

← Borealis Glossary Definitions



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INTRODUCTION

The following terms and shared understandings have been curated in topical order to aid in creating communal comprehension around concepts we most frequently engage in as a philanthropic intermediary working in partnership with grassroots organizers and social justice movements. The terms are also grouped based on their relationships to help us see how our work, values, and issues are interconnected.

We owe a great debt of thanks to grassroots organizers, social justice movements, and organizations that have defined these key terms.

KEY CONCEPTS TO OUR WORK

BROAD

- **Agency:** The capacity to act independently and make and impose choices on the world. People exhibit agency when they can act for themselves, even in the face of social structures that oppress them. ([Source](#))
- **Collective Liberation:** The recognition that all of our struggles are intimately connected and that we must work together to create the kind of world we know is possible. ([Source](#))
- **Community Control:** When a community—defined by geographical boundaries, culturally or otherwise—directs the institutions and businesses that affect their lives on how they will meet the community's needs. In essence, when a local community has control of issues that directly affect their lives, land, and security. ([Source](#))
- **Critical Consciousness:** The ability to recognize and analyze systems of inequity and the commitment to take action against them. Critical consciousness focuses on an in-depth understanding of the world, leading to the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions. ([Source](#))

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- **Hegemony:** Dominant ideological frameworks of knowledge and understanding that works to conceal power while upholding existing power structures and hierarchies. ([Source](#))
- **Historical Trauma:** Multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group. It is related to significant events that oppressed a particular group of people because of their status as oppressed, such as slavery, the Holocaust, forced migration, or the violent colonization of Native Americans. ([Source](#))
- **Imperialism:** A doctrine, political strategy, practice, state policy, or advocacy that extends power by territorial acquisition or by extending political and economic control outward over other areas. Imperialism often involves using military and economic power and always aims for more expansion and collective or individual domination. ([Source](#))
- **Interdependence:** The acknowledgment that our survival is bound together, that we are interconnected, and that what we do impact each other. Interdependence is the condition where two or more entities depend on each other. Interdependence is the only way out of the most pressing issues we face today. ([Source](#))
- **Intersectionality:** Refers to the concept and reality that it is not enough to take on one kind of oppression without acknowledging other types of oppression that interlock and fuel one another. Intersectionality was always about exposing how Black women are caught up in multiple systems of oppression, such as race, gender, class, and many more. It was meant to help Black women understand their experiences in a white supremacist patriarchal culture. ([Source](#))
- **Liberation Framework:** A process and practice of self-governance, accountability, responsibility, and transparency with oneself and within one's community. It requires ongoing acknowledgment of oppression in all forms and on all levels of society, reparations, meaningful reconciliation directed by those targeted by oppression, and transformational changes on personal, positional, institutional, and systemic levels of society. ([Source](#))
- **Lived Experience:** Valuing individuals' personal experiences as much as quantitative data. ([Source](#))
- **Mobilize:** To organize a group of people and resources and take collective action to pursue a particular objective. ([Source](#))
- **Oppressive Systems:** A pervasive system of supremacy and discrimination perpetuating itself through differential treatment, ideological domination, and institutional control. Oppression expresses itself through the denial and limitation of resources, agency, and dignity based on one's social identity. This includes policies, laws, and practices that are enforced in and by an institution (i.e., hospitals, governments, universities, prisons, non-profit organizations, etc.) made for the benefit of the dominant group with little to no consideration of or care for the longer term harm inflicted on marginalized individuals and groups. ([Source](#))
- **Progressive:** A social or political movement that aims to represent the interests of ordinary people through political change and the support of government actions. ([Source](#))
- **Racial Reckoning:** The mass protest response to the police-involved killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Rayshard Brooks during the spring and

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- **Radical:** Advocating for complete political and social change, often representing or supporting a political party's extreme or progressive section. ([Source](#))
- **Resistance:** A powerful way for people to fight for their rights, freedom, and justice. When people wage civil resistance, they use tactics such as strikes, boycotts, mass protests, and many other nonviolent actions to withdraw their cooperation from an oppressive system. ([Source](#))
- **Revolution:** A radical change in the established order, usually the established government and social institutions. ([Source](#))
- **Rights vs. Needs:** "Rights" are laws written to favor those in power. Using "needs" over "rights" illustrates how we're entitled to these things to access freedom, safety, self-determination, and joy.
- **Solidarity:** An awareness of shared interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies, creating a sense of unity among social groups or classes. Solidarity refers to the ties in a society that bind people together as one. ([Source](#))
- **The State:** The set of people and interests that determine a geographical area's laws, policies, and practices. Many of the people most involved in performing the state's power are those who benefit from it most directly. ([Source](#))
- **The System:** Institutions, laws, written or unwritten policies, and entrenched practices that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment and oppression of people of color.
- **White Supremacy:** A perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and people of color by white people and European countries to maintain and defend a system of wealth, power, and privilege over non-white people. ([Source](#))

SPECIFIC

- **Ageism:** The discrimination and stereotyping directed towards a specific age group, especially older people. It may be casual or systematic. ([Source](#))
- **Anti-Blackness:** Structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Black people. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies and the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of the class, race, and gender privilege that certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. ([Source](#))
- **Anti-Capitalist:** Individuals and groups who take action to shift their communities away from extractive economic models, namely capitalism, and towards economic models that honor all life. Elements include shared ownership, accountability, and resources for the many as a central value. ([Source](#))
- **Anti-Fatness/Bias:** the attitudes, behaviors, and social systems that specifically marginalize, exclude, underserve, and oppress fat bodies. Refers both to individual bigoted beliefs as well as institutional policies designed to marginalize fat people. ([Source](#))

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rules of others. ([Source](#))

- **Bodily Sovereignty:** The concept that each person has the right to complete control of their body. It counteracts the culturally-promoted idea that one's body is anyone else's business. This works on many levels: food, clothing, sexual activity, tattoos, piercing, etc. ([Source](#))
- **Capitalism:** An economic system in which products are produced and distributed for profit using privately-owned capital goods and wage labor. Capitalism reflects a particular ideology that celebrates individual wealth and accumulation at the lowest cost to the investor, with little regard for societal costs and exploitation. ([Source](#))
- **Classism:** The systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability—resulting in differential treatment—based on social class. ([Source](#))
- **Colonization:** Some form of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as a geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. ([Source](#))
- **Decolonization:** The active resistance against colonial powers and the shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, and psychic independence and power that originate from a colonized nation's own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically and applies to the personal and societal psychic, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression. ([Source](#))
- **Fascism:** Right-wing, fiercely nationalist, subjectivist in philosophy, and totalitarian in practice. It is an extreme reactionary form of a capitalist government. ([Source](#))
- **Fatphobia:** The irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against fat bodies. ([Source](#))
- **Feminisms**
 - **Abolition Feminism:** Takes an intersectional and structural approach to analyzing and dismantling systems of oppression and understanding that the state's criminal legal system works as it was designed to maintain a racist, patriarchal, and capitalist order of social control through violence. Abolition feminism contends that interpersonal and structural violence must be addressed by combining critical analysis with praxis for social transformation rather than punishment for social control. ([Source](#))
 - **Black Feminism (s):** An ideology or belief system that explains how power and systems of oppression are both interconnected and systemic and provides us with a blueprint for our individual and collective liberation. ([Source](#))
 - **Black Queer Feminism:** Political praxis (practice and theory) based on Black feminist and LGBTQ traditions and knowledge, through which people and groups see to bring their whole selves into dismantling all systems of oppression, creating alternatives to self-governance and self-determination, and prioritizing problems and methods that center historically marginalized people and communities. The Black Queer Feminist lens calls for us to be individuals and to work collectively, with neither being at the expense of the other. ([Source](#))
 - **Carceral Feminism:** An approach that sees increased policing, prosecution, and imprisonment as the primary solution to violence against women. This stance does not acknowledge that police are often purveyors of violence and that prisons are always sites

