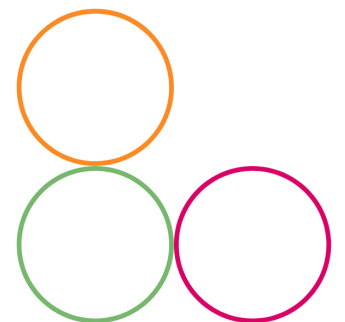




# An Introduction to Intersectionality

definitions and concepts



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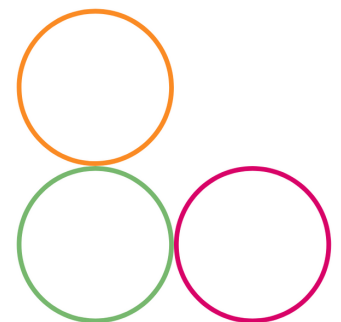
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This informative e-book does not contain professional advice. For professional advice or comprehensive training on Intersectionality, please connect with us!  
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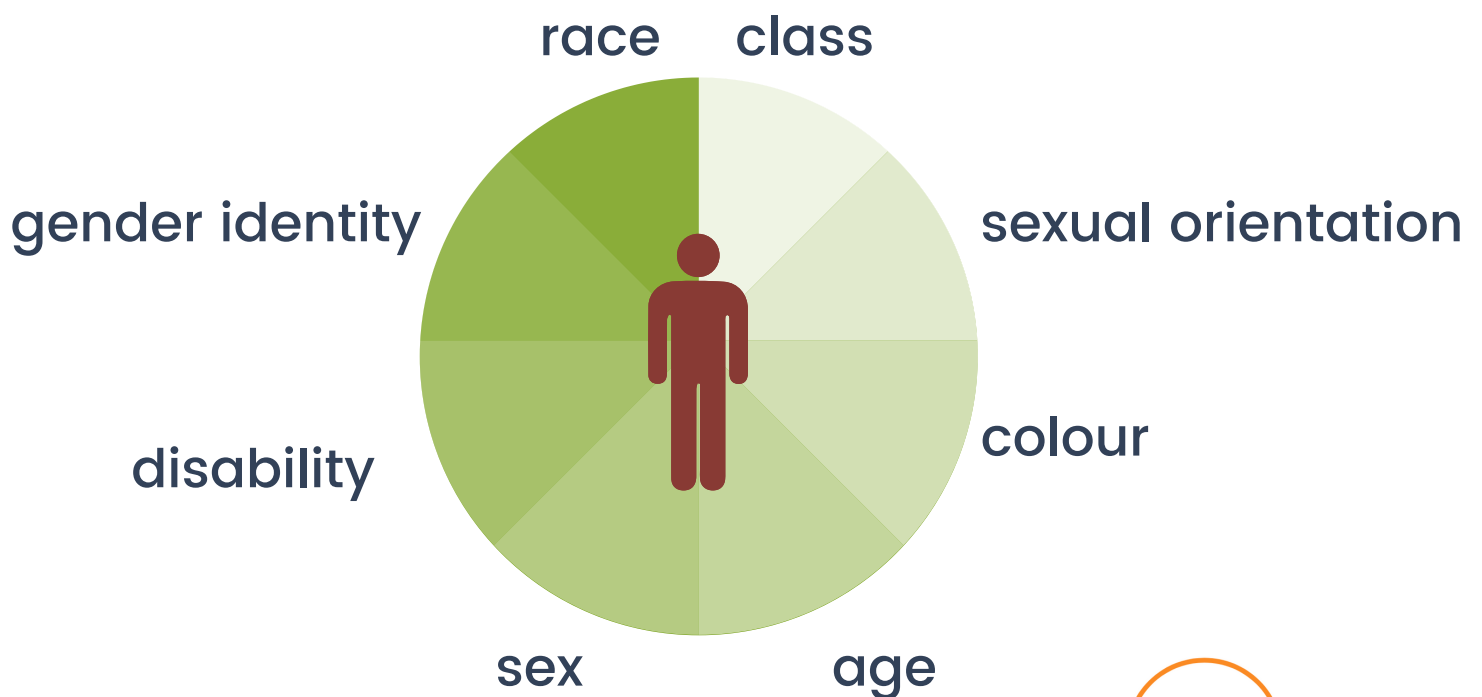


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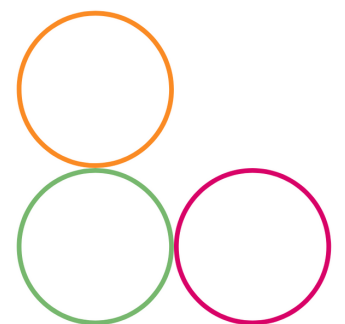


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Intersectionality is a term that was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a Professor at Columbia University. "Intersectionality" implies the intersection of multiple identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and class.



People at the intersection of multiple identities have a unique experience, as they navigate through spaces, because each identity carries with it certain "baggage." This figurative baggage can be full of **discrimination** or it can be full of **privilege**. It all depends on which baggage, i.e., which identities a person carries with them.



