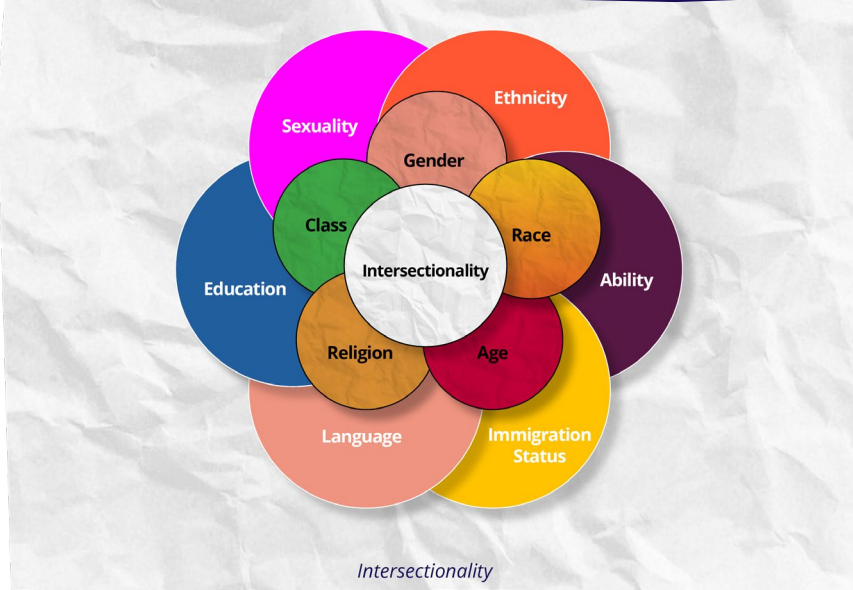


# Intersectionality



Like many terms that have become mainstream, intersectionality can be controversial, so it's helpful to clarify what we mean by it. Defined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a Black legal scholar in the US, 'intersectionality' describes how race, gender, class, sexuality, and other characteristics intersect and overlap to create different experiences of oppression, discrimination, and privilege.

Activists of earlier generations note that intersectionality was a concept and practise long before it was introduced in legal studies. Indigenous peoples and Asian, African, and Latin American feminists of earlier generations, particularly those working in popular education, focused on interconnected forms of oppression.



The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women, we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of colour face.

- Combahee Collective, 1974

Like many political ideas, intersectionality is contested by the right and the left. But a critical analysis of the intersections between our different identities is a core part of building individual and collective awareness and power. We come to recognise and celebrate the different and converging sources of our power as well as our oppression. This can inspire us to mobilise within and across our identities for change, find common ground, and create alliances.