Ward 8 Forum

Equity Conversations (Understanding Terms & Terminology)

Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Team

Toronto District School Board

Learning Goals

What?

- Providing understanding of key terminology encompassing equity, anti-oppression and anti-racism work.

Why?

- Unpack how equity and anti-oppression work plays out in schools

- Reflect on systems and structures of oppression that impact students' success.

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Setting Context: Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Leadership

Leadership Development

What is our goal?
To support educators and leaders to have the knowledge, skills, and resources to ensure anti-oppressive and equitable practices are in place to support student learning, well-being, effective instruction and service excellence.

Leadership Development in Equity & Anti-Oppression
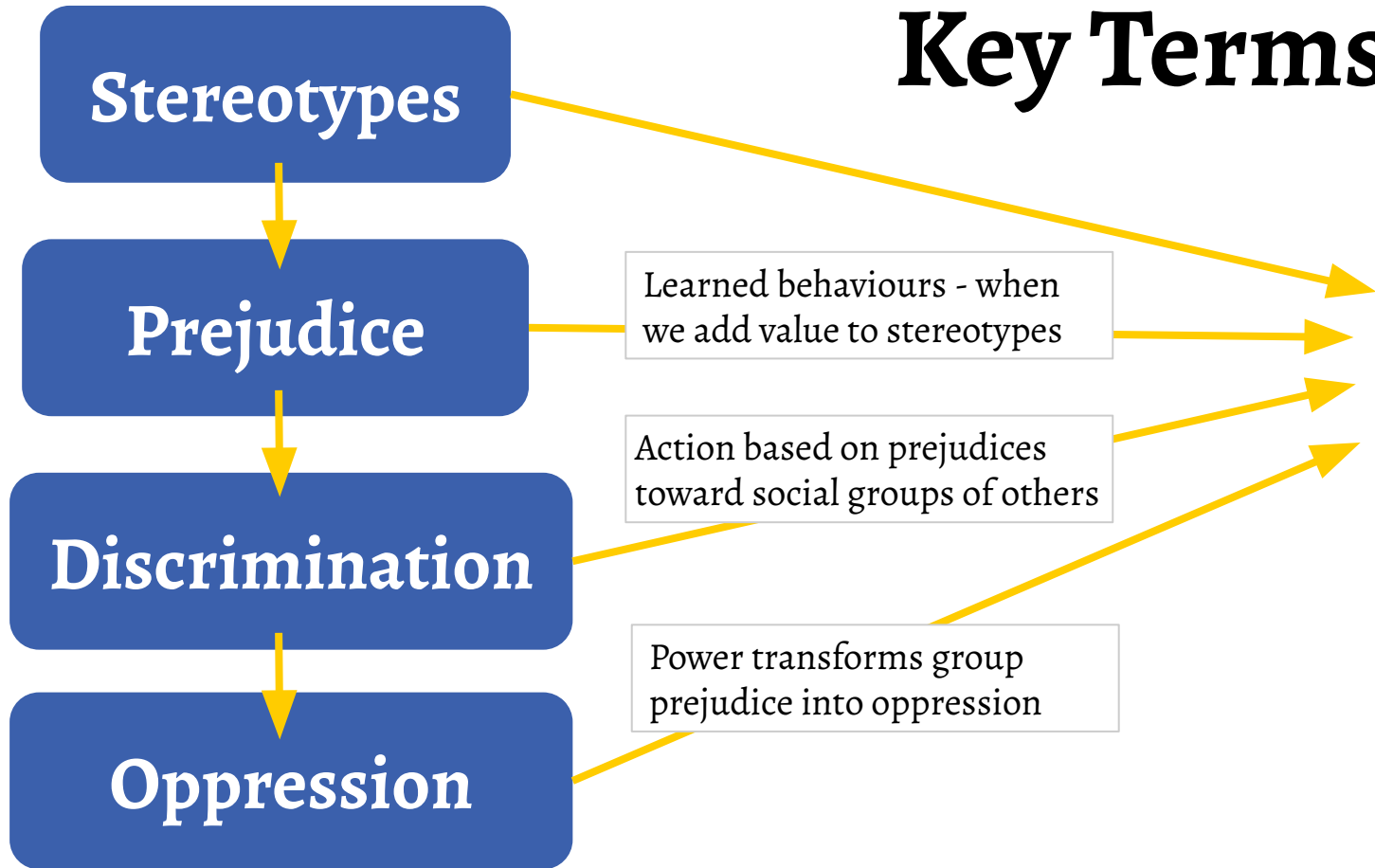
What is our goal?

