The Words We Use: Human Rights Glossary

Introduction

The definitions to follow are terms people use when talking about equity and anti-oppression. Equity language is tricky because it changes a lot, as people who experience oppression continue to evolve their analysis and language in order to resist that oppression. Equity language renames communities, social relations and circumstances, to better reflect the particular histories and realities of marginalized peoples.

Often, people may feel awkward and irritated that it's so "hard to get it right." Even a word or definition which seems to have wide support, can offend someone, for whom that word or definition applies. Hence, when it comes to equity language, it's always best to check it out and find out how people would like to be named. To that end, the definitions in this glossary will require reviewing and updating over time. Should you come across a term in this document that appears out of date, please let the Programs section know.

Sources

The original glossary was part of a glossary that appears in: Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations. Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas. Toronto, Between the Lines Publications, January 2006.

For terms contained in the Employment Equity Act, definitions are either derived from the Act itself, or from materials from Employment and Social Development Canada's Labour Program.

We also adapted definitions from "To Our Allies: Everything you ever wanted to know about LGBT Issues..." produced by the Canadian Labour Congress, and from the Canadian Union of Public Employees course Challenging Homophobia in the Workplace.

Also included are terms and explanations from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Equity Toolkit.

This document is regularly updated, and definitions may be revised as the understanding of human rights evolves.

Ableism

Attitudes and beliefs in society that devalue and limit the potential and opportunities for people with disabilities and reduce their inclusion in their communities. It sees people with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate and having less inherent value than others.

It is a pervasive system of discrimination (conscious or unconscious) and exclusion that oppresses people who are defined as "disabled" in relation to a concept of "ability" or "able-bodied" as the norm, and who are therefore excluded from participation in society because of systems, physical infrastructure, prejudices, and barriers that are based on this "norm".

People with disabilities experience discrimination, segregation and isolation as a result of other people's prejudices and institutional barriers, and not because of the disability itself.

Accessibility

Design of products, services, or environments for people with disabilities.

Accessibility defined by an outcome, means that the product, service or physical environment does not have barriers for all users including people with disabilities.

Ageism

Ageism is a form of discrimination that involves prejudice against people based on their age. Ageism results in the invisibility of, and discrimination faced by, people outside of the preferred age range (may be younger or older).

Ally

Someone from a dominant group who takes a stand against injustice directed at oppressed groups other than their own and who joins or supports them in their struggle. An ally believes that eliminating oppression will benefit the targets of oppression and the dominant group members. For example, in the struggle against sexism, men can be allies to women; in the struggle against racism, white people can be allies to racialized and Indigenous activists, and so on.

Allyship

Situation in which allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of groups other than their own; act and to take risks consistently that support the oppressed group, commit to ongoing learning of their own role in the oppression, and to listen and give voice to those whom they are allies to.

Anti-Black racism

Prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping or discrimination that is directed at people of Black-African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices (e.g. education, criminal justice system, immigration, social services, health care, employment, housing, etc.). These institutions reinforce the prejudices, attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes and discrimination towards people of Black-African descent and often making anti-Black racism appear normal or invisible to the larger society. The results of anti-Black racism include higher poverty rates than in non-Black communities; over-representation in unemployment and precarious work, criminal justice system, social services and child welfare systems; and under-representation in employment, media, politics and decision-making tables.

Anti-oppression

Actively challenging all forms of oppression including taking responsibility for our own privileges; educating ourselves about experiences different from our own; communicating with people to challenge behaviour that marginalizes or excludes others; recognizing that oppression and privilege affect all of us and our interactions; being accountable in addressing our own oppressive behaviours; and integrating anti-oppression principles into our daily lives.

Anti-Semitism

Hostility, prejudice or discrimination against the Jewish people or Judaism as a religion. Criticism of laws and policies of the Israeli government that adversely impact other groups such as Palestinians, Black or other marginalized communities in Israel is not anti-Semitism, similar to criticism of laws and policies of the Canadian government that adversely impact Indigenous or racialized communities is not anti-Canada.

Attitude

Mental position that arises out of core internal values and beliefs. Attitudes are perspectives that we learn through personal experience or observation that leads us to evaluate things in a certain way and which we express through our behaviours.

Attitudes can be explicit or implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviours. Implicit attitudes are unconscious, but nonetheless influence our behaviour.

Social roles and social norms have a strong influence on attitudes. Social roles relate to how people are expected to behave in a particular role or context. Social norms involve society's rules for what behaviours are considered appropriate.

Barriers (for employment equity)

Formal or informal policies or practices (written or unwritten) that disproportionately restrict or exclude designated group members based on factors unrelated to the nature of work, merit, or safety. Barriers can be obvious and direct, or they can be embedded in systems and may seem neutral on their face but have negative impacts on a particular group.

