

# Community Agreement

The Community Agreement reflects FOCS' Mission and Vision that helps to promote a safe and loving community for families of color. This Agreement is essential in helping our dialogues to grow and be a respectful learning space. Growth can be uncomfortable and challenge what you believe and what you have experienced, which may differ for others. This is an important process to honor so that we can be constantly learning and growing with our children to help them become strong and compassionate people of color.

1. **Move Up, Move Up.** Be conscious of your privilege and careful about taking up space. We ask those at the top of power hierarchies (e.g. white, cis male, affluent) to consciously make room for those that are disempowered. We simultaneously encourage those who are typically marginalized and unheard (e.g. people of color, cis women, \*trans, gender fluid or non-conforming, queer, low income), to step forward and be centered.
2. **Speak Using “I” Statements.** Acknowledge your experience is uniquely yours and that others are experts in *their own* experience.
3. **Practice Receptive (not predatory) Listening.** Listen with as fully an open mind and heart as you can, not with the motive of disproving or arguing a person's testimonial to prove your own points.
4. **It's OK to Make Mistakes. It's Not OK to Avoid Accountability.** Progress cannot happen without risks. Risks can lead to missteps and that's okay. We always appreciate a person's courage in trying something new. But we also ask you to realize that mistakes are sometimes hurtful and when hurt happens: responsibility and accountability are key. Think intent versus impact.
5. **Call People Out *And* In.** Calling In = asking questions or someone's experience, clarifying statements, etc. Calling Out = transformative disagreement (e.g. “my experience differs from you,” “I disagree,” “that statement can be dangerous because”).
6. **Resolve Conflicts through TRUST, SAFETY & RESPECT.** We can and should have the hard conversations; dig deep; share experiences; work to understand with compassion. But transformation cannot happen if our space is unsafe: if lived lives are not honored and people are not met where they're at. Conflicts will arise but we can keep moving forward if we respect, listen when needed, and hold trust and safety at the middle of our dialogues.

# Common Language: Definitions

by Sharon H Chang

**Cis / Trans\* / Gender Fluid, Gender Non-Conforming, (Gender)Queer:** How one relates or does not relate to birth-assigned gender. Those who conform to birth-assigned gender are *cisgender* (e.g. “cis woman”); identify as different than birth-assigned gender are *transgender*; identify with both male/female variously are *gender fluid*; reject all assignment are *gender non-conforming*. *(Gender)Queer* is an umbrella term referring to anyone who feels outside gender and sexuality societal norms.

**Colorism:** Favoritism towards lighter skin tone and prejudice against darker skin tone practiced among group(s) of color but typically rooted in, supported ongoing, and pushed externally by white supremacy and systemic racism.

**Internalized racism:** When people of color consciously or subconsciously accept white racist views, stereotypes and biases against their own racial group(s). Such internalization is encouraged by white supremacy, is very damaging for people of color, and can result in self-minimizing, criticizing, invalidating, and hating oneself while simultaneously over-valuing white dominant culture.

**Multiracial:** Also *mixed-race* (of which *biracial* is a subset). A person who can be categorized as belonging to more than one racial group. The experience of being multiracial may be particularly strong for those who are generationally close to their mixed heritage (e.g. through parents or grandparents) and/or who “appear” visibly multiracial to others.

**Race:** A psychosocial idea developed (and perpetuated still) by whites that people can be divided into hierarchically organized categories based on the way they look with whites occupying the top.

**Racism:** Pervasive social prejudice plus power emerging from the race hierarchy. Refers to the many individual, *institutional* and *systemic* ways whites are disproportionately advantaged and empowered, while groups of color are disproportionately disadvantaged and disempowered. *Anti-Black racism* refers specifically to the experience of racism by Blacks and those of African descent and emphasizes anti-Blackness as the fulcrum of white supremacy.

**Transracial:** Originates from adoptive and academic circles to describe the lived experience of children raised in homes that are phenotypically and culturally different from their birth. Most commonly used in the context of *transracial adoptions* (e.g. “transracial adoptee”).

**White privilege:** A set of advantages and/or immunities that white people benefit from on a daily basis beyond those common to all others. White privilege maintains the racial hierarchy and often exists without white people's conscious knowledge of its presence.

**White supremacy:** The belief, theory, or doctrine that white people are inherently superior to people from all other racial groups, especially Black people, and are therefore rightfully the dominant group in any society.