To support District and site leaders to develop skills and a capacity to address issues of human rights, equity and anti-oppression at the system and classroom levels.

To strengthen our organizational culture to foster shared leadership, ensure learning cultures embody human rights and support the achievement of all of our students and the priorities in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
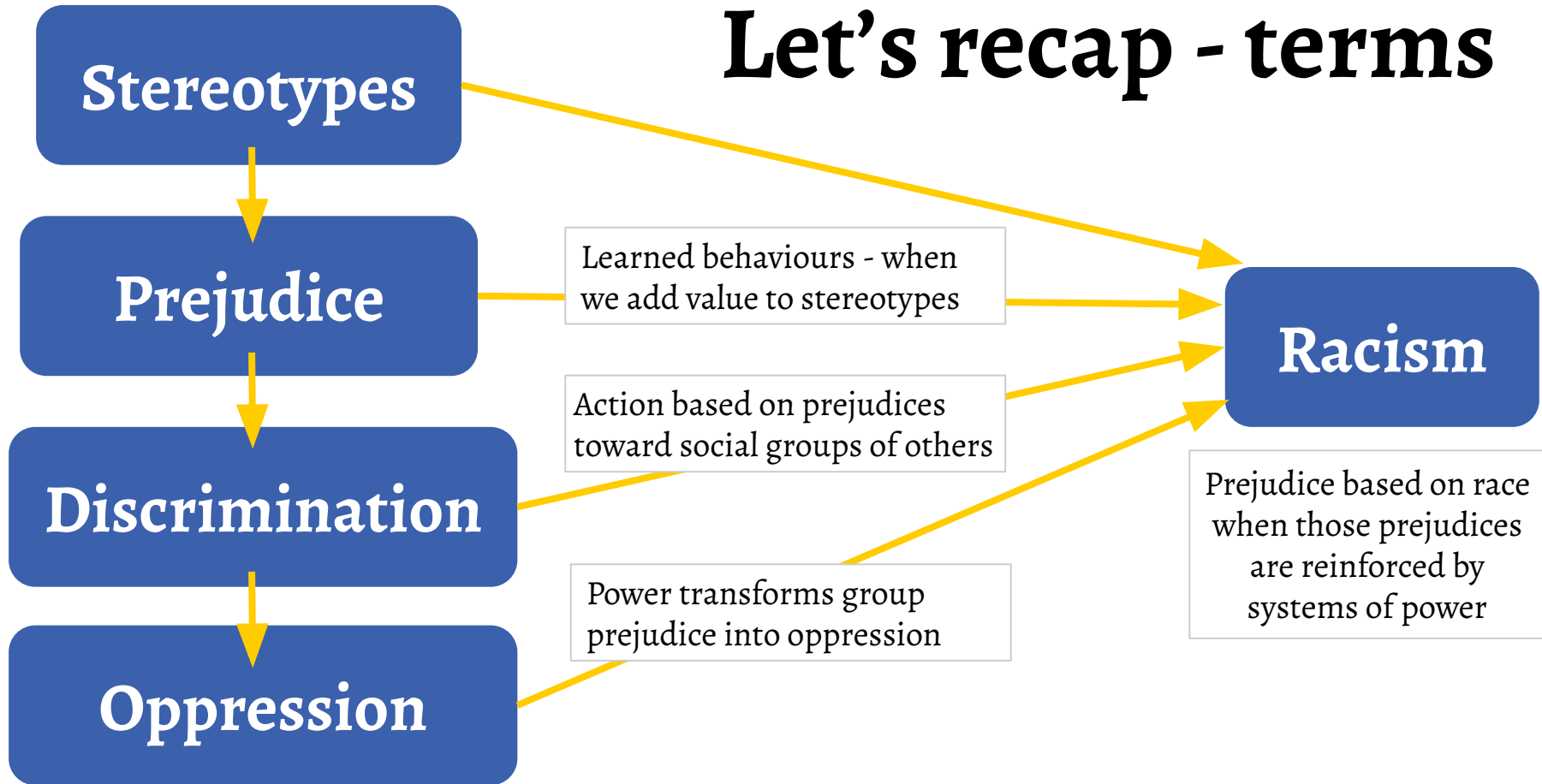
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Common Understanding: Equity