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- **White Feminism:** A diverse array of activist movements which all share the common goal of challenging traditional sexism (i.e., the assumption that femaleness/femininity is inferior to, or less legitimate than, maleness/masculinity). Focuses on traditional sexism, and white women's rights without considering other identity-based discrimination faced by non-white cisgender women. ([Source](#))
 - **Intersectional Feminism:** Recognizes how different aspects of a person's identity might interact to change the way they experience the world and the barriers they might face—and urges us to view the world outside of our own experience to understand better how different forms of marginalization can deepen and amplify each other to create unique vulnerabilities, which cannot be addressed through one-size-fits-all solutions. ([Source](#))
 - **Liberal Feminism:** Includes most mainstream expressions of feminism, typically focused on reforming laws and customs to ensure that women have equal rights in society.
- **Systems**
 - **Carceral:** Includes prisons, border regimes, secret security services, militaries, and the industries that supply and profit from them. The term 'carceral' describes these institutions because incarcerating people – restricting their movement and segregating them from the rest of society – is central to their operations. ([Source](#))
 - **Child Welfare:** Exists to fulfill society's collective commitment to protecting children when they become victims of severe abuse. ([Source](#))
 - **Jail:** Local facilities under the jurisdiction of a city, county, or other local districts where the people detained have recently been arrested, are awaiting trial or sentencing, or have been sentenced for a shorter time. ([Source](#))
 - **Juvenile Justice:** A collection of state and local court-based systems whose purpose is to respond to young people who come into contact with law enforcement and are accused of breaking the law. ([Source](#))
 - **Police/ing:** A social relationship comprised of a set of practices empowered by the state to enforce the law and social control through force. ([Source](#))
 - **Prison:** Facilities under state or federal jurisdiction where people serve longer sentences after being found guilty of violating a state or federal law. ([Source](#))
 - **Psychiatric Hospitals/Mental Health Units/Behavioral Health Units:** Function to contain and surveil people, remove their locus of control, isolate them from their communities, and limit their freedom. ([Source](#))
 - **Justice:** The establishment or determination of rights according to rules of law and standards of equity. ([Source](#))
 - **Birth Justice:** Analysis of interlocking oppressions, marginalizations, and actions on how they influence birth experiences and outcomes. ([Source](#))
 - **Disability Justice:** A movement that originated in response to the many marginalized groups often excluded from disability rights-focused work. It centers on the needs and experiences of disabled people who are part of historically oppressed groups, including disabled people of color, immigrants, and LGBTQIA disabled people. ([Source](#)) The Disability Justice framework includes 10 principles: intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, anti-capitalist politic, commitment to cross-movement organizing, recognizing wholeness, sustainability, commitment to cross-disability solidarity, interdependence, collective access, collective liberation. ([Source](#))
 - **Economic Justice:** The reconstruction of the economy to ensure all communities have collective ownership, not merely access. ([Source](#)) The work to break down the

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remaking the current U.S. political system to create a real democracy where all people and all marginalized people can effectively exercise full political power. ([Source](#))

- **Environmental Justice:** Reparations to support Black and indigenous folks in restoring their communities' land, water, and air. The prioritization of civil and human rights, health, and environmental protection. Black and indigenous communities have been the most heavily impacted by climate and environmental injustices and hold the knowledge and solutions to address these injustices. ([Source](#))
- **Gender Justice:** A world where everyone can thrive regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. ([Source](#))
- **Healing Justice:** A political strategy seeking to transform generational trauma from systemic oppression, colonization, and slavery—including the exploitation, experimentation, and harmful abuses of the Medical Industrial Complex and Prison Industrial Complex—by regenerating our cultural, spiritual, physical, emotional, psychic and environmental practices and traditions as integral to our political liberation. ([Source](#))
- **Language Justice:** The right everyone has to communicate in the language in which they feel most comfortable. ([Source](#))
- **Maternal Justice:** A model of culturally sensitive care that aims to dismantle inequities in maternity care and maximize maternal health and well-being. It rests on human rights and requires us to chip away at racism entrenched in health systems. ([Source](#))
- **Migrant Justice:** Organizing farmworkers to address their challenges and bringing about systemic change to improve and advance their fundamental human rights. ([Source](#))
- **Transformative Justice:** A political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence and reducing harm. Transformative justice can be thought of as a way of “making things right,” getting into the “right relation,” or creating justice together. ([Source](#))
- **Racial Justice:** The systematic treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or goes beyond “anti-racism.” It’s not just the absence of discrimination but also the presence of deliberate systems and support to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. ([Source](#))
- **Reproductive Justice:** The human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities. ([Source](#))
- **Restorative Justice:** A response to wrongdoing that prioritizes repairing harm and recognizes that maintaining positive relationships with others is a core human need. It seeks to address the root causes of crime and to transform unjust systems and structures. ([Source](#))
- **Social Justice:** A broad term for action intended to create genuine equality, fairness, and respect among people. ([Source](#))

- **Left:** Refers to liberal or radical political parties and their supporters. Left-wing politics supports social equality and egalitarianism and gives importance to ideas such as freedom, rights, progress, and reform. It considers social welfare as the most important goal of government. ([Source](#))

- **Liberalism:** A political philosophy and a set of political institutions and norms that arose around the end of the seventeenth century. It initially became dominant in the West and then globally after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its watchwords include liberty, individual rights, equality of opportunity, tolerance, the rule of law, and checks and balances in government. ([Source](#))

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- **Mutual Aid:** Mutual aid is collective coordination to meet each other's needs, usually from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them. Mutual aid projects mobilize people, expand solidarity, and build movements, and are participatory, solving problems through collective action rather than waiting for saviors. ([Source](#))
- **Neoliberalism:** Emphasizes reductions in government spending on social welfare, privatizing public services, and the deregulation of labor standards, environmental standards, and financial. Proponents claim that neoliberalism promotes freedom by limiting the state's power and allowing global free movement. In reality, the neoliberal era has been marked by an intensification of repressive state power, used to pacify communities and sectors that resist neoliberal reforms and by borders that provide easy movement for business and the wealthy while severely limiting the movement of labor. ([Source](#))
- **Patriarchy:** A form of social stratification and power relationships in society that favors men—mainly cisgender white men—and grants them more rights and privileges over women and oppresses women's social, political, financial, sexual, and human rights. ([Source](#))
- **Racialization:** When groups come to be designated as part of a particular "race" and, on that basis, are subject to differential and unequal treatment; in short, the process of manufacturing and utilizing the notion of race in any capacity. ([Source](#))
- **Reproductive Health:** The direct servicing of an individual's reproductive needs by a medical professional. ([Source](#))
- **Reproductive Rights:** The individual legal rights to reproductive health care services. ([Source](#))
- **Respectability Politics:** Refers to how people attempting to make social change present their demands in a way that is acceptable to the dominant standards in their society. ([Source](#))
- **Right:** Refers to a conservative or reactionary political party and its members. Right-wing politics usually oppose extensive political reform. ([Source](#))
- **Sexism:** Involves imposing a limited or false notion of masculinity and femininity on people with the belief that a person of one sex is intrinsically superior to a person of the other. ([Source](#))
- **Self-Determination:** The process of one's freedom to live as one chooses and to have the ability to control one's destiny without consultation and interference by anyone else or anything else. ([Source](#))
- **White-Supremacist Vigilantism:** Extra-legal actions taken by white people to militantly protect white privilege and maintain the power and control of white-supremacist interests of capital and premature death of Black, Indigenous, and brown people. ([Source](#))