Beliefs

Assumptions, opinions, propositions or convictions that an individual holds to be true about themselves or others, and about the world based on past experience. There are different kinds of beliefs: moral, social, religious, spiritual, political, etc. Beliefs are internalized and influenced by the people around us (e.g. family, community, media, religion, etc.) Our beliefs can change over time, depending on our experiences.

Biphobia

Hatred, fear, discomfort or violence towards bisexual people.

Bisexual

An individual that is attracted to, and may form sexual and romantic relationships with, women and men.

Cisgender (cis)

An individual who identifies with the sex and gender assigned at birth.

Class and classism

Class denotes the differences between those who rule the economy and those employed in or outside the margins of that economy. Indicators of class include income, wealth (sometimes inherited), formal education, networks of influence, and access to basic and other resources. In a class system, the wealth of those at the top results from exploiting the labour of those at the bottom and middle.

Classism refers to the practices and beliefs that assign different value to people according to their perceived social class. Most workplaces reflect and reinforce this hierarchy. For example, in many office environments, the support staff and janitorial staff are routinely undervalued in their work, knowledge and skills, which often leads to exclusion from decision-making, being placed in a low pay grid, and getting talked down to by co-workers and managers.

Colonialism

Practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. It is a process by which a foreign power dominates and exploits an Indigenous group by taking their land and resources, extracting their wealth, and using them as cheap labour. The term also refers to a specific era of European expansion into the Americas and countries of the Global South, between the 16th and 20th centuries.

Colonialism was explained by racial doctrines which tried to justify these practices. These ideas about race, superiority and inferiority are still widespread. Uncovering and challenging both the ideas and ongoing practices of colonialism is an important part of racial equity work.

Colour blindness / colour evasion

Powerful and appealing idea for many people who insist that they do not notice the skin colour of a person, and that they believe everyone has equal opportunities and that racial privileges do not exist. The refusal to recognize that race denies racialized people's everyday life and denies their experiences. The denial of racism serves to perpetuate racist systems. It also prevents the acknowledgment of the historical causes of racial inequality and how racial inequality continues to persist in society.

Consent

Voluntary agreement. It is an active and informed process, without the influence of coercion or impairment. Consent can never be assumed and is always required. Consent is the responsibility of the initiator. Consent is ongoing, meaning it can be given and taken away at any time.

In a culture of consent, the fact that consent is mandatory is normalized, respected and valued in society. It is an expression of values and attitudes that respects bodily autonomy and understands that each person is always the best judge of their own wants and needs.

Cultural appropriation

Situation in which a relatively privileged person or group adopts the culture – fashion, trends, or styles – from another group that has been historically oppressed. It is taking or exploiting an aspect of another culture for one's own personal interest or a group's interest without the understanding what it means to that culture or without acknowledgement of that culture.

Culture

Aspects of individual and group identities and the totality of the ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic, or social background. Manifestations of culture include art, laws, politics, institutions, and customs. Cultures change over time.

Deadnaming

Using the name a trans person was given at birth rather than the name they chose for themselves.

Designated group (for employment equity)

One of the four designated groups under the Employment Equity Act: women, Aboriginal Peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

Disability

Term that is defined differently in different contexts depending on who uses the term. Generally, disability is understood to refer to a physical or psychological condition that is ongoing, significant, or episodic and which impacts or restricts an individual's participation in work or society. Examples include: mobility impairments, visual or hearing impairments, learning or cognitive disabilities, addiction, psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety, and others.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that disability is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between people with disabilities and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability as defined under the Canadian Human Rights Act (i.e. that triggers the legal duty to accommodate) means any previous or existing mental or physical disability and includes disfigurement and previous or existing dependence on alcohol or a drug.

Discrimination

Action or decision that treats a person or a group of people unequally, differentially, and unfairly based on a human rights ground. It is a denial of rights, human dignity and equality for some groups while endowing privilege and benefits to others. If a behaviour or practice has a disproportionate and negative effect on a group protected by human rights legislation, this is discrimination. Intent is not a factor.

Under the Canadian Human Rights Act, discrimination may be based on race, nationality, ethnicity, colour, sex, gender identity or expression, age, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, genetic characteristics, and conviction of an offence for which a pardon has been granted. Human rights laws under other jurisdictions may include other grounds such as: social conditions, source of income, political beliefs, political associations and activities, criminal conviction, language, and citizenship.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination happens when a person or organization specifically excludes or denies an opportunity or a benefit to a particular group protected under human rights

legislation. Indirect discrimination is when there is a practice, procedure, policy or rule that applies to everyone in the same way but has an adverse effect on a group protected under human rights legislation.

Systemic Discrimination - The institutionalization of discrimination through policies, procedures and practices which may appear neutral on the surface, but which have an exclusionary or adverse impact on groups protected by human rights legislation, such that they are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally. This occurs in laws, as well as institutions and organizations where policies, practices and procedures (e.g., job requirements, hiring practices, etc.) exclude and/or act as barriers to the participation of marginalized groups. Systemic discrimination can be found in the education, housing, health care, employment, social and public services, media, banking, criminal justice and law enforcement, immigration, religion, etc.

