Racial Definitions¹
From the Perspective of the American Experience

**Stereotyping** – the negative characterization of individuals or groups (usually of color) without any factual basis.

**Prejudice** – a *belief* in unfavorable stereotypes of others that is not based on experience or fact (attitude-based).

**Discrimination** – *behavior or conduct* toward others based on prejudice that may limit an individual’s or group’s opportunities in life (conduct-based).

**Racism** – *outcomes* rooted in historical prejudices and discriminatory acts (attitude + conduct) which are systemic in nature and result in inequities or disparities for some racial or ethnic individuals/groups. Often the outcomes are based in misuse of power by a dominant group.

**Institutional racism** – the *practices* of racism exercised by public or private institutions (for example, police departments, financial, educational, real estate, etc.) that create ongoing inequities for specific racial or ethnic individuals/groups.

**Structural racism** – a deep-rooted *system* in which history, ideology, public policies, institutional practices, and culture interact to maintain a racial hierarchy that creates advantages (privileges) associated with whiteness, and disadvantages associated with color that endure and adapt over time.

**White Privilege** – is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society.

¹ These definitions are not trademarked by Everyday Democracy. They are provided for your use as a starting point for exploring racial equity in your community. We leaned heavily upon our learnings and the resources of the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change.