ABOLITION

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- **Bail:** A judicially set amount of money to release someone who is charged with a crime while they await trial. Conditions of bail/release may be imposed, such as an order to not contact someone, avoid a location, not get re-arrested, or not leave the state. ([Source](#)) The use of bail exacerbates existing racial and economic inequities, coerces guilty pleas, and makes it more difficult for folks to return home to their communities and loved ones.
- **Bail Bond:** An agreement to pay the court if an individual fails to meet the terms of conditional release from jail. When an individual is financially unable to post their own bail, they might enter an agreement with a bail bondsman to act as a surety by providing money to the court for the person's bail, and promising the individual will appear in court. ([Source](#))
- **Carceral System:** An extensive interconnecting network of public and private institutions and structures designed for imprisonment, policing, and surveillance based on policies and practices relying on punishment, social control, and criminalization. The carceral system includes prisons and jails; immigrant and juvenile detention centers; the courts; probation and parole programs; law enforcement, including immigration enforcement agencies; and other types of incarceration (e.g., e-carceration; confinement in schools, hospitals, and homes). ([Source](#))
- **Crime:** An act or instance considered to be against the morals or laws of society. What is regarded as a crime changes across time and space, sometimes very quickly. Those changes often happen because political forces manipulate public fears instead of responding to the issue. Actions become crimes only after we culturally and legally define them as crimes. Everything that is criminalized isn't harmful, and everything harmful isn't criminalized. ([Source](#))
- **Criminalization:** The process through which actions become illegal and people become labeled "criminal." Entire groups of people and communities are criminalized when targeted by police. ([Source](#))
- **Defund the Police:** The movement to shift money away from police budgets towards life-affirming resources and practices that keep communities safe, like access to affordable and safe housing, access to healthy food, quality, and free education, living wage jobs, and transportation. This approach pushes back against the narrative that safety necessitates policing and punishment. ([Source](#))
- **Deportation:** This occurs when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) orders that an individual who has migrated to the United States be removed from the United States, typically after violating immigration or criminal laws. ([Source](#))
- **E-Carceration:** The use of technology to deprive people of their liberty. Electronic monitors combined with house arrest represent the most prominent and likely punitive form of E-Carceration. ([Source](#))
- **Harm Reduction:** A set of practical strategies and ideas to reduce the negative consequences of drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in and respect for the rights of people who use drugs. ([Source](#))
- **Incarceration:** Refers to the state of being in prison or jail. Incarceration was invented to isolate those who have committed a crime; however, confinement is not an appropriate response to crimes or harm since it doesn't result in rehabilitation or accountability and is a catch-all solution for specific problems with specific systemic roots. Incarceration also negatively impacts people on both sides of prison, jail, and detention center walls. Many people in

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([Source](#))

- **Mass Incarceration:** Refers to the reality that the United States criminalizes and incarcerates more of its people than any other country in the history of the world and inflicts enormous harm primarily on the most vulnerable among us: poor Black people. It's also referred to as a network of policing, prosecution, incarceration, surveillance, debt, and social control that is rooted in, builds upon, and reproduces economic and racial inequality and oppression. ([Source](#)) *(Note some orgainizarrs are starting to move away from using the phrase "mass incarceration" because it suggest that there is a right amount of incarceration.)*
- **Invest/Divest Framework:** A demand for investments in the education, health, and safety of Black people instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging, and harming of Black people. Investments in Black communities, determined by Black communities, and divestment from exploitative forces, including prisons, fossil fuels, police, surveillance, and exploitative corporations. ([Source](#))
- **Militarization:** The practice of federal programs providing police departments with surplus military equipment and firepower that is often far beyond what is necessary for their jobs. ([Source](#)) Describes becoming like the military or using military equipment or strategies. Militarization also links the military and local agencies, like the police. The military teaches these agencies to "solve problems" by capturing people and using force. ([Source](#))
- **Policing:** A social relationship comprised of a set of practices empowered by the state to enforce the law and social control through force. Reinforcing the oppressive social and economic relationships central to the U.S. throughout its history, the roots of policing in the United States are closely linked to the capture of people escaping slavery, the enforcement of Black Codes, and the administration of society's compliance with racial capitalism. ([Source](#))
- **Political Prisoner:** Someone imprisoned because they have opposed, criticized, or participated in activities that oppose or are in direct contradiction to the established government's exertion of power and control over land and people. ([Source](#))
- **Pretrial:** The pretrial period starts at the moment when someone is arrested and continues until their case ends (either because it is dismissed, or they plead or are found "guilty" or "not guilty"). ([Source](#))
- **Prison Industrial Complex:** A term to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems. ([Source](#))
- **Public Safety:** The function of governments that ensures the protection of citizens, persons in their territory, organizations, and institutions against threats to their well-being – and to the prosperity of their communities. This term is often used by judges, prosecutors, policymakers, and the media. Usually, the "public" they refer to is white, middle- and upper-class, able-bodied, and otherwise privileged. This particular community is whom the police and prison industrial complex was created to protect. Judicial determinations of "public safety" risk tend to be loaded with racialized and biased assumptions. ([Source](#))

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- **Reform:** A liberal political leaning that maintains the current oppressive system by insisting the system is broken and needs to be fixed. But when an institution is historically rooted in oppression and is designed to maintain powerlessness and inequity, making that system work better will increase its ability to inflict harm and violence. If the job of a system is racialized social control, then fixing it to do its job better will improve how it carries out racialized social control. The system must be completely uprooted and dismantled to end its oppressive power over our lives. ([Source](#))
- **School-to-Prison Pipeline:** A national trend in which various K-12 policies and practices, directly and indirectly, push students – particularly students of color – out of school and into juvenile detention, prison, and the criminal justice system. ([Source](#))
- **School-to-Deportation Pipeline:** Part of a more significant trend within the school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately harms Black and Brown youth. Immigrants, undocumented students, and youth of color are pushed out of school and into the criminal justice system, detention, and potentially deportation proceedings due to harsh discipline policies and practices, school policing, and heightened surveillance. It is another aspect of over-policing communities of color. ([Source](#))
- **Stop and Frisk:** A policy that allows police officers to stop, interrogate, and search citizens on the sole basis of “reasonable suspicion.” Overwhelming evidence suggests that the policy is used as a method of racially profiling and harassing Black and Latine citizens. ([Source](#))
- **Surveillance:** The observation of people, places, and property. Carceral systems practice surveillance. ([Source](#))
- **Violence**
 - **Gender-Based Violence:** Perpetuates gender hierarchies, inequities, and binaries in our society. This includes, but is not limited to, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and rape. ([Source](#))
 - **Interpersonal/Community Violence:** Involves the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals. Interpersonal violence may be physical, sexual, or psychological (also called emotional violence) and may involve deprivation and neglect. Acts of interpersonal violence can be further divided into family or partner violence and community violence. ([Source](#))
 - **Intimate Violence:** Refers to the continuum of personal forms of violence that people experience throughout their lives, such as child sexual abuse, sexual violence, domestic violence, family violence, relationship abuse, dating violence, elder abuse, and other forms of gendered violence. ([Source](#))
 - **Patriarchal Violence**
 - An interconnected system of institutions, practices, policies, beliefs, and behaviors that harm, undervalue and terrorize girls, women, femme, intersex, gender non-conforming, LGBTQ, and other gender-based oppressed people in our communities.
 - The widespread, normalized epidemic is based on the domination, control, and colonizing of bodies, genders, and sexualities in every community globally.
 - A global power structure that manifests at the systematic, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels. It is rooted in interlocking systems of oppression. ([Source](#))

