club activities.

In instances of disrespectful conduct, the priority will be the safety and dignity of victims, but management of the conflict should be approached without assuming ill-intent on behalf of the offender and with understanding of differences of knowledge. Conflict management will generally follow the flow described in the *Chair's Guide for Conflict Management* below.

5.2.1 Immediate actions

To protect the dignity and wellbeing of all members, the following immediate actions will be taken in instances of disrespectful conduct in various settings.

In the event of disrespectful conduct during a meeting or through an official communication channel, members present are encouraged to address the conduct directly. In the event no present member addresses the conduct, this responsibility falls to the chair. An issue can be seen as resolved when addressed if the member in violation of the bylaws acknowledges said behavior and demonstrates intent to amend their actions.

In the event that the tone of discussion is not conducive to resolving the conflict, any member may move to pause the conversation to prevent escalation. As with ensuring the attendance of relevant parties, this should not result in the conversation being postponed indefinitely. Rather all relevant parties should agree on a time to continue the discussion and move towards resolving the conflict, either immediately following the break or at a designated later time. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that relevant parties have agreed to a time to continue the conversation, and to discuss the origin of the conflict with all relevant members individually if needed.

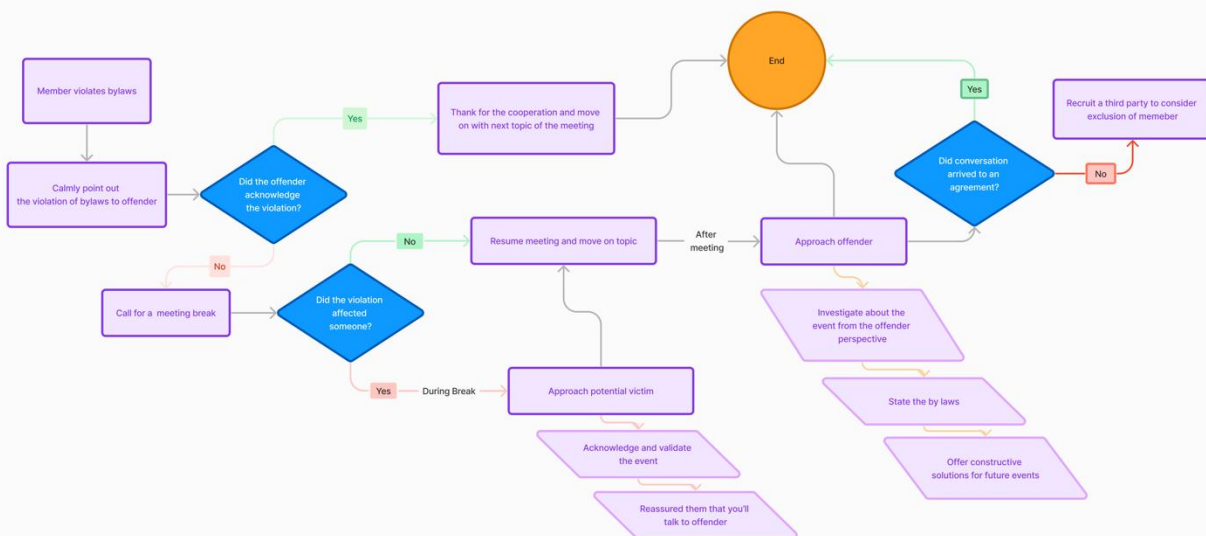
5.2.2 Third-Party Mediation

If a resolution to conflict resulting from behavior violating the bylaws cannot be reached, or if relevant parties request it for continuing discussion, a third-party mediator may be involved in the resolution process. The mediator should be agreed upon by the relevant members, and refusal of a member to meet for mediation is considered acting in bad faith and may be grounds for suspension of membership.

5.2.3 Responsibilities of the Chair

After immediate actions to protect all members, the following process for resolution of conflict between members or disrespectful conduct will be adhered to. In the event that a conflict occurs outside of a meeting (i.e.: through an official communication channel), the responsibilities fall the chair of the most recent meeting.

Chair's action guideline for conflict management



Following the actions outlined in 5.2.1-2, the chair should coordinate a meeting with individuals who have been in violation of the bylaws. The person(s) in violation should share their experience of the incident. The chair should ask what about the way the conversation was conducted caused the conflict. The chair will also explore ways to make conversations about the topic more constructive in the future – was a term not clearly defined and understood by all members? Should there have been a content warning before the discussion? The chair should explain clearly any violation of the bylaws and provide alternative language or behaviors which do not violate the bylaws and standards of communication.

