

Introduction to Understanding Different Experiences and Identities

This document is intended to help on board Campaign Bootcamp staff and freelancers to understanding in more detail the experience and identities of people who work with, volunteer for and attend our trainings. Campaign Bootcamp believes our movements and campaigns are stronger for understanding the way that social power exists in a space. We don't, however, expect that everyone has the same exposure, education or resources in learning about other people's identities. Having the right language is important because it demonstrates that you care and respect the person you are talking to, but it's not always easy to know what that language is.

Therefore, this document will introduce you to identities and/or ideas and language you may not be familiar with:

- To help you learn: This is just intro, there's loads more out there we hope this will help springboard you to further learning
- To ensure common understanding across the team
- To make sure we are all representing bootcamp in the world in line with our methodology and values
- To take the burden of educating people on an identity away from the people who inhabit it. It's often the case that marginalised people do a lot of labour with mainstreamed people to educate them on how to understand, empathise with and support them. This burden of labour further marginalises people from campaigns and activism as it takes their time and emotional energy away from working on the issues they care about.



“Black and Third World people are expected to educate white people as to our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. Lesbians and gay men are expected to educate the heterosexual world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade their responsibility for their own actions. There is a constant drain of energy which might be better used in redefining ourselves and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future.”

~ AUDRE LORDE

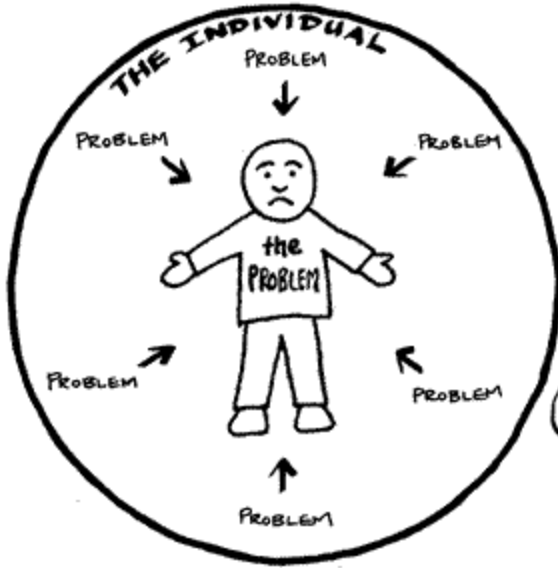
Disabled people

The way we understand disability in the world has changed dramatically over the last 200 years. There have been a series of “models” of disability which have helped move the concept of disability from the idea that someone “has something wrong with them” to the idea that society isn’t designed to meet everyone’s needs, but rather privileges the access of non-disabled people and puts barriers in the way of disabled people. The current popular model of understanding disability in the UK is the “Social Model”, which replaces the “Medical Model” which was popular in the 1960s through to the 90s. Avoiding the medical model is why at Bootcamp we don’t ask people what their “condition” or “disability” is, but instead we ask them what their requirements for access are – this puts the onus on us to ensure our spaces aren’t disabling, instead of suggesting that disability is inherent to their body.

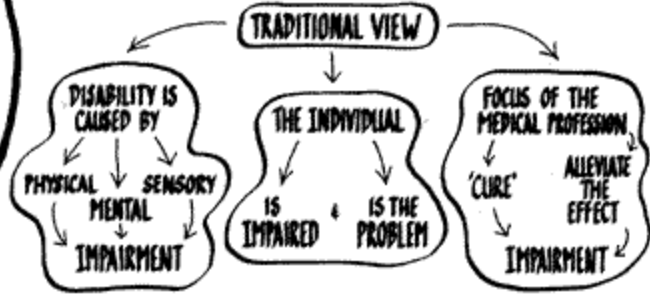


- [Scope's What is the social model of disability? film](#)
- Lisa Egan's Blog: [I'm not a "person with a disability": I'm a disabled person](#)
- BBC Three's film: [Things not to say to someone who uses a wheelchair](#)
- Be the Change: [Six disabled activists on why the resistance must be accessible](#)

