





Separating people out in this way makes it easier to deny certain zip codes and neighborhoods resources such as grocery stores, bicycle lanes, public transportation and more by making the argument that those residents don't need or can't financially support such amenities so why even bother building them, Bailey said.

Some experts point to the Baltimore neighborhood where, Freddie Gray, was arrested in April 2015, suffered a spinal injury in police custody and died as an

economic and political systems in which we all exist," according to the [Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Community Change](#)

Structural racism refers to interdependence of one institution to the next, said Alyasah Sewell, an associate professor of sociology at Emory University and the founding director of The Race and Policing Project. It functions much as the sections of a spider web, each touching the next, she said.

"It's when black kids are disproportionately put into special education classes, become disruptive out of boredom, are expelled from school, and then they are criminalized as adults," Sewell said. "Once you get in that space of being in prison it locks you into a trajectory in life of competing for resources. Once you have the mark of a criminal, it invades every aspect of your life. You can't get an apartment or a job."

Structural racism is currently playing out in the ways people of color who disproportionately make up the [invisible army of workers](#) -- all now deemed "essential" to help the nation reopen are being impacted, Bailey said.

"We're able to see differences in how people are valued," said Bailey who co-authored a 2017 paper in [The Lancet](#) examining racial health inequity.

If systemic racism is the large spider web, and structural racism the sections of the web that touch, then institutional racism is the threads that run throughout, experts say. It is racism that occurs within social and governmental institutions and refers to the blocking of people of color from the distribution of resources in a systematic way that benefits whites, Sewell said.











should not have to cater to the comfort of white people. We shouldn't limit justice based on the comfort of white people. White fragility is that inherent sense that you have to take care of white people and their feelings."

This refers to the "quotidian racial slights that accumulate and make a person feel marginalized," Gillespie said.

Microaggression

organization,' " Bailey said adding "It's a microaggression a lot of people of color experience every day. Then, for the sole person of color in the room, the onus is on them to say 'What do you mean not the right fit?'

"And then they question 'why don't we have a diverse staff?' "

Microaggressions also occur in other spaces such as classrooms, television casting, bars and other places, experts said. They point out that asking where someone of color is "really from", constantly mistaking one person of color for another or suggesting that they look like another person of color and having an expectation that a person of color should sound a certain way are all common microaggressions.

Gillespie said common microaggressions include "not speaking to people of color in the hallway or in meetings when you speak to others. Telling a black person, 'you are so articulate.' Telling someone who is Asian American or LatinX that 'you speak English so well.' If you are a teacher that makes basketball references and always look over at the black kid."

"The example of the black girl on the reality show who is going to be a "trouble maker", grabbing your purse in a store when a black teen walks by, all of these are microaggressions," Gillespie said.

- in this context is "when a white person claims expertise on racial issues to a person of color," Gillespie said.

With Americans taking to the streets to protest the killing of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody, corporate America is now using this national moment to speak out on racism and pledge a [renewed commitment to diversity and inclusion](#).



As many Americans work to confront the ways racism impacts their lives in broader systemic and individual ways, it's important to be open to self reflection and learning more from others--especially from the lived experiences of people of color, sociology and African American studies experts told ABC News.

"Challenge yourself with difficult writings. If you are in a space where you are in a position of power, endeavor to listen more than you speak," Gillespie said. "This is definitely a time of listening and reflecting and intentionality. No one is asking anybody to walk on eggshells. If you are someone who feels like they walk into a space like they own it consider whether you feel you can do that because of the privileges you have and because of your whiteness. If someone points something out to you, be willing to ask questions if you don't understand. But also be willing to receive the critique."