

WHAT IS ANTI-OPPRESSION?

[HTTPS://THEANTIOPPRESSIONNETWORK.COM/WHAT-IS-ANTI-OPPRESSION/](https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/what-is-anti-oppression/)

(the information on this page is public commons – please do share!)

Oppression is the use of power to disempower, marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group or category, often in order to further empower and/or privilege the oppressor. Social oppression may not require formally established organizational support to achieve its desired effect; it may be applied on a more informal, yet more focused, individual basis.

The Anti-Oppression network seeks to recognize the oppressions that exist in our society, and attempts to mitigate its affects and eventually equalize the power imbalance in our communities.

Basically there are certain groups in our society and communities that hold power over others based on their membership in those groups. For example, if you were to look at the demographics of the CEO's of any major corporation, city council, parliament etc. you would notice that most if not all of these positions of great power are populated by white (publicly straight) males. On the flip side, if you were to look at the demographics of janitorial staff or fast food workers you might notice that these positions are populated largely by persons of colour, specifically women of colour. When studying the statistics of those receiving social assistance, or state aid, you would also notice that the vast majority of those in our communities living in this poverty are folks with disabilities and the elderly.

Black people | Women | People of Colour | LGBT2IQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, 2spirit, Intersex, Queer people | Seniors/Elders | Folks with disabilities | Low-income people | People of Indigenous ancestry | Children/Teenagers/Youth | Fat folks | Peoples with mental health struggles | New immigrants/Refugees | ELL – English Language Learners | Marginalized animal species | etc. (Certainly there are more, and communities like LGBT2IQ are problematic where as oppression exists where the more privileged believe their needs are greater than others)

Personal Responsibility

Practicing anti-oppression work in real terms is not only confronting individual examples of bigotry, or confronting societal examples, it is also confronting ourselves and our own roles of power and oppression in our communities and the bigger picture.

Though you may be a person that would never think to ever say anything racist/sexist/classist etc., by not realizing the power that you hold, and how your actions affect other people you will inevitably fall into sustaining and contributing to a larger system of oppression.

Kyriarchy

The theory of kyriarchy is that individually we are all oppressed while we are all oppressors. While you may be a person who is historically marginalized (a person of colour for example) you may also have a role and be a member of a group that is oppressive to others (while you are a person of colour, you may also be a man, an abled person, upper/middle class, straight etc.) The idea is that no single oppression holds more weight than another, and that we all have a role in combating oppression and unequal power dynamics.

Links:

(The information above was taken – in part – from this page. It is very similar to much information online.)

http://wiki.freegeekvancouver.org/article/What_is_Anti-Oppression%3F

for a more comprehensive definition of oppression and other terminology check out: <https://theantioppressionnetwork.wordpress.com/resources/terminologies-of-oppression/>