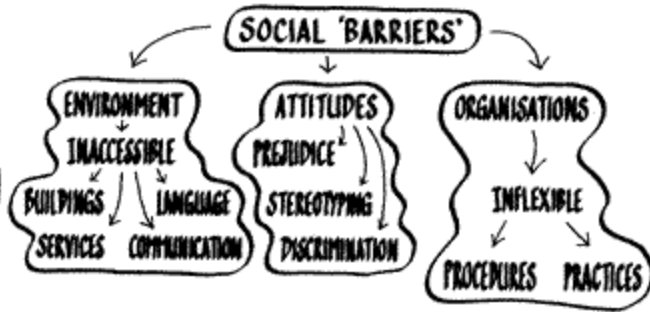
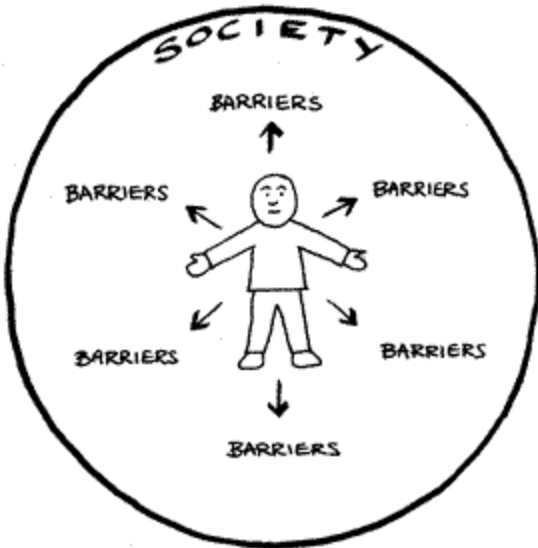
THE MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY



IMPAIRMENTS AND CHRONIC ILLNESS
OFTEN POSE REAL DIFFICULTIES BUT
- THEY ARE NOT THE MAIN PROBLEMS



THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY



Faith

Faith is a complicated identity to unpick because its relationship to power is institutionally privileged and oppressed in very different ways depending on the context and which faith one addresses. However, in the UK activist/campaigning sector, being of faith is generally an incredibly marginalising experience. Not least when one's faith intersects with race and culture. Islamophobia is arguably one of the most pertinent and pernicious forms of structural oppression in the west today – it is normalised and has supported the rise in power of both the central and far right across the western world.



- Gallup's poll data: [Understanding anti-muslim sentiment in the West](#)
- Guardian: [reports of anti-semitic incidents rise to record levels in the UK](#)
- Washington post: [An Indian immigrant is murdered in Kansas. It's part of a spike in hate crimes against South Asians](#)
- Michael Jallo-Jamborah's blog: [Making space for faith in feminism](#)

A nun can be covered from head to toe in order to devote herself to God, right?



But, then, if a muslim girl does the same, why is she oppressed?



A Jew can grow his beard in order to practice his faith

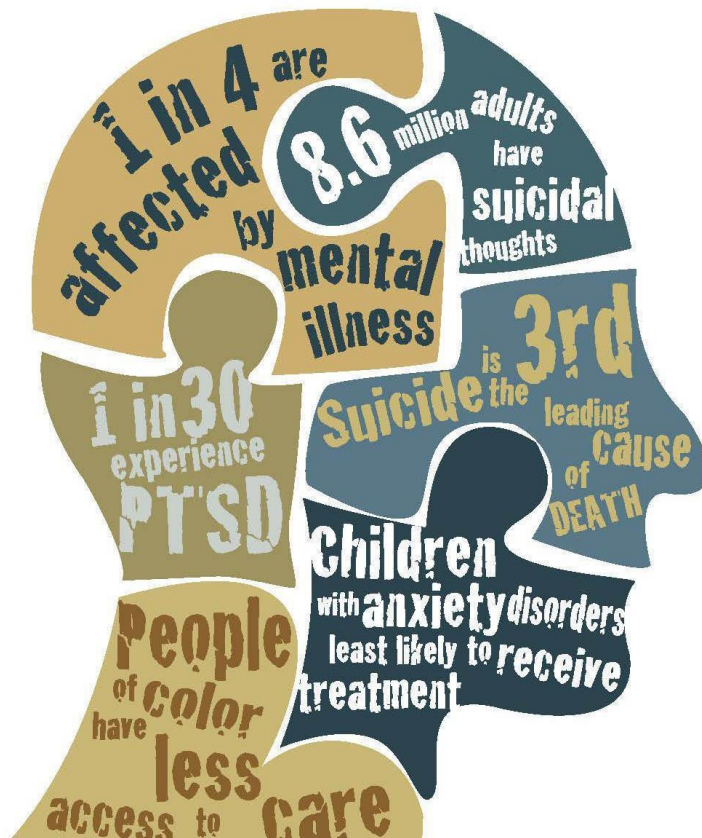


But when a Muslim does the same, he is called extremist and terrorist!



Mental health

We all have mental health, like physical health. Sometimes our mental health is good and sometimes it's not so good. 1 in 4 people are affected by mental health issues each year and yet we still struggle to talk about it. Mental Health and wellbeing are really central to the sustainability and success of campaigning so we are passionate about talking about mental health and reducing the stigma surrounding it. We also recognise that systemic oppression both negatively impacts our mental health and means that how we are treated by mental health services is dependent on who we are; gender, sexuality, race, disability all intersect with our experiences of wellbeing and access to services.



