



Glossary of Terms

	Definition	Why is this practically relevant?
1. Anti-Racism	Being anti-racist means acknowledging that racism is a hierarchy of inequality based on skin tone and that in order to disrupt the hierarchy, action needs to be taken. If an individual is aware of racism but does not actively challenge it in some way, the status quo remains, meaning that the passive individual is inadvertently sustaining it.	The positive observation regarding anti-racism is that it is a verb rather than a noun, meaning that being anti-racist is an active rather than passive position. The goal of being anti-racist means that there is important work ahead which may be uncomfortable, including checking your own bias, giving opportunities to others and identifying ways to ensure equitable outcomes (beyond inclusion).
2. Assimilationism	Assimilation demands that minorities become a part of the bigger majority group. This requirement or expectation to fit into 'the norm' suggests that difference does not count and is not valued within society.	Assimilation takes effort and time – to truly blend in and make aspects of their life disappear, assimilators risk sacrificing their full energy and their full self. Like diversity , assimilation can also lead to a waste of talent.
3. Benevolent Racism	Benevolent racism occurs when a positive trait is applied to a group of people based on their race. This is often rooted in media portrayals or stereotyping and while the traits themselves may be superficially understood as positive (e.g. seeing a race as being athletic or particularly good at maths), they still have the effect of forcing their objects into a tired stereotype or a prejudice by reducing their multiplicities and contingencies. Benevolent racism may not seek to intentionally cause harm to its objects but it still does.	Benevolent racism is often insidious within societies thanks to widely unchallenged media depictions and cultural stereotypes.





Glossary of Terms (cont.)

	Definition	How practically relevant
4. Colour blindness	Colour blindness refers to the assertions made by an individual that they 'do not see colour.' Usually, this is meant as a rejection of racist prejudices but it is problematic for two key reasons. Firstly, refusing to acknowledge difference can lead to a potentially damaging homogenisation of society which leads to a wilful blindness to different experiences, histories and cultures. Secondly, this inevitably leads to a refusal or an inability to recognise the different forms of discrimination faced by people of colour on a daily basis.	Colour blindness can ignore the experiences of people of colour, leading to an inability to see the systemic racism that governs society. This can make challenging these systems and shining a light on them into a harder task that becomes clouded by issues of white privilege and white fragility .
5. Covering	Covering is an assimilation tactic. It might include techniques like disguising an accent or using generic pronouns to refer to a same sex partner.	Like assimilation , covering takes effort and time – to 'cover' entails sacrificing one's full energy and one's full self, leading to a waste of talent.
6. Cultural Competency	Delta uses cultural competency in the context of our executive coaching approach. It means being able to understand, empathise and evaluate the various experiences of people across ethnic (including white) groups and the effect that these may have on their career progression.	We use it in the context of our coaching. When we accept that many career experiences in the UK are influenced by cultures and stereotypes, then we can put in solutions for individuals, teams and businesses. These solutions might include culturally competent executive coaching, or using this understanding to get the best out of geographically distributed teams.
7. Diversity	Diversity refers to heterogeneity – or, put simply, all of the things that make humans different in identity, personality, experience, emotions, culture and background.	Some aspects of diversity have been given undue value (e.g. the school you went to might become shorthand for how smart you are perceived to be and what opportunities you are deemed worthy of). This can lead to inefficient use of talent.





Glossary of Terms (cont.)

	Definition	How practically relevant
8. Inclusion	Inclusion demands that all our differences matter or count in a meaningful way.	We know that inclusion is the right combination of both belongingness and being valued for your uniqueness (i.e. inclusion is not <i>just</i> about belonging). This is a tricky balance but when achieved, it pays many dividends including empowerment, creativity and retention.
9. Institutional Racism	Institutional racism is the fact that racist hierarchies (which can have significant and long-lasting effects) are embedded as normal in society (e.g. people moving away from areas that are populated by immigrants to areas that have higher valued property so they can send their children to better-funded schools with higher rates of university success , leading to the chance of getting a better paid job, meaning that you have less contact with police, are able to afford better health care, etc.).	Understanding institutional racism helps break down the myth of meritocracy. In other words, it reveals that high achievers have ‘made it’ because the system has helped them, not <i>just</i> because they are just good but because wider societal organisation has positively skewed their chances of achieving greatness on the basis of luck (plus their hard work).
10. Microaggression	Microaggressions are small, everyday reminders that your difference is not valued. Examples of microaggressions might include talking over you, mispronouncing your name, others taking credit for your work, etc.	The damaging effects of microaggressions are increased by their subtlety where those at the receiving end may begin to question if events were actually imagined or whether they actually even happened at all.
11. Structural Racism	Structural racism is often used as a synonym for systemic racism . However, while the two terms are closely linked, structural racism tends to place more emphasis on historical structures of racism and how they have contributed to and continue to inform and shape systems in society today.	Understanding the foundations that racist systems have been built on can be a first step to discrediting and undermining them in the society in question.





Glossary of Terms (cont.)

	Definition	How practically relevant
12. Systemic Racism	Often linked to institutional racism and structural racism , systemic racism occurs where the systems (e.g. policies, laws, etc.) that are entrenched within a society display an insidious bias or privilege towards certain members of the community depending on skin colour. Systemic racism occurs not at an individual level but rather through the default biases built into cultural and societal systems (such as healthcare). These systems then have a disproportionate effect on people of colour who exist within these systems.	When racism is embedded into practices or systems that are widely accepted as 'normal' or 'legitimate', challenging systemic racism can demand a re-evaluation of the basis on which society operates. A current example might include the disproportionate number of COVID deaths among minority ethnic communities across the UK and the US.
13. White Fragility	White fragility is a term describing the emotional reaction (e.g. anger, defensiveness, dismissal/silence) caused by realising that racism affects us all and whether you have been intentional about it or not, you have benefited from a system that puts your skin tone above others.	Understanding the concept of white fragility helps in developing an understanding of why it has taken so long to have these conversations. This is also a key reason why societies with a white majority tend to have low race fluency.
14. White Privilege	White privilege is the condition of not having to worry that people will treat you negatively on the basis of your skin tone.	White privilege helps for perspective taking, and is important for successful white people to understand. It can be thought of as the benefits of swimming <i>with</i> the current as opposed to swimming <i>against</i> the current, especially when this leads to impatience or frustration with those swimming against the current, and blaming them for 'not swimming fast enough'