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- **Police Violence:** Refers to various human rights violations by police. This might include beatings, racial abuse, unlawful killings, torture, or indiscriminate use of riot control agents at protests. ([Source](#))
- **Racialized Violence:** Overt forms of violence, including but not limited to widespread police brutality against BIPOC communities.
- **Religious/Spiritual Violence:** Violence motivated by, or in reaction to, religious precepts, texts, or the doctrines of a target or an attacker.
- **State-Sanctioned Violence:** Connects structural (macro) violence with interpersonal (micro) forms of violence, state or otherwise, that originate in broader social structures. In this sense, violence is not always an “event” but rather a process or ongoing social condition embedded in our everyday lives. State violence takes physical and structural (non-physical) forms and manifests in racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized forms. ([Source](#))
- **Child Sexual Assault:** When a perpetrator intentionally harms a minor physically, psychologically, sexually, or by acts of neglect, the crime is known as child abuse. ([Source](#))
- **War on Drugs:** A series of campaigns and policies formally introduced in the Nixon administration as a direct response to Black Power and civil rights movements that ostensibly sought to reduce the use of certain substances through criminalization and resulted in the hyperincarceration of Black and brown people in the United States. These policies warped all facets of community life, including schools, housing, healthcare, support-seeking, families, and neighborhoods. ([Source](#))

BLACK LIBERATION

- **Black Liberation:** An expression, political movement, and affirmation that tangibly addresses the material, social, and political conditions of Black people worldwide. A world in which we have abolished the systems that marginalize, criminalize, imprison, and kill Black people.
- **Black Lives Matter:** A political movement to address systemic and state violence against African Americans/Black people. ([Source](#))

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- **Black Radical Tradition:** The continuing development of a collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality. ([Source](#))
- **Colorism:** Discrimination based on skin color often privileges lighter-skinned people within a racial group, positioning people with darker complexions at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. This exemplifies how white supremacy can operate amongst a single racial or ethnic group member. ([Source](#))
- **Misogynoir:** How anti-Black and misogynistic representation shape broader ideas about Black women, particularly in visual culture and digital spaces. ([Source](#))
- **Racial Capitalism:** Challenges the Marxist idea that capitalism was a revolutionary negation of feudalism. Instead, capitalism emerged within the feudal order and flowered in the cultural soil of a Western civilization already thoroughly infused with racialism. Capitalism and racism, in other words, did not break from the old order but instead evolved from it to produce a modern world system of “racial capitalism” dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide. ([Source](#))
- **Racial Profiling:** The discriminatory practice by police of targeting people of color for suspicion of crime without evidence of criminal activity based on their perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. ([Source](#))
- **Reparations:** A process of repairing, healing, and restoring people injured because of their group identity and violating their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions, and families. Those groups that have been injured have the right to obtain from the government, corporation, institution, or family responsible for the injuries that are needed to repair and heal themselves. In addition to being a demand for justice, it is a principle of international human rights law. ([Source](#))
 - **Media Reparations:** A way for media institutions and the government to repair the harms caused by adopting policies that have materially, physically, and spiritually subjugated Black people in the United States. The white-dominant press has used the power of racist narratives to subjugate, punish and control Black people and perpetuate white supremacy – both intentionally and unintentionally. Controlling the narrative is about maintaining power. And that power has been wielded against Black and other Indigenous and colonized people to launch disinformation media campaigns from colonial times to the present. ([Source](#))

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- **Civic Engagement:** The act of working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. Promoting a community's quality of life through political and non-political processes. ([Source](#))
- **Civic Participation:** Participating in your community to develop it with the help of your knowledge, skills, and values, to make a difference in your society. ([Source](#))
- **Democracy:** A government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all citizens, directly or through their freely elected representatives. ([Source](#))
- **Disenfranchisement:** Refers to the state of being deprived of a right or privilege.
 - **Felony Disenfranchisement:** The denial of voting rights based on a felony conviction. ([Source](#)) Felony disenfranchisement laws are enduring reminders of how state government creates and maintains a two-tiered level of citizenship. These laws produce stark racial disparities (disproportionately Black and brown communities) that influence who can participate and the outcomes of federal and state elections and dilute communities' voting power. ([Source](#))
- **Disinformation:** False or misleading content purposefully created to deceive and cause harm. Disinformation is typically motivated by three factors: political power or influence, profit, or the desire to sow chaos and confusion. ([Source](#))
- **Gerrymandering:** Refers to contorted political districts, but gerrymandering has specific legal and policy meanings in redistricting. ([Source](#))
 - **Racial Gerrymandering:** Prohibits racially segregated political districts. ([Source](#))
 - **Partisan Gerrymandering:** Seeks to arrange electoral districts in such a way as to benefit the political party and their candidates running for office in control of drawing the map. ([Source](#))
- **Malinformation:** Information based on reality but used to inflict harm on a person, organization, or country. ([Source](#))
- **Misinformation:** Content that is false, misleading, or taken out of context without intent to deceive. ([Source](#))
- **Redistricting:** The redrawing of election boundary lines for political, administrative, or other public bodies that elect their membership by the district. ([Source](#))
- **Voter Disenfranchisement:** The practice of preventing citizens from expressing their 15th amendment right to vote. Techniques of disenfranchisement have been practiced throughout American history, with poll taxes, literacy tests, felon disenfranchisement, and other means of stripping people of their franchise. These efforts were primarily directed at Black Americans and were an essential pillar of the system of segregation (also known as Jim Crow) in the South. ([Source](#)) Voter disenfranchisement remains present today, ranging from new limits on assistance for voters with disabilities or language-access needs to the criminalization of election administrators who encourage mail voting.