- Guardian article: [if we hide our mental health issues, we make it easier for society to ignore us](#)
- Resource library: [A library of free PDFs on academic articles on "Mad Studies" topics](#)
- Unapologetic feminism: [4 ways mentally ill people are blamed for our struggles](#)
- Time to Change blog: [Talking about mental health](#) – lots of personal blogs on things you can do to support yourself and other people regarding mental health

SOME CONVERSATIONS ARE SCARY



SOME AREN'T.



Don't be afraid to talk about mental health.

Race: Colonialism and Social construct

The way that we categorise and understand race in the west is directly linked to systems of trade and finance; capitalism and colonialism. The idea of categorising people based on physical features long precedes the expansion of the British Empire, but the specific ways we categorise race today is very modern. A racial hierarchy, with white people at the top and black people at the bottom, was created in order to create a hierarchy of global labour and profit and then to justify the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade. While this is the history of race, it also shapes how we understand race today; the profit of our current financial and political systems are still built on and dependent on this categorisation within western borders, but also neo-imperialism is what creates the biggest mass movement of people's in the world. Whether it's homophobic laws imported to the African and Indian sub-continent by US Christianity, or drone bombs dropped across the middle east in the name of western peace (and oil profits) – the UK and US create movements of people to western borders via economics and then scrutinise, penalise and demonise those very people when they reach us.

“They are here, because we were there”

- Film: [The social construction of race explained](#)
- Film: [The myth of race, debunked in 3 minutes](#)
- Guardian article: [Migrants, Asylum Seekers, refugees – what's the difference?](#)



Profit margins

Colonial purchases of British goods were a major stimulus to the economy. Around 1770, 96.3% of British exports of nails and 70.5% of the export of wrought iron went to colonial and African markets. Around the same time, British exports of iron manufactures took 15-19% of domestic iron production.

Textile exports accounted for between a third and a half of total production, with colonial and African markets again taking a huge share. In the periods 1784-1786 and 1805-1807, the growth of exports accounted for no less than 87% of the growth of British output.

During the French Wars (1793-1802, 1804-1815) British exporters often found that, excluded from Europe, they had to rely on colonial and American markets. The merchant and finance houses that facilitated the import of sugar and cotton also helped to extend badly-needed credit to the textile and metal manufacturers.

“
Slave-generated profits could have covered a third of Britain's overall investment needs
”

Around 1770, total investments in the domestic British economy stood at £4 million, (or about £500 million in today's money). This investment included the building of roads and canals, of wharves and harbours, of all new equipment needed by farmers and manufacturers, and of all the new ships sold to merchants in a period of one year.

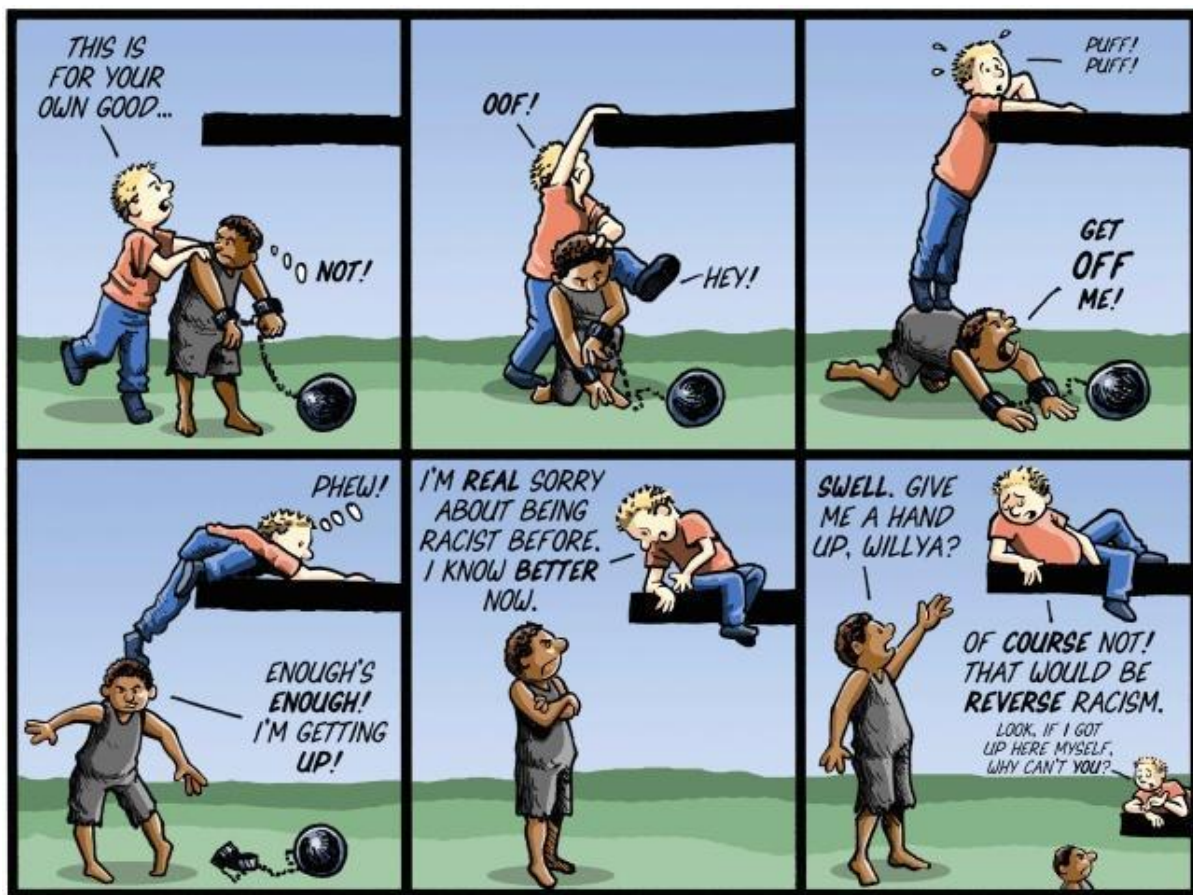
Around the same time, slave-based planting and commercial profits came to £3.8 million (or about £450 million in contemporary terms). Of course profits were not all reinvested, but they did furnish a convenient pool of resources available for this purpose. British West Indian planting profits can be estimated at £2.5 million in 1770, while trading profits on the West India trade were around £1.3 million, at a time when annual slave trading profits were at least £1 million. Even if not all reinvested the slave-generated profits were large enough to have covered a quarter to a third of Britain's overall investment needs.