Equity ensures equality of opportunities and outcomes for all by responding fair and proportionality to the needs of individuals. Equity is not the same as equal treatment because it recognizes a social-cultural power imbalance that unfairly privilege some while oppressing others and therefore focuses on redressing disparity - meeting individual needs to ensure fair access, outcomes and participation that results in equality, acknowledging historical and present systemic discrimination against identified groups and removing barriers, eliminating discrimination and remedying the impact of past discrimination and current oppression. Equity practices ensure fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities and intersectionality of multiple social identities, access to privileges and impacts of oppression. Equity honours and accommodates the specific needs of individuals/ groups.

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Key Terms

Stereotypes

Prejudice

Learned behaviours - when we add value to stereotypes

Discrimination

Action based on prejudices toward social groups of others

Oppression

Power transforms group prejudice into oppression

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Let's recap - terms

Stereotypes

Prejudice

Discrimination

Oppression

Learned behaviours - when we add value to stereotypes

Action based on prejudices toward social groups of others

Power transforms group prejudice into oppression

Racism

Prejudice based on race when those prejudices are reinforced by systems of power

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Common Understanding: Race

Race is a socially constructed way of judging, categorizing and creating difference among people based on physical characteristics such as skin colour, eye, lips and nose shape, hair texture and body shape.

The process of social construction of race is termed **racialization**. This is the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life.

Individuals may have prejudices related to various racialized characteristics. In addition to physical features, these characteristics could include accent, dialect or manner of speech, name, clothing and grooming, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, and places of origin.

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Common Understanding: Racism

A set of assumptions, opinions, and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another.

Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Racism is about a relationship of unequal power.

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Source: Toronto District School Board Equity Policy P037 (2018)

Common Understanding: Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy.

Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifested in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.

Toronto District School Board (2020) "Expected Practices for Understanding and Dealing with Discrimination," cited from Anti-Racism Directorate in Ontario's *Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism*

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Common Understanding: Anti-Racism

Anti-Racism is the practice of **identifying**, **challenging**, and **changing** the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism. Anti-racism examines **the power imbalances** between racialized people and non-racialized/White people.

Anti-racist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may foster racism, implicit bias, colonial settler privilege, and White privilege as well as the racist attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices.

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Common Understanding: Anti-oppressive Education

Anti-Oppressive Education is premised on the notion that many "traditional" and "common sense" ways of engaging in education contributes to oppression in schools and society. It also relies on the notion that many "common sense" approaches to education reform mask or exacerbate oppressive education methods. The consequences of anti-oppressive education include a deep commitment to changing how educators conceptualize and engage in curriculum, pedagogy, classroom management and school culture. There is a recognition that bias and barriers exist and are reinforced within the institutional structure and policies and therefore must be must be transformed along with the teaching practices.
Anti-oppressive education, explores privileges and power imbalances within social groups and structures and expects to be different, perhaps uncomfortable, and even controversial.

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Connections to School: Equity Goal

A goal embedded in Equity:

- Supports educators in ensuring the implementation of the achievement and well-being for students.

- Supports adults building their consciousness to ensure they are able to enact the goals for students.

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Next Steps: School Equity Goal

Moving forward, how might you use your lived experiences and understandings of equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression to continue your involvement in your school community?

What do you see as your role in the creation of your school's equity goal?

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Next Steps: Committing to Action

"I am no longer accepting the things
I cannot change. I am changing the things I
cannot accept."

\- Angela Davis

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