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- **Voter Purge:** An often flawed process of cleaning up voter rolls by deleting names from registration lists. ([Source](#))
- **Voter Suppression:** All activities that seek to curb voting, including to barriers in front of the ballot box, imposing strict voter ID laws, cutting voting times, restricting registration, and purging voter rolls. ([Source](#))

DISABILITY JUSTICE

- **Able-Bodied:** Used to describe someone who does not identify as having a disability. ([Source](#))
- **Access/Accessibility:** Ensuring all products, services, and environments are entirely usable and available in order for all to participate. ([Source](#))
- **Ableism/Ableist:** The system of oppression that disadvantages people with disabilities and advantages people who do not currently have disabilities. Like other forms of oppression, it functions on individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Ableism is not solely about the experiences of people with disabilities as targets of discrimination but rather about the interaction of institutional structures/practices, cultural norms, and individual beliefs and behaviors that together function to maintain the status quo and exclude people with disabilities from many areas of society. ([Source](#))
- **Bodymind:** A term used to challenge the idea that the body and mind are experienced separately. The term body-mind insists on the relationship of the mind and body as intertwined so that the notion of a physical versus mental process cannot be separated. ([Source](#))
- **Care Work:** A survival strategy and practice to give and receive necessary care and support for all people. ([Source](#))
- **Chronic Illness/Disease:** Defined broadly as health conditions that last one year or more, require ongoing medical attention, limit activities of daily living, or both. ([Source](#))
- **Disability/Disabled:** A person with a physical or mental impairment substantially limiting one or more major life activities. However, this definition doesn't offer a complete picture of disability and the various ways of experiencing oppression imposed by the systems and structures designed for and by able-bodied people. It's essential to recognize the diversity of disabilities. Disabilities can be visible or invisible, something a person is born with or acquired at any point in life. ([Source](#))

← Borealis Glossary Definitions

- **Health:** Affirms and supports life, allowing us all to live in harmony and dignity with ourselves, one another, and the planet. ([Source](#))
- **Medical Industrial Complex:** Comprised of interlocking institutions like big pharma, multi-billion dollar health insurance corporations, medical technology companies, and governmental regulatory bodies like the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that play a profoundly overlooked role in degrading national and global health, enabling climate change, and perpetuating racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism. ([Source](#))
- **Medicalization/Pathologization:** Refers to ways health and social service fields and society more broadly have, over time, developed an analysis and response to social issues and non-normative ways of being as individualized problems that should be researched, diagnosed, treated, cured, or controlled. This often strips people of autonomy and exposes them to violation, coercion, surveillance, and trauma. ([Source](#))
- **Neurodivergent/Neurodiversity:** A viewpoint that differences in nervous system function related to learning, thinking, communicating, and controlling physical movement are normal rather than deficits can benefit all people. ([Source](#))
- **Person-First Language (PFL):** A way of describing disability involves putting the word person or people before the word disability or the name of a disability rather than placing the disability first and using it as an adjective. This practice centers the person rather than defining people by their disabilities. ([Source](#)) (*Note when interviewing members of the disability community ask which type of language they prefer.*)
- **Sizeism:** Mistreatment or discrimination against people based on their perceived (or self-perceived) body size or shape. ([Source](#))

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

- **Bias:** A is a preference in favor of or against a person, group of people, or thing. These initial human reactions, which are often unconscious, are rooted in inaccurate information or reason and are potentially harmful. ([Source](#))
 - **Unconscious/Implicit Bias:** These are biases that are subtly expressed. We don't initially detect or intend implicit biases, but they can become more apparent with tools and careful self-introspection. ([Source](#))
 - **Conscious/Explicit Bias:** Biases that you are consciously aware of and admit to yourself and potentially others. ([Source](#))
- **BIPOC:** Acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, meant to unite all people of color in the work for liberation while intentionally acknowledging that not all people of color face the same levels of injustice. ([Source](#))

← Borealis Glossary Definitions

to groups that have settled, occupied, or colonized the area more recently. This can refer to groups traditionally termed Native Americans (American Indians), Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians in the United States. ([Source](#))

- **People of Color:** A person who is not white. This can include but is not limited to, people who identify as Black, Asian, Latinx/e, Pacific Islander, Indigenous/Native American, African, Middle Eastern, etc. ([Source](#))

- **Colorblind:** Asserts that ending discrimination merely requires treating individuals equally, regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity. By overlooking the cumulative and enduring ways in which race unequally shapes life chances and opportunities for people from different groups, color blindness reinforces and sustains an unequal status quo. By leaving structural inequalities in place, color blindness has become the “new racism.” It also ignores cultural attributes people value and deserve to recognize and affirm. ([Source](#)) *(Note from original source, which we believed was important to uplift: “We recognize the problematic ableist language of this term, but we reference it as used by scholars to describe an important social phenomenon.”)*

- **Critical Race Theory/Movement:** Considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up but places them in a broader perspective, including economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights—which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress—critical race theory questions the foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and constitutional law principles. ([Source](#))

- **Diversity:** The range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity. ([Source](#))

- **Equity**

- The aim of fairness and justice focuses on outcomes most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. ([Source](#))
- A commitment to action: the process of redistributing access and opportunity to be fair and just. ([Source](#))
- A way of being: the state of being free of bias, discrimination, and identity-predictable outcomes and experiences. ([Source](#))

- **Inclusion:** Involvement and empowerment within a group or structure where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized and everyone has full access to opportunities. ([Source](#))

- **Intent vs. Impact:** Intent refers to what you hope or want to do when choosing to act, and impact refers to the reality (e.g., results) of your actions/ behaviors. The resulting impact may not always align with what you intended. ([Source](#))

- **Marginalized Communities/Marginalization** The systemic disempowerment of a person or community by denying access to necessary resources, enforcing prejudice through society’s institutions, and not allowing for that individual or community’s voice, history, and perspective to be heard. ([Source](#))

← Borealis Glossary Definitions

- **Multiracial/Ethnic:** Mixed ancestry of two or more races/ethnicities.
- **Indigenous/Native Erasure:** Settler societies discount and eliminate the presence of American Indian peoples, cultures, and polities. This erasure is part of a larger colonial imperative to diminish the existence of American Indians in order to access land and resources. ([Source](#))
- **Performative Activism:** Surface-level activism—when a person or an organization posts on social media about a current issue but doesn't follow through with meaningful action, showing solidarity online for social clout but not genuinely supporting a cause. ([Source](#))
- **Positionality:** Social identities in relation to power influences how we understand the world and our interactions with others. ([Source](#))
- **Post-Racial:** Denoting or relating to a period of society in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist. ([Source](#))
- **Prejudice:** A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one individual or group toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with unique characteristics. ([Source](#))
- **Privilege:** Unearned special advantage or entitlement to social power, political, economic, and psychological benefits given by society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g., white privilege, male privilege, etc.) by the formal and informal institutions of society. Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but it puts them at an advantage over those who do not. ([Source](#))
 - **White Privilege:** Advantages and benefits white people enjoy that aren't available to people of color. ([Source](#))
- **Power:** The ability to influence decision-makers to make choices in favor of your cause, issue, or concern. ([Source](#))
 - **Personal Power:** Power that an individual possesses or builds in their personal life and interpersonal relationships.
 - **Social Power:** Power that social groups possess or build among themselves to determine and shape their collective lives.
 - **Institutional Power:** Power to create and shape an institution's rules, policies, and actions.
 - **Structural Power:** Power to create and shape the rules, policies, and actions that govern multiple and intersecting institutions or industries.
- **QTBIPOC:** Acronym for queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, Person/People of Color.
- **Race:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as a physical appearance (particularly color) ancestral heritage, cultural affiliations, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. ([Source](#))
- **Racism:** Involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices. ([Source](#))