Notwithstanding the interruptions of war, the plantations made a very substantial contribution for many decades, indeed for the greater part of the century after 1720. Between 1761 and 1808, British traders hauled across the Atlantic 1,428,000 African captives and pocketed £60 million - perhaps £8 billion in today's money - from slave sales.

A study of the activities of 23 London merchants who were heavily involved in the slave trade found they 'played their part in building roads and bridges ... They invested in [other] maritime undertakings, especially whaling; the making of cloth, mainly wool; mining, especially salt, coal, and lime; and the production of building materials, such as lumber, rope, iron and glass.'

Race: White supremacy and racism

So now we have some context for the history of how race was constructed, we can talk about what it looks like today. While we widely condemn the overt enactment of racism, white people are still seen and treated as superior in our global systems of power – a hangover from the colonial hierarchies of race. This is widely referred to as “white supremacy” – this might make you think of the KKK or the national front but actually it’s important to understand that it’s use in current progressive space refers not to extreme acts of overt racism but to the *system* of privileging white people and inferior treatment of peoples of colour across health, education, wealth, employment, housing and all other systems of society.



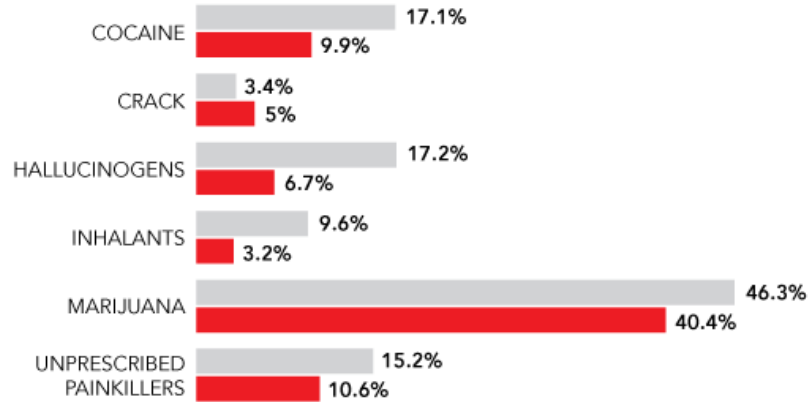
A CONCISE HISTORY OF BLACK-WHITE RELATIONS IN THE U.S.A.

