



Using an Anti-Racist Intersectional Frame at CSSP

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I. Definitions

Central to using a frame, is developing a shared language. The following breaks down individual concepts as a means to better understand what an anti-racist intersectional frame entails.

- **Anti-racism** is the active process of identifying and challenging racism, by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes to redistribute power in an equitable manner.
- **Anti-Black Racism** is any attitude behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that Black people are inferior to another racial group. Anti-Black racism is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of racism and is a function of White supremacy.
- **A racist idea** is any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way.
- **Intersectionality** is a concept and frame coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, to describe the ways in which race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identity “intersect” overlap and interact with one another, informing the way in which individuals simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives interpersonally and systemically. Intersectionality promotes the idea that aspects of our identity do not work in a silo. Intersectionality, then, provides a basis for understanding how these individual identity markers work with one another.

II. Using an anti-racist intersectional frame

CSSP uses an anti-racist intersectional frame to ensure that all our work grapples with oppression and power. The frame is a conceptual tool that we use to examine the power held by institutions and systems as well as the oppression that Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) face. The frame also provides a guiding approach for working with and in communities to create a more just and equitable society.



Operationalizing anti-racism, anti-Black racism, racist ideas, and intersectionality, the anti-racist intersectional frame recognizes all the different ways people and communities experience racism with respect to their identities. This anti-racist frame also recognizes that racism in the United States is grounded in and motivated by anti-Black racism.

The anti-racist intersectional frame:

- Recognizes the social effects of racism that omitting a racial analysis from any work allows racist systems, laws, and policies to continue operating within the status quo. The frame requires that work centers a racial analysis.
- Requires an understanding that the impact of racial oppression is not fully realized without interrogating the intersections of all forms of oppression—oppression based on SOGIE, class, immigration status, and ability. The frame requires exploration and analysis of how other forms of oppression are intertwined with and complicated by racial oppression.
- Calls out White supremacy and White privilege, understanding the historical role of the enslavement of Black people and colonization and genocide of Native and Indigenous people. The frame recognizes that historical violence has created a modern reservoir of power for White people and institutions. The frame also uses historical understandings to examine racial and ethnic groups' relationship to power given their proximity to Whiteness and White privilege.
- Centralizes an appreciation of the human experience, recognizing the importance of individuals' and communities' social, cultural, political, ecological, and spiritual identities.
- Takes a critical approach to the development of racial identity, specifically of Blackness and Whiteness. The frame recognizes that anti-Black racist ideas depict individual Black person's actions as representative of the race, while Whiteness is neutral and allowed the diversity of experience.
- Questions the motivations of traditional institutions, acknowledging institutions' role in distributing and maintaining oppression based on identity. The frame asks anti-racist work to be critical of social and political institutions and systems.
- Does not divorce issues affecting historically marginalized communities from the social, political, and material conditions in which they exist. The frame rejects pathological explanations of behaviors and outcomes because such explanations mask the role institutional structures play in affecting outcomes.

The anti-racist intersectional frame is an action-orientated frame. It critiques society's structure and its treatment of people and communities while providing a guiding approach for how to work towards a more just and equitable society. CSSP adopted this frame to strengthen our work as an anti-racist organization. This is a living document, and it is our hope that we will continue to refine this frame as staff use the frame in their work and as the thinking in the field around racial equity grows and develops.

References

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