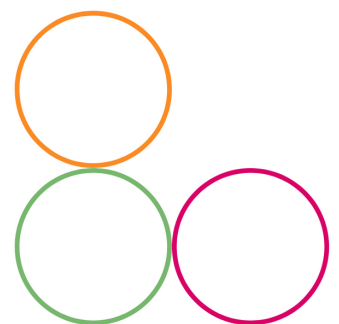
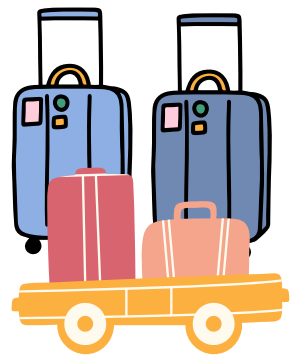
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Some people belong to multiple identity groups that have each historically experienced oppression. For instance, consider a person who identifies as:

- a woman; and
- a racialized person; and
- a transgender person; and
- someone experiencing poverty.

This person's lived experience will be one where the intersection of all of their identities create a uniquely discriminatory experience for them. In other words, their experience of discrimination is amplified because they not only experience sex discrimination, but also trans discrimination, racial discrimination, and class discrimination. They find themselves at the intersection of multiple, historically marginalized identities, each of which contribute to their experience of discrimination.



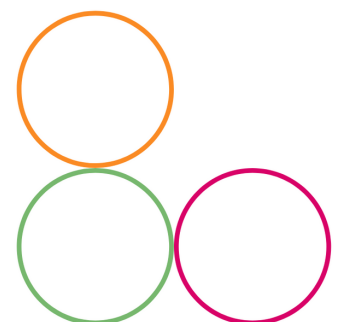
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Similarly, some people belong to multiple identity groups that have historically experienced privilege. For instance, consider a person who identifies as:

- white; and
- male; and
- cisgender; and
- straight; and
- able-bodied; and
- wealthy.

As this person navigates through spaces throughout their lifetime, he experiences the privileges that each of his identities carries. He not only experiences male privilege, but also the privilege of being white, wealthy, cisgender, and straight. The intersection of these various identities creates a unique form of compounded privilege experienced by this person. This person's lived experiences will never be the same as the lived experiences of a racialized trans woman (the example on the previous page) or a white male with a disability.



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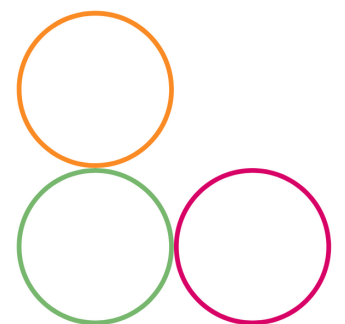
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Intersectionality is important because people at the intersection at multiple identities, such as race and gender, never experience only one form of discrimination, i.e., racial discrimination. Their experience of discrimination is both racialized and gendered.

Considering the following example:

Which of the three identities do you think would most likely face greater surveillance by campus security at a North American university campus?

- 1) A young, able-bodied Black man
- 2) A young, Black man with a visible disability
- 3) An elderly, able-bodied white woman.

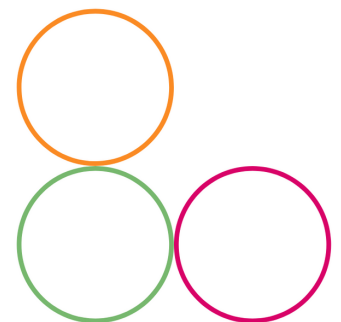


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While it may not always be true, chances are that the young, able-bodied Black man will experience greater surveillance by campus police because of historically pervasive and problematic stereotypes held about young, able-bodied Black men in North America. These problematic stereotypes include being (wrongly) perceived as "dangerous."\*The young Black man with a visible disability would likely experience surveillance too, but could perhaps be perceived as less of a "threat" to campus security because of his visible disability. In any case, both young, Black men would likely experience greater surveillance by campus security compared to an elderly, able-bodied white woman.



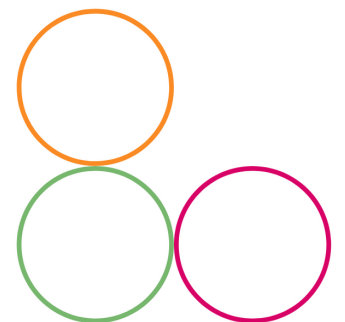
\*see [Policing the Black Man](#) by Angela J. Davis.



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In order to understand and dismantle systems of oppression, we have to understand the multi-layered, discriminatory impact that intersectionality has on people, and, equally, the privileges that it affords certain other people.



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"Black Feminists (Hill Collins; King) have long argued that race, gender, class, and other social identities cannot be separated because they function independently and accompany an individual into every interaction or experience. In other words, challenging monolithic conceptions of communities requires an understanding of how these multiple social identities operate in and through one another to produce diverse experiences. Such an analysis appreciates the complex relationality of these multiple identities that frame individuals' social, economic, and political lives."

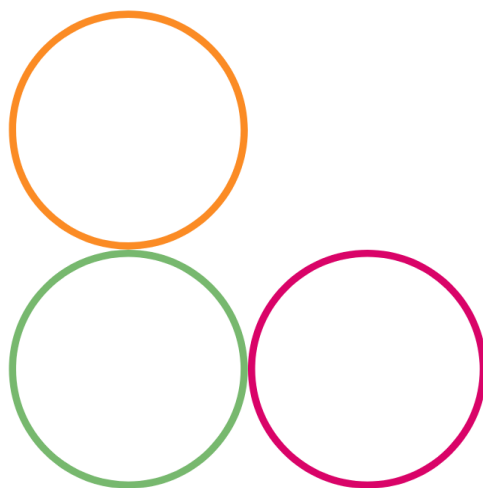
- Ingrid R.G. Waldron





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intersectionality, connect with us!  
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