- Alternet article: [10 things everyone should know about white supremacy](#)
- Blog: [The white privilege checklist](#)
- Gary Younger: [Racism is more than old white men using the N-word](#)
- MTV Decoded film: [5 things everyone should understand about racism](#)
- Full length documentary: [Injustice by Ken Fero](#) The struggles for justice by families of people who have died in police custody

Prisoners under state jurisdiction sentenced for drug offenses by race, December 31, 2011



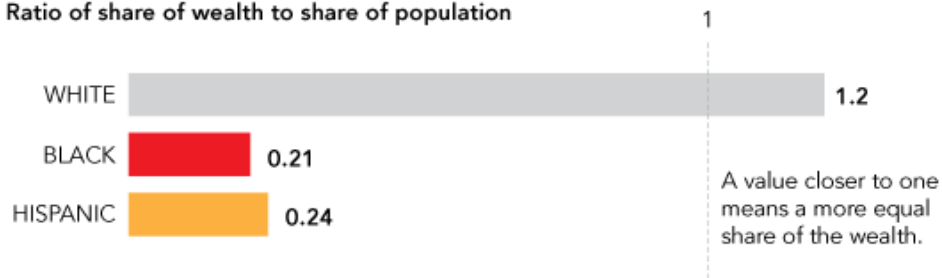
Percent who have ever used these drugs, by race, 2011



Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Bureau of Justice Statistics

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Ratio of share of wealth to share of population



Source: Federal Reserve, Census Bureau

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Mean callback rate by potential employers, by racial soundingness of names



Source: National Bureau of Economic Research

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Race: Microaggressions

So we can see that systems work to disadvantage people based on their racialisation (how they are treated because of where they are put on the hierarchy of race). But it's much easier to understand how overt racism or large systems operate than it is to understand *covert* racism. Microaggressions are the micro interactions people of colour have with white people that reassert the hierarchy of race, often without the white person realising that they are doing it. In these micro interactions people of colour are reminded that they *don't belong* in mainstream space aka whiteness – their *otherness* is constantly reasserted in these minutae ways.

- Resource: [Examples of racial microaggressions](#)
- Video: [How microaggressions are like mosquito bites](#)
- BuzzFeed [photo blog: 21 racial microaggressions you hear on a daily basis](#)
- Film: MTV Decoded [Where are you really from?](#)

Race: People of colour

Language around race is ever evolving and can be confusing. Terms that are considered empowering are dependent on social and historical context, so words that were deemed appropriate 50, 15 or even 5 years ago might be offensive today. The reason language is important is because being referred to in the ways you find empowering validate your experience and existence in the world. On that note, it's important when we talk about race that we don't only focus on racism and white supremacy but also the contributions and expertise of people of colour globally.

- BuzzFeed: On language – [Here's why Coloured is not the same as People of Colour](#)
- Article: [15 things you did not know about Black people in London before 1948](#)
- Huffington Post: Series on [Black Excellence](#)
- Huffington Post: [26 of the most important articles by People of Colour in 2016](#)

Sex workers

Sex work is often the butt of jokes denigrating women, and a point of contention in feminism. Some feminists argue that sex work upholds patriarchy, but sex workers campaign for sex work to be seen as work. Sex workers use their bodies in the means of production as do other workers in post-industrial capitalism. Sex workers campaign tirelessly for decriminalisation so that they are free to unionise and protect themselves against the state and police as much as their clients. There's a lot of debate about which "models" of sex workers are most important – sadly, those conversations are usually had from a point of moralism and without the voices of sex workers themselves being centred.





- Broadly article: [What we owe to the hidden, groundbreaking activism of sex workers](#)
- On why not to use the word prostitute: [p-word 101](#)
- Mic article: [4 feminist reasons why we need to support sex workers](#)
- Huffington Post: [17 facts about sex work and sexual assault](#)

