

# Definitions

**Prejudice** is an attitude based on limited information, often on stereotypes. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative. Positive and negative prejudices are both damaging, especially when directed toward oppressed people, because they deny the individuality of the person. In some cases, the prejudices of oppressed people (for example, ‘You can’t trust the police’) are necessary for survival. No one is free of prejudice.

**Racism** is:

- A system of advantage for white people
- The systematic oppression of people of color
- A belief in the supremacy of white people and the institutional power to enforce that belief

**White Privilege** is a set of advantages that are enjoyed by white people beyond those commonly experienced by non-white people in the same social, political, and economic spaces. White privilege can be differentiated from racism or prejudice because a person who benefits from white privilege is not necessarily racist or prejudiced and may be unaware of having any privileges reserved only for whites.

**Oppression** is the systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic and political benefit of the more powerful social group.

Oppression exists when the following four conditions are found.

1. The oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others.
2. The target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them).
3. Genocide, harassment and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going.
4. Members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.