5.2.4 Suspension of membership

In cases in which disrespectful behavior and violation of the bylaws is persistent, extreme, or the if the behavior of the offender rises to harassment or abuse, the member in question may have their membership suspended. This includes refusal to comply with the conflict resolution process described in the bylaws, including third-party mediation. In these instances, the member in question will be notified of the pending suspension and offered a meeting with the chair of the most recent meeting and a third-party mediator. If no resolution can be reached or the meeting is refused by the member in question, their membership will be suspended.

A suspended member cannot attend meetings, access official communication channels such as the Microsoft Teams page, and cannot vote on club initiatives. The chair of the most recent meeting should notify the Microsoft Teams Page administrator to remove the suspended member. If a suspended member wishes to have their membership reinstated, they may request a meeting with the chair of the most recent meeting, the chair of the meeting where the violation occurred, if possible, and a third-party mediator to discuss.

6. Club Organization

The club will be sectioned into two groups: 1. A IF OIST members main group through which club activities are developed open to and including all members of the club; 2. a group that serves as an organizational committee, in which matters of the group's structure can be discussed. This may include tasks such as drafting amendments to the bylaws.

Any member can and is encouraged to join the organizational committee, and inclusion happens on an opt-in basis to allow members to freely decide how involved they want to be with the group activities. This is reflected in the Microsoft Teams environment as a separate channel that everyone can access but can choose to be involved in if interested in the club's organizational matters.

Decisions regarding club actions, initiatives, formal activities or bylaws reforms will be taken through a simple voting system in which any member can call and participate.

7. Future Amendments to the Bylaws

Amendments to the bylaws can be made upon a proposal by an existing member of the club. The default month for an optional amendment period for the bylaws is August of every year, but additional amendments can be requested if necessary. Any suggested or proposed changes to the club's Bylaws shall be discussed and drafted within a one-month drafting period. The drafting period will consist of editing the bylaws. The drafting period concludes with a final meeting, that takes place at least a month after the commencement of the drafting period and will summarize the proposed changes and conclude in a vote. Active members present at the final meeting have the right to vote on the proposed changes to the bylaws. Those active members unable to be present may send their votes through email by the final meeting.

The requirement for accepting proposed amendments to the club Bylaws document is 2/3 of active members agreeing. The requirement for accepting changes to Sections 1 and 3 (considered essential to the purpose and existence of the club) is 4/5 of active members voting in favor.

8. Definitions

Ableism/disablism

Ableism is a word for unfairly favoring non-disabled people. It means that the needs of non-disabled people are prioritized, and it is assumed that the "normal" way to live is as a non-disabled person. The cause can be the belief that non-disabled people are more valuable to society than disabled people. Disablism, on the other hand, defines negative opinions, behavior or abuse against disabled people. In practice, it is disablist to treat someone differently, or choose to offend or hurt someone, because of their disability.

Disability

One legal definition of this term by the Americans with Disabilities Act, defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. This purely legal definition does not encompass the diversity in disability as the term disability can mean mental

health disabilities, chronic illnesses, intellectual disabilities, hearing and vision disabilities or others of which many are not visible and it is often impossible to discern

Discrimination

Unjust treatment of different age, gender, racial, ethnic, religious, national, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, and other categories at the individual and institutional/structural level. Discrimination is usually the behavioral manifestation of prejudice and involves negative, hostile, and injurious treatment of members of rejected groups.

Feminism

An ideology which acknowledges that the current global social structure executes a gender-based systematic discrimination that results in an unequal distribution of rights and opportunities. As a socio-political movement, Feminism aims to define, fight for, and establish the political, economic, personal, and social gender equality.

Gender

The social, psychological, cultural, and behavioral classification of humans in the bases of their experience related to sex and the assigned roles by society.

Traditional western societies saw gender as a classification of people equivalent to their sex, while more recent conceptions define it in exclusion to sex, more as an intrinsic expression of self. (see gender identity/expression).

Gender-binary

Modern-Western classification of humans in 2 opposing categories in relation to their sex and biological characteristics, specifically that of men and women. This structure inherently discriminates people who identify/express themselves with gender-expansive identities either between or outside of this binary such as genderfluid, genderqueer, non-binary or agender.