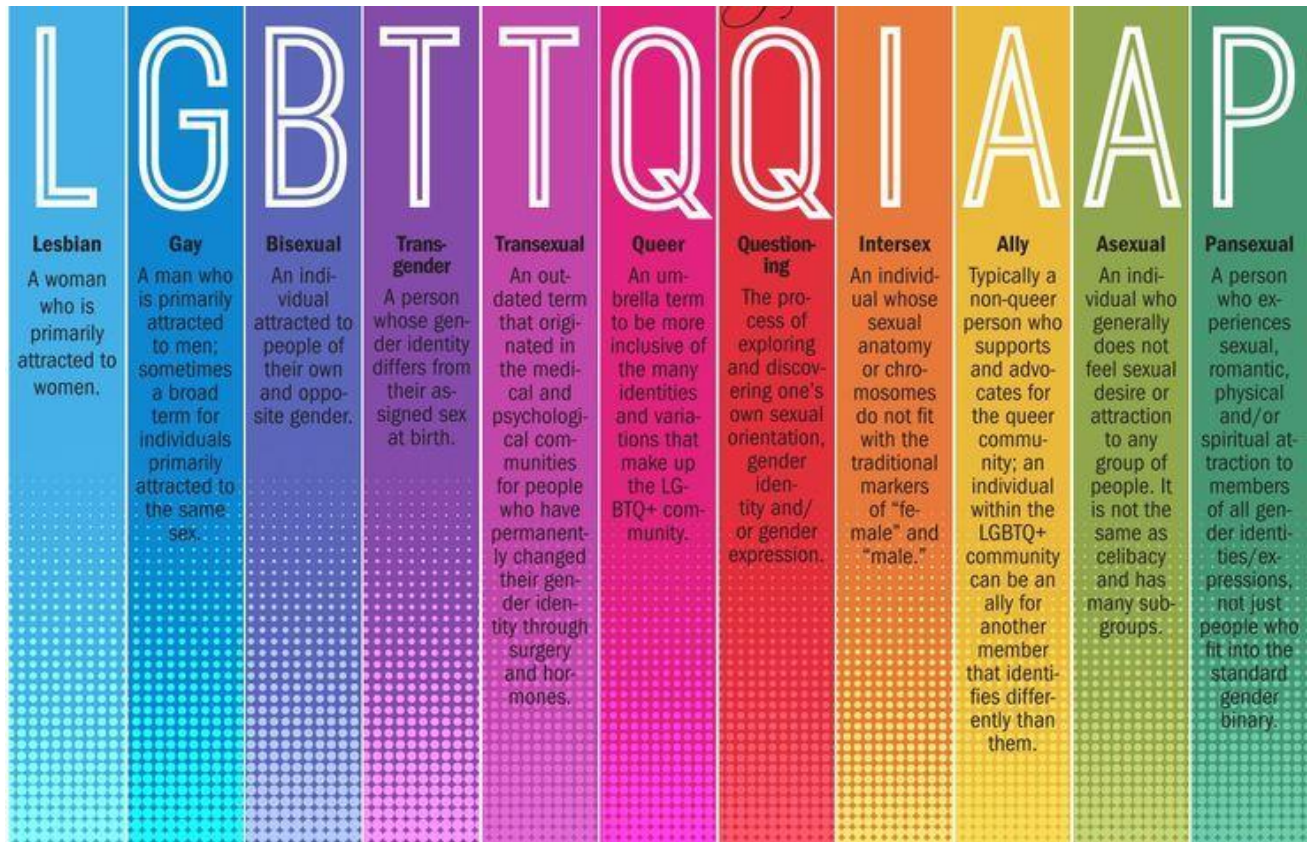
Sexuality: Definitions

It's easy to think that in a post-equal marriage era that sexuality is no longer an identity that experiences much marginalisation, but that isn't true. LGBTQ+ people still face a lot of oppression but we usually only see the most assimilationist and privileged gay people in the media.

Understanding the spectrum of sexuality and identity is confusing at times, with ever-changing and lengthening alphabet soups. We've provided some links to help demystify that.

Statistically, LGBTQ+ people are still failed by many systems in society; housing, bullying, mental health, education, employment and so on. If we assess these statistics purely by white and/or middle class and/or men then the stats are warped, but when we take those categories out we realise that sexuality still has a profound affect on your access to safety and wellbeing.

Finally, the movement for equal marriage certainly saw a sea change in progressive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people in society, but that often obscures many of the real issues of marginalisation. It does not account for heteronormativity and the constant invisibilising of queer people and practice, it also doesn't account for the decades of shame and alienation many LGBTQ+ people have endured. Understanding the reasons that marriage does not mean equality or liberation is important to understanding the struggles of LGBTQ people.



Definitions of terms: [A comprehensive list of LGBTQ terms and their definitions](#)

Everyday feminism article: [3 differences between gay and queer](#)

LGB/Queer: Stats

Albert Kennedy Trust [UK LGBT Youth Homelessness report PDF](#)

The Advocate article: [13 things never to say to a bisexual person](#)

LGB/Queer: heteronormativity

Teen Vogue: [Why heteronormativity is a bad thing](#)

Video: [What is heteronormativity?](#)

LGB/Queer: beyond marriage equality

Articles: [Why didn't gay marriage cure gay loneliness?](#) And a response [Gay loneliness is real but "bitchy, toxic" culture isn't the full story](#)

On institutional homophobia: BuzzFeed article: [Meet the man who stopped thousands of people becoming HIV positive](#)

Buzzfeed: [7 LGBT issues that matter more than gay marriage](#)

Survivors (nb: all links refer to rape and sexual assault, some in detail)

Survivors walk amongst us every day and yet we often work to the assumption that unless someone tells us they are a survivor of rape or sexual assault that they aren't. Views on sexual assault and consent are bound up entirely in patriarchy with a belief that men are entitled to women's (and queer and trans peoples) bodies and therefore the burden of proof on assault is on the shoulders of the survivor. We believe in building a space that centres survivors – their resilience, and experience – without needing to assume who is and isn't a survivor.