← Borealis Glossary Definitions

- **Anti-Racism:** The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and is set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts. ([Source](#))
 - **Interpersonal Racism:** The bias occurs when individuals interact with others, and their personal, racial beliefs affect their public interactions.
 - **Internalized Racism:** This type of racism comprises our private beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture. This can take many forms, including prejudice towards others of a different race; internalized oppression—the negative beliefs about oneself by people of color; or internalized privilege—beliefs about superiority or entitlement by white people. ([Source](#))
 - **Institutional Racism:** Refers to the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.) that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the institution's power when they reinforce racial inequities. ([Source](#))
 - **Structural Racism:** Involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. ([Source](#))
 - **Reverse Racism:** Prejudice or discrimination, real or perceived, against those of a racial majority or dominant ethnic group. Dominant racial groups don't directly experience the systemic adverse effects of racial discrimination and therefore aren't victims of racism or reverse racism in the same way as oppressed groups. ([Source](#))
- **Social Construction:** Refers to the emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality. ([Source](#))
 - **Stereotype:** Blanket beliefs, unconscious associations, and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes go beyond necessary and proper categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information, and are highly generalized. ([Source](#))
 - **Tokenism:** The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing - most commonly referring to the workplace. Tokenism in the workplace may be defined as giving those in power the appearance of being non-racist and even champions of diversity because they recruit and use POC as racialized props merely as a smokescreen to prevent criticism and give the public impression that they treat people equitably or justly. ([Source](#))
 - **White Fragility:** A state where even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. ([Source](#))
 - **Whiteness:** Refers to the specific dimensions of racism that elevate white people over people of color. The creation of 'whiteness' meant giving privileges to some while denying them to others, using the justification of biological and social inferiority. ([Source](#))
 - **Woman of Color:** A woman who is not white. This can include but is not limited to women who identify as Black, Asian, Latine, Pacific Islander, Indigenous/Native American, African, Middle

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IMMIGRATION/DISPLACEMENT

- **Anti-Immigrant:** Opposed to immigrants or immigration, characterized by or expressing opposition to or hostility toward immigrants.
- **Anti-Indigeneity:** Opposition to self-determination, political and cultural autonomy, and the right to maintain, use, and protect traditional territories and resources.
- **Anti-Refugee:** Opposed to refugees, characterized by or expressing opposition to or hostility toward refugees.
- **Asylum:** A protection grantable to foreign nationals already in the United States or arriving at the border who meet the international law definition of a "refugee". ([Source](#))
- **Assimilationist:** The white supremacist/racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviorally inferior and supports dominant cultural or behavioral enrichment programs to develop that racial group. ([Source](#))
- **Borders:** A real or artificial line that separates geographic areas. Borders are political boundaries. They separate countries, states, provinces, counties, cities, and towns. A border outlines the area that a particular governing body controls. The government of a region can only create and enforce laws within its borders. Borders change over time. Sometimes the people in one region take over another area through violence. Other times, the land is traded or sold peacefully. Many times, the land is parceled out after war through international agreements. ([Source](#))
- **Cultural Appropriation:** Theft of cultural elements—including symbols, art, language, customs, etc.—for one's use, commodification, or profit, often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the original culture. ([Source](#))
- **Deculturalization:** The process by which indigenous people and people of color have been stripped of their language and culture through intentional schooling practices and policies designed to enforce white supremacy. ([Source](#))
- **Detention:** Any place where people awaiting a determination of their immigration status or potential deportation are incarcerated. ([Source](#))
- **Displacement**
 - **Cultural Displacement:** As residential change advances, shops and services shift to focus on new residents, the neighborhood's character is transformed, and the remaining residents may feel a sense of dislocation despite remaining in the community. ([Source](#))
 - **Direct Displacement:** This occurs when residents can no longer afford to remain in their homes due to rising housing costs. Residents may also be forced out by lease non-renewals, evictions, eminent domain, or physical conditions that render homes uninhabitable as investors await redevelopment opportunities. While displacement occurs routinely in low-income neighborhoods, when it appears in the context of new

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income residents move out. In a gentrifying community, when low-income residents vacate homes, other low-income residents cannot afford to move in because rents and sales prices have increased. ([Source](#))

- **Ethnocentrism:** Characterized by or based on the attitude that one's group is superior. ([Source](#))
- **Im/migrant:** A person who moves from one country or region and intends to reside temporarily or permanently in that country or region. ([Source](#))
- **Islamophobia:** A form of racism rooted in stereotypes that label all Muslims or Muslim "appearing" people as "terrorists." This form of racism manifests itself in hate crimes, federal actions such as the "Patriot Act," and increased surveillance or racial profiling of Muslims, Arab-Americans, or anyone who "appears" to be either. ([Source](#))
- **Land Acknowledgment:** A formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional, unceded territories. ([Source](#))
- **Land Back Movement:** A campaign by Indigenous people in the United States and in Canada that seeks to re-establish Indigenous sovereignty - notably, the political and economic control of lands in what is now the United States and Canada to the peoples who have historically occupied them before colonization. ([Source](#)) It's also a political framework that allows us to deepen our relationships across the field of organizing movements working towards true collective liberation. It will enable us to envision a world where Black, Indigenous, and POC liberation co-exists. ([Source](#))
- **Land Occupation:** The use, settlement, or possession of solid areas of the earth's surface.
- **Migrant:** An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from their usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. ([Source](#))
- **Model Minority:** The model minority myth, which has historically been assigned to Asian Americans, is a cultural expectation that can be understood as a tool that white supremacy uses to pit people of color against each other to protect its status. Creates an understanding of ethnic groups, including Asian Americans, as a monolith or as a mass whose parts cannot be distinguished from each other. Its origins are rooted in colorism and anti-Blackness. ([Source](#))
- **Nation States:** The idea of a homogenous nation governed by its sovereign state—each state contains one nation. This idea is rarely achieved. ([Source](#))
- **Nativism:** Prejudiced thoughts or discriminatory actions that benefit or show preference to individuals born in a territory over those who have im/migrated into the said territory. ([Source](#))
- **Reparations:** Meant to acknowledge and repair the causes and consequences of human rights violations and inequality in countries emerging from dictatorship, armed conflict, and political violence, as well as in societies dealing with racial injustice and legacies of colonization and slavery. ([Source](#))
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Sovereignty for tribes includes the right to establish their form of government, determine membership requirements, enact legislation and establish law enforcement and court systems. ([Source](#))

- **Temporary Protected Status (TPS):** A temporary immigration status provided to nationals of certain countries experiencing problems that make it difficult or unsafe for them to be deported to those countries. ([Source](#))
- **Xenophobia:** Fear and loathing of people who hold social group identities or memberships that differ from one's own. ([Source](#))

QUEER AND TRANS LIBERATION

- **AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome):** A chronic, potentially life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- **Agender:** A person who does not identify with or experience gender. ([Source](#))
- **Biphobia:** Animosity, hatred, or dislike of bisexual people, which may manifest in the form of prejudice or bias. ([Source](#))
- **Bioessentialism:** Short for biological essentialism. Reliance or weaponization of biology in an attempt to disprove trans people's genders and that gender and sex are binary-based. ([Source](#))
- **Cisheterosexism:** Describes a societal mindset wherein cis/cisgender/cissexual is presumed to be the norm, while trans/transgender/transsexual people and experiences are deemed "abnormal" by comparison. Cisheterosexism enables trans erasure and invisibility. ([Source](#))
- **Cisgender:** An umbrella term for people who identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.