Gender identity

Personal, internal and subjective sense of self regarding gender, independent of the sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression

External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not

conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Harassment

Given that we are an OIST club, we will firstly rely on definition provided by OIST's Policy, which states that *"Harassment involves continued antisocial or unreasonable actions that violate a reasonable person's personal rights and/or dignity and cause mental suffering, and thus worsen the person's work environment or make him/her anxious about employment. Specific examples of harassment include (but are not limited to) abusive supervision or other abuses of power in an organizational or academic setting, and are not limited to actions by supervisors."* While this definition mainly addresses work environment situations, we highlight that we consider behaviors of this nature to be harassment in any environment, and even when the effect of such actions is not actively recognized by the harassed person.

Intersectionality

In feminism, intersectionality is the acknowledgment and consideration of how different forms of discrimination amplify gender-based discrimination.

Judgment

In the context of these bylaws, IF OIST Promotes using one's best judgment to assume the best intentions in other members or individuals, meaning that unless it is obvious or explicit that an individual's behavior is harmful, they are given the benefit of the doubt that potentially hurtful comments or actions were caused by a lack of knowledge, context, or sensitivity to the subject at hand. In that vein, we promote that our members avoid making snap judgments, defined as hurried or impetuous decisions or reactions to ideas that may challenge their own.

LGBTQ+phobia

Negative feelings and attitudes towards non-heterosexuality, non-cis gender and/or gender-expansive identities and expressions, through the critical and hostile behavior such as discrimination and violence.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity can be defined as a framework to understand conditions once classified as disorders or illness, such as autism and ADHD. According to this view, there is no "right" way of brain function, and conditions such as ADHD, autism and dyslexia are differences, not disabilities. This definition is not

exclusive to the diagnosis cited above as it usually includes all developmental disorders ([reference1](#), [reference2](#))

Patriarchy

Traditionally, patriarchy is defined as an autocrat social structure in which the oldest male is the leader of the family or clan, holding and controlling all power and using it their own advantage and that of other men (Cambridge dictionary). Feminist ideology describes the current global social structure as a Patriarchy, a male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered society that promotes male privilege. Patriarchal ideology bases this power distribution in un-based biological differences and/or religious beliefs aligned with its own conservation of power. This social system has created an inherent discrimination and oppression for non-males though the establishment of gender roles that range from the personal spheres of private life, and reach all the way into the social, legal, political, religious, and economic organizations.

Racism

Racism is discrimination and prejudice against people based on their race or ethnicity. Racism can be present in social actions, practices, or political systems (e.g. apartheid) that support the expression of prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices. The ideology underlying racist practices often assumes that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behavior and innate capacities and that can be ranked as inferior or superior. Racist ideology can become manifest in many aspects of social life. Associated social actions may include nativism, xenophobia, otherness, segregation, hierarchical ranking, supremacism, and related social phenomena. While much of the research and work on racism during the last half-century or so has concentrated on "white racism" in the Western world, historical accounts of race-based social practices can be found across the globe. Thus, racism can be broadly defined to encompass individual and group prejudices and acts of discrimination that result in material and cultural advantages conferred on a majority or a dominant social group. So-called "white racism" focuses on societies in which white populations are the majority or the dominant social group. In studies of these majority-white societies, the aggregate of material and cultural advantages is usually termed "white privilege". Racism is a form of prejudice that generally includes negative emotional reactions to members of a group, acceptance of negative stereotypes, and racial discrimination against individuals; in some cases, it can lead to violence.

Sex characteristics

Any traits associated with sex identity that can be separated into primary and secondary characteristics. Primary sex characteristics are directly involved in reproduction while secondary sex characteristics are features not directly concerned with reproduction, such as voice quality or facial hair.

Sexual/romantic orientation

The enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to people of the same and/or other genders, independent of sex characteristics or gender identity.

Stereotype

A standardized mental picture or belief that is held that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes can often be unfair and untrue beliefs that individuals hold generalizing about people or things with a particular characteristic.

Transphobia

Transphobia consists of negative attitudes, feelings, or actions towards transgender people or transness in general. Transphobia can include fear, aversion, hatred, violence or anger towards people who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. Examples of transphobia would be intentionally using a person's incorrect pronouns, intentionally using the deadname of a transgender person, not including transwomen and transmen in the activities of the group.