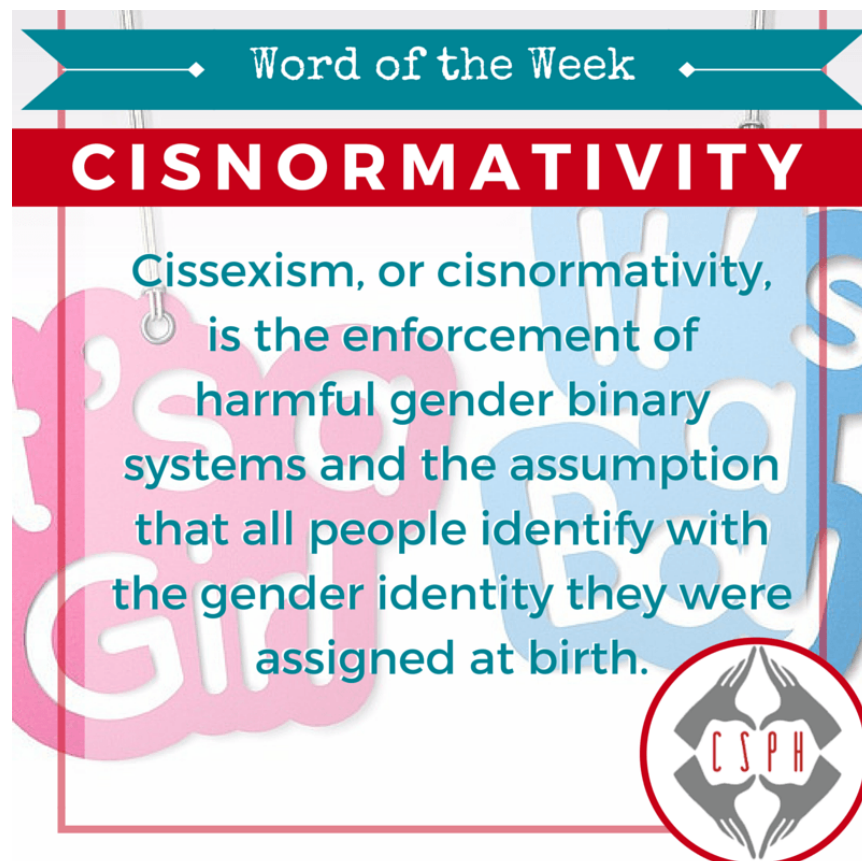
- Cosmopolitan article: [17 beliefs about sexual assault that are wrong](#)
- Thought catalog article: [10 things you shouldn't say to a survivor of sexual assault](#)
- Blog: [Helping a survivor of sexual assault](#)
- Blog: [Survivor versus victim – why choosing your words carefully is important](#)
- Open Democracy article: [victim vs survivor – feminism and language](#)
- LONG read: The Marshall Project [An Unbelievable story of rape](#)
- Video: [consent is as simple as tea](#)
- Cartoon: [What victim blaming really looks like](#)



Trans

Trans people are people who don't feel their gender is the same as the binary woman/man label that society imposes onto them. Biological sex and gender are, like race, social constructs. The categorisation as male/female or woman/man is used to help control the populace and, in particular, define labour roles more easily. Very many people experience themselves outside of this binary. Unfortunately, rather than accepting people's right to define and live their own identities, people across the political spectrum believe that trans people's experience is up for debate and something we are all entitled to an opinion on.

- Everyday feminism: [Transgender 101](#)
- Everyday feminism: [Science doesn't support the sex binary](#)
- Experience the world through a trans person's eyes in short film [Headspace](#)
- On why surgery matters to trans people: Guardian article [Trans Top surgery saved my life](#)
- Everyday feminism blog: [Still think trans women have "Male Privilege": These 7 points prove they don't](#)
- Buzzfeed news: [I'm trans, disabled and tired of fighting to get into bathrooms](#)
- Video: [There's no such thing as a sex change](#)
- Video: [Why pronouns matter for trans people](#)



**“DO YOU WANT HER
IN THE MEN’S ROOM?”**



**ACTUALLY, IF THAT’S WHERE THEY FEEL SAFE,
I WOULDN’T MIND ANYONE BEING THERE
BECAUSE I DON’T JUDGE PEOPLE OF
ANY IDENTITY BASED ON HOW THEY LOOK.**

**THE ARGUMENT THAT TRANS WOMEN “LOOK WRONG” IN
THE MEN’S ROOM BECAUSE THEY LOOK STEREOTYPICALLY
FEMININE PERPETUATES THE IDEA THAT TRANS PEOPLE’S
RIGHTS AND SAFETY ONLY MATTER WHEN THEY “PASS”.**

Trans: non-binary

Many people who don't identify with the sex or gender that society imposes on them feel non-binary; without gender, between genders or ambivalent to gender. Some non-binary people identify as trans and some don't. Arguably, we are all non-binary as the policing of binary gender categories are so strict that even people who identify with the gender identity that society imposes on them can't actually perform gender as pure. But visibly not fitting into the gender binary often places non-binary people at the sharp end of anti-trans violence.

