Intersectionality 101

*In the 1960s-1980s, political movements concerning Black, women’s, and gay liberation gained traction globally. Although there was occasional crossover between the organisation of these movements, some staunch supporters believed their cause to hold greater precedence over the others. This attitude created turmoil for supporters whose identity crossed over into different groups, for example, who does a Black, gay man support when he experiences discrimination in the world for his identities, but also discrimination within liberation movements for his other protected characteristics?*

**What is intersectionality?**

The term “intersectionality” was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a leading expert in race and gender studies.

Intersectionality explains the connection of various parts of a person’s identity that combine to reinforce each other, creating new modes of oppression. Another way of explaining intersectionality is to view it as overlapping and *intersecting* parts of your social identity which contribute to the likelihood of you experiencing more or less privilege. Intersectionality highlights the interconnected nature of oppression, showing how pieces of your identity cannot be separated and discrimination based on your identity cannot be solved by tackling individual parts.

**Which elements contribute to my identity?**

Things like our gender, race, ability, age, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, religion, education and more, all form part of our identity. Some of these elements of our identity, when added together, create multiple levels of injustice.

**Why is intersectionality important?**

There is often a focus on individual minoritised groups, and sometimes the detrimental impact of belonging to more than one of these groups is overlooked. For example, if a Black female who identifies as a lesbian faces discrimination, it can be difficult to understand the cause, or how to address the situation. Is the individual experiencing sexism? Homophobia? Racism? Or all three?

We can’t fit everyone into one category or box, we as individuals are more unique and complicated than that!

Here is an interesting TED talk by Prof. Kimberlé Crenshaw on [the urgency of intersectionality](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o).

Please note, at 16:30-16:48 there are some distressing images of police violence against black women.