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- **Cisheterpatriarchy:** A system of power based on the supremacy and dominance of cisgender heterosexual men through the exploitation and oppression of women and the LGBTQIA+ community. ([Source](#))
- **Cissexism:** Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on sex, specifically towards transgender and gender-expansive people. ([Source](#))
- **Enbyphobia:** Discrimination or prejudice against non-binary people, or people who do not identify exclusively as male or female, may occur in social, legal, or medical contexts.
- **Femme:** Historically used in the lesbian community, it is being increasingly used by other LGBTQIA+ people to describe gender expressions that reclaim and disrupt traditional constructs of femininity. ([Source](#))
- **Femininity:** Behaviors, mannerisms, interests, and styles of dress that are commonly associated with (but certainly not exclusive to) women in our culture. ([Source](#))
- **Gender:** Broadly, gender is a set of socially constructed norms, expressions, roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate. ([Source](#))
- **Genderqueer:** Refers to individuals who blur preconceived boundaries of gender about the gender binary, rejecting commonly held ideas of static gender identities. ([Source](#))
- **Gender-Affirming Care:** Encompasses a range of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions "designed to support and affirm an individual's gender identity" when it conflicts with the gender they were assigned at birth. ([Source](#))
- **Gender Binary:** The disproven concept that there are only two genders, male and female, and that everyone must be one or the other. ([Source](#))
- **Gender-Expansive:** An umbrella term for any expression of gender that falls outside of society's current gender binary standards.
- **Gender Expression:** How one expresses oneself in terms of dress and behaviors. Society and the people that make up society characterize these expressions as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous." ([Source](#))
- **Gender Fluid:** Describes a person who does not consistently adhere to one fixed gender and may move among genders. ([Source](#))
- **Gender Nonconforming (GNC):** An umbrella term for those who do not follow gender stereotypes or expand ideas of gender expression or gender identity. ([Source](#))
- **Gender Pronouns:** The pronouns that reflect a person's gender identity (e.g., she/her/hers; they/them/theirs; he/him/his). Various gender-neutral pronouns exist, most commonly they/them/theirs. ([Source](#))
- **Gender Variance:** A term often used by the medical community to describe individuals who dress, behave, or express themselves in a way that does not conform to dominant gender norms. ([Source](#))

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- **Heterosexism:** The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. ([Source](#))
- **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus):** A chronic virus that breaks down the immune system. It can lead to AIDS if not treated. ([Source](#))
- **HIV Stigma:** Refers to the negative attitudes and beliefs about people with HIV. It is the prejudice that comes with labeling an individual as part of a group that is believed to be socially unacceptable. ([Source](#))
- **Homophobia:** An umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQIA+ people. ([Source](#))
- **Homonationalism:** A favorable association between a nationalist ideology and LGBTQ people or their rights.
- **Intersex:** The current term used to refer to people who are biologically between the medically expected definitions of male and female. This can be through variations in hormones, chromosomes, internal or external genitalia, or any combination of any or all primary and secondary sex characteristics. ([Source](#))
- **LGBTQIA+:** The umbrella term for a community of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual. ([Source](#))
- **Masculinity:** Behaviors, mannerisms, interests, and styles of dress that are commonly associated with (but certainly not exclusive to) men in our culture. ([Source](#))
- **Misgendering:** Attributing gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. ([Source](#))
- **Nonbinary:** Describes any gender identity that does not fit the man-woman binary.
- **Non-binary erasure:** Refers to an attempt at erasure, or an intentional refusal of acknowledgement, of gender identities which do not fit in the gender binary of "male" and "female".
- **Pinkwashing:** When a state or organization appeals to LGBTQ+ rights to deflect attention from its harmful practices. ([Source](#))
- **Poz:** Communal slang for people living with and affected by HIV.
- **Pride Month:** A month that is celebrated every year in honor of the Stonewall Inn riots that took place in June 1969. Pride reminds us of the violence endured, the progress made, and the hardships yet to come for the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Queerphobia:** An umbrella term used to describe the mistreatment, antagonism, hostility, victimization, marginalization, and othering of queer individuals and identities. It encompasses, but is not limited to, the following discriminations: homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, cissexism, heterosexism, transmisogyny, transmisogynoir, binarism, and non-binary erasures. ([Source](#))

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- **Rainbow Capitalism:** The action of companies claiming to support LGBTQ+ causes and communities but only making merchandise for-profit and capitalizing off of the LGBTQ+ community. In other words, it centers on corporate interests and profit. ([Source](#))
- **Sex:** A medically constructed categorization. Sex is often assigned based on the appearance of the genitalia, either during an ultrasound or at birth. ([Source](#))
- **Sexuality:** The components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual practices, etc. ([Source](#))
- **Trancestors:** A term for trans elders, coming from the words “transgender” and “ancestors.” Trancestors can be well-known within the movement or personal to a community, filling a parent or grandparent-like role. ([Source](#))
- **TGNC:** Acronym for trans and gender nonconforming and an umbrella term for people who are not cisgender. ([Source](#))
- **Transgender/Trans:** A term describing a person’s gender identity that does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth. ([Source](#))
- **Transantagonism:** Active hostility towards trans and gender-expansive people to enact harm, hate speech, physical harm, and bigoted media coverage. ([Source](#))
- **Transphobia:** The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans people, the trans community, or gender ambiguity. ([Source](#))
- **Transmisogyny:** Form of sexism that is directed against trans women and gender-expansive people. It accounts for why trans women and gender-expansive people bear the brunt of societal fascination, consternation, and demonization in considering transgender people. ([Source](#))
- **Transmisogynoir:** Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive Black women that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice, bias, and anti-Black racism. ([Source](#))
- **Two-Spirit:** A term used within some American Indian and Alaska Native communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. ([Source](#))
- **Womxn:** X in womxn represents the many who are confronting and living in the constraints of the gender binary.

PHILANTHROPIC PRACTICE

- **Accountable to Movement:** The ways philanthropy holds itself to its commitments to the organizations, communities, and people that it aims to serve.

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- **Boom and Bust Cycle:** An increase in funding (boom) followed by a decrease in financing (bust).
- **Calling In:** The act of calling someone into education and conversation, addressing someone's behavior more privately and personally, identifying the hurtful behavior, and making space to talk about it with compassion and patience. Based on the belief that mistakes happen and harm is an opportunity for transformation, primarily when mistakes/harm occurs in a relationship with shared values and within communities seeking justice and freedom. ([Source](#))
- **Capacity Building:** Bolstering an organization's infrastructure, management, and governance, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the organization for the long term to become more productive and effective overall. ([Source](#))
- **Centering Blackness:** Considering the Black experience as unique and foundational to shaping America's economic and social policies demands that we create and design policies and practices that intentionally lift and protect Black people and allow for a completely different worldview to emerge, free from the constraints of white supremacy and patriarchy. ([Source](#))
- **Community-Driven:** Decision-making power is in the hands of the communities being served.
- **Community Organizing:** A collaborative process of using, building, and demonstrating the power to influence decision-makers to get things the community needs or wants. ([Source](#))
- **Counter-Narrative:** The narratives that arise from the vantage point of those historically marginalized. The idea of "counter-" itself implies a space of resistance. ([Source](#))
- **Decolonize Philanthropy:** Investing in local leadership and programs co-designed with the communities served, funding collaboration rather than competition, and awarding unrestricted grants. ([Source](#))
- **Due Diligence:** An investigation, audit, or review performed to confirm facts or details of a matter under consideration. As it relates to grantmaking, due diligence refers to care to avoid harm committing to fund an organization – gathering more profound insight into the organization's operating capacity and mission alignment. ([Source](#))
- **Extraction/Extractive Philanthropy:** The belief is that foundations should maintain control of and grow their resources indefinitely to exist perpetually. ([Source](#))
- **Fiscal Sponsor:** An organization that provides fiduciary oversight, financial management, and other administrative services to organizations who do not have that expertise internally or the ability to complete those functions on its own. ([Source](#)) Fiscal sponsors can be foundations or institutional organizations focusing solely on providing fiscal sponsorship. It can be a nonprofit with its own issue area focus but also does fiscal sponsorship. Fiscal-sponsored organizations can receive donations and grants without being a 501(c)(3). Some fiscal sponsors can provide human resources and personnel support, health, facility, director insurance, legal coverage for a project/organization, and political shelter for groups easily targeted by the state or vulnerable to attack from the opposition.
- **Fiscally-Sponsored Organization:** Instead of starting a nonprofit, individuals, groups, and organizations can work with fiscal sponsors to receive grants and tax-deductible donations under the fiscal sponsor's exempt status. ([Source](#))

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supported by other donors to responding to an unforeseen crisis or opportunity to even covering basic costs like office rent and staff salaries.