Seattle Non-binary collective: [Non-binary 101](#)

Guardian article: ["My life without gender: strangers are desperate to know what genitalia I have"](#)

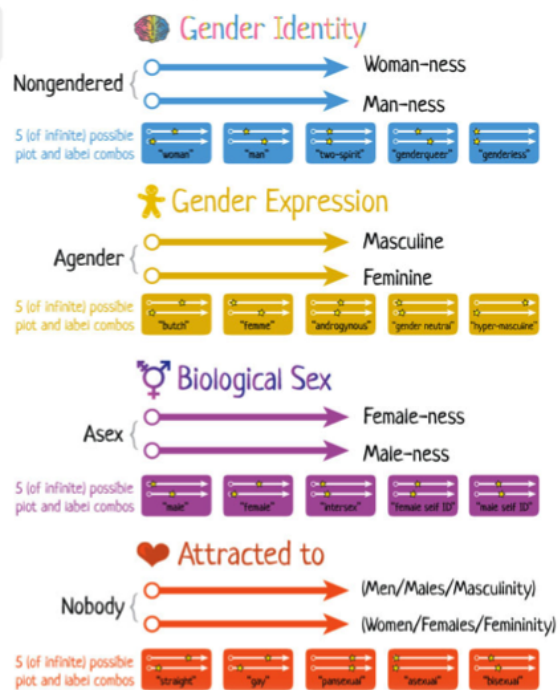
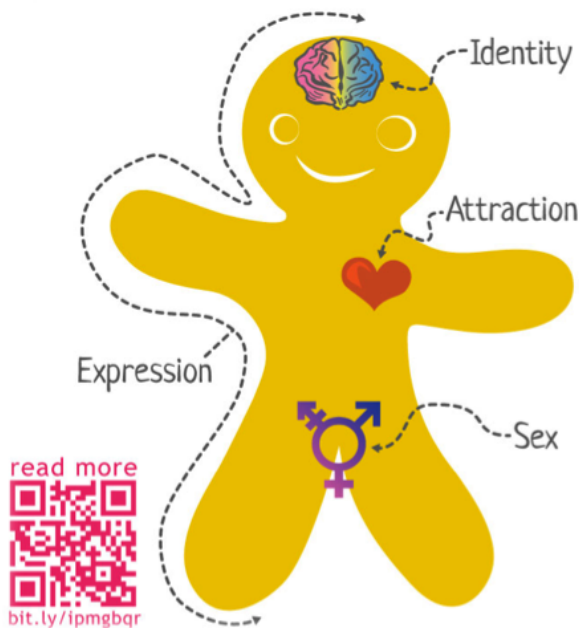
Cosmopolitan article: [I don't identify as a woman: Will the women's movement still fight for me?](#)

Bustle article: [12 questions about non-binary people you've been afraid to ask](#)

Alok Vaid-Menon: [\(cis\)-gay progress --> trans backlash](#)

The Genderbread Person v2.0 by its pronounced METROsexual.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more.



Working Class

Class or socioeconomic status is a societal construct that indicates an individual or group's social standing or class in respect to others in society. It is commonly measured by taking into consideration an individual or groups' education, income and occupation.

Class is so culturally specific that it's hard to talk about as universal. The social structure of the UK has historically been highly influenced by the concept of social class, which continues to affect British society today. Focussing on class in the British context it's broadly defined by three social strata: are three major categories referred to when allocating a socioeconomic status: upper, middle, and working class..

Class is inherently bound up with money, but in the British context it's not *only* to do with money, but all the ways that money gives you access to power; job opportunity, social networks, education, housing and so on. It is possible in the UK to be both filthy rich and also working class because class is as much about status and social rules as it is about wealth.

Working class activists are often marginalised in activists spaces - from having their ideas dismissed, lives romanticised, to their lifestyle choices criticised. Middle class people can tend to dominate movements and perpetuate privileged positions and views.

- Activist class culture: [resources on understanding the way class shows up in community organising and activist spaces](#)
- OpenDemocracy: [7 everyday things poor people worry about that rich people never do](#)
- Class from an Upper class perspective: [My public school days & the building of upper class solidarity](#)
- Cartoon: [Pencilsword – On A Plate – a cartoon about class and privilege](#)