- **Grassroots Organizers/Organizations:** People who are drawn together by something they have in common that has both personal and community consequences—and grant themselves the authority to solve the problem they are facing or create the future they desire. ([Source](#))
- **General Operating Support:** Investments in an organization's overall mission and functioning rather than a specific program. Nonprofit leaders can choose how to use the money— whether it be overhead, programs, or technology upgrades. With this freedom, nonprofit leaders can ensure that day-to-day operational needs are met, which allows them to focus more on their mission. ([Source](#))
- **Hoarding Wealth:** Accumulated wealth at the expense of the rest of society.
- **Just Transition:** A vision-led, unifying, and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. ([Source](#))
- **Liberated Capital:** A donor community and funding vehicle aimed at moving untethered resources to Black, Indigenous, and other people-of-color communities for liberation and racial healing. ([Source](#))
- **Mobilization:** The intent to motivate masses of participants to express themselves and to undertake a particular action.
- **Movement Building:** The effort of social change agents to engage power holders and the broader society in addressing a systemic problem or injustice while promoting an alternative vision or solution. Movement building requires a range of intersecting approaches through a set of distinct stages over a long-term period. ([Source](#)). Funding social movements through investing in infrastructure, capacity building, and leadership. ([Source](#))
- **Movement Ecosystem/Ecology:** Interconnected individuals, groups, and communities working towards liberation. Being in a movement ecology means you are aware of your role within social change efforts and are connected to other communities working for justice and liberation locally, regionally, and beyond. ([Source](#))
- **Narrative Power:** The ability to create leverage over those who set the incentives, rules, and norms that shape society and human behavior. ([Source](#))
- **Nonprofit Industrial Complex:** A system of control that keeps our movement fragmented and competitive rather than cooperative and in solidarity and community. ([Source](#))
- **Participatory Grantmaking:** Democratizing philanthropy, this practice shifts power from foundation staff to those most affected or harmed by particular problems or challenges. The goal is to increase accountability, transparency, and collaboration. ([Source](#))
- **Philanthropic Intermediaries:** Organizations that provide strategic capacity and expert guidance to individual donors and foundations. Often, as in the case with Borealis, they connect donors with limited access to lesser-known organizations, enabling funders the opportunity to

← Borealis Glossary Definitions

- **Political Power:** The ability of an individual or a group to influence the thoughts, actions, and mindset of people in a nation.
- **Power Building:** Promoting collaborative efforts that build the power and influence of those with the least access to opportunity.
- **Rapid Response Funding:** Quick turnaround funds for frontline social justice organizations facing uncertain, challenging, or urgent circumstances.
- **Regenerative:** The idea that—rather than being accumulated by individuals and institutions—capital must support the collective capacity of communities most impacted by economic inequality to produce for themselves, give to and invest directly in what their communities need, and retain the returns generated from these investments. All aspects of collective well-being must be prioritized over the wealth and power of a few. ([Source](#))
- **Reparative Giving:** The act of making amends and offering reparation through funding.
- **Responsive Philanthropy:** Adapted approaches to funding and significantly emphasize the relationship between the funder and the funded partner.
- **Restorative:** The idea that individuals and institutions have a moral obligation to redistribute their accumulated capital in support of communities most impacted by economic inequality. The positive social and environmental impact must be prioritized over preserving wealth and power. ([Source](#))
- **Redistribution:** Taking money from where it is unjustly concentrated among the wealthy and using that money to improve conditions for marginalized people.
- **Scarcity Mindset:** Refers to a belief system that funding, resources, and opportunities are finite.
- **Shifting Power:** The act of relegating power ensures that communities that have historically been left out are involved in decision-making. ([Source](#))
- **Stakeholder Philanthropy:** A more equitable approach to granting that includes multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process. Practically, stakeholder philanthropy empowers diverse groups of people – employees, consumers, partners, community members, and investors – to have input on the sharing of resources – funds, skills, volunteers, and products – to nonprofits. ([Source](#))
- **Sustained/Racial Wealth Gap:** Refers to the asset differences among different racial and ethnic groups, reflecting resource and opportunity disparities.
- **Systemic Analysis:** Examining the root causes and the mechanisms at play that result in patterns. This involves looking beyond individual speech, acts, and practices to the larger structures – organizations, institutions, traditions, and knowledge systems. ([Source](#))
- **Systems Change:** A philanthropic strategy that identifies crucial organizations already working on a problem and helps them come together to achieve a common goal. Systems change philanthropy acknowledges the interconnected nature of social issues and conditions. It requires

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- **Theory of Change:** A system of beliefs about how change and transformation happen. ([Source](#))
- **Transformative Change:** A philosophical, practical, and strategic process to effect revolutionary change within an organization.
- **Transparency:** The widespread availability of relevant, reliable information about the performance, decision-making, financial position, and governance of an organization.
- **Traditional Philanthropy:** Focuses on alleviating immediate suffering by funding direct aid. It is often criticized as supporting "short-term and reactive" band-aid solutions. The funding structure usually operates as a top-down method. ([Source](#))
- **Trust-Based Philanthropy:** Advocating for flexible funding and streamlined paperwork, a trust-based approach centers on relationship-building, mutual learning, and transparency between funders and nonprofits. In a trust-based context, funders see our role as partners, seeking to support rather than control nonprofit leaders who are more proximate to the issues we seek to address. It also invites funders to do their homework when considering prospective grantees – including exploring publicly available materials and having conversations with community stakeholders – while checking our biases and assumptions often rooted in white-dominant norms. ([Source](#))
- **Unrestricted Funds:** Financial support that a nonprofit can use to support its mission in any way they see fit. Unrestricted funds can go toward specific projects or essential overhead costs that keep nonprofits running. This can include staff salaries, rent, technology, equipment, and more. ([Source](#))
- **Wealth Inequality:** The unequal distribution of assets in a group. ([Source](#))
- **Well-being:** The state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous through removing structural barriers to participation in decision-making. ([Source](#))
- **White Savior Complex:** A white person's self-serving assumption that they should be saving people who lack resources or power. White saviors typically help others in defined parameters while supporting or remaining complacent towards the policies and practices that create and sustain inequitable outcomes. ([Source](#))



TOWARD OUR NORTH STAR:
BOREALIS PHILANTHROPY'S SHARED SOCIAL JUSTICE UNDERSTANDINGS