Diversity

Term used to encompass all the various differences among people including but not limited to race, religion, gender, gender identify and expression, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, etc. and commonly used to describe workplace programs aimed at reducing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all groups. Diversity acknowledges the existence of different backgrounds but also implies the appreciation of those differences.

Diversity, as a concept, does not provide a framework to examine power and privilege nor does it identify the elements to achieve equity and equality. Diversity also does not mean the same thing as employment equity, because employment equity involves analyzing representation rates, conducting workforce analysis and employment systems review, identifying and removing barriers through proactive measures and employment equity plans.

Domestic violence

Pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship. It can include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological and/or spiritual abuse as well as stalking or harassment. It exists in same-sex and opposite-sex relationships and maybe between people who are married, divorced, common law, separated or dating.

Domestic violence is sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence

Domestic violence is a gendered issue in that the vast majority of victims are women and perpetrators are men.

Dominant group

Group of people whose social identity confers on them unearned power and privilege. Most of us have one or more dominant identities. In most parts of Canada, dominant identities are white, male, English-speaking, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, affluent and/or middle class.

Duty to accommodate

Legal responsibility to ensure that individuals are respected and can fully participate in the workplace or have access to services and housing.

In the workplace, the duty to accommodate is the legal requirement for employers to remove barriers and eliminate employment standards, practices, policies, requirements, procedures or rules that discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of a prohibited ground, such as race, sex, disability, age, family status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and so on. The employer must take all steps, short of undue hardship to eliminate discrimination related to human rights grounds and to accommodate employees who fall under human rights protections.

There is also a duty to accommodate for unions in two contexts. In the workplace, they must cooperate in the employer's obligation to accommodate and not be a "barrier" in the accommodation measures. In the union context, unions have an obligation as a service provider to members with respect to union activities and functions.

Employment equity

Program of proactive, positive measures designed to: 1) increase the representation of people from the "designated groups" in the workplace to a level that reflects their availability in the labour market; and 2) to identify and eliminate artificial barriers in the workplace (including systemic and attitudinal barriers) that prevent designated group members from accessing jobs, promotions, training, etc. The designated groups under the federal Employment Equity Act are women, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, and people with disabilities. These are groups that have historically faced under-representation in the workplace, and who continue to face disproportionate levels of unemployment, underemployment, and barriers in the workplace.

Employment systems (for employment equity)

Systems that include recruitment, selection, hiring, development and training, promotion, retention and termination, and accommodation. These systems consist of formal and informal policies, practices and procedures.

Employment systems review (for employment equity)

Examination of an employer's policies and practices governing the employment systems, in order to determine if there are barriers to members of the designated groups embedded in any of those policies or practices.

Environmental racism

Enforcement of regulations and laws, deliberate targeting of Indigenous, Black and Racialized communities for toxic waste facilities, official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in communities [of colour and Indigenous communities], and history of Indigenous, Black and Racialized communities from leadership of the ecology movements. In environment policy making, environmental racism refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals', groups', or communities' environment – which includes where they live, work, play, learn and pray – based on race or colour. For example, the lack of access to clean water due to polluted water source such as lakes, rivers and wells for many Indigenous communities is a form of environmental racism. Another example is creating a garbage dump for a mostly White community directly by or in a Black community.

Equality

Situation in which everyone has equal social, political and economic rights and opportunities. Everyone is treated equally in terms of their ability and have the same access and opportunities to an outcome.

Equity

Condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences. Equity focuses on just and fair access and outcomes and refers to the rights of individuals and groups to an equitable share of resources and influence/power in society. Equity is the process that gives everyone what they need to fully participate and have the full range of opportunities and benefits to succeed.

Ethnicity

Social characteristics that people have in common, such as religion, language, regional background, culture, food, etc. Ethnicity is revealed by traditions followed, language, etc. Ethnicity should not be confused with race, which describes categories to assigned groups based mostly on observable physical characteristics, like skin colour, hair texture and eye shape. (see race)

Ethnocentrism

Uncompromising loyalty to one's own cultural values as natural, normal and necessary. Difficulties arise when these standards are used to evaluate the behaviour of other groups as inferior, backward or irrational.

Family violence

Any form of abuse or neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. This definition of family violence includes intimate partner violence which refers to physical, sexual or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. Family violence can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, economic standing, or level of education.

Feminism

Action of advocating for the economic, political and social equality between women and men.

First Nation

Term that reflects the self-naming process of some Indigenous Peoples in Canada today. The word "first" recognizes the fact that Indigenous Peoples are the original inhabitants of what is now considered Canada. The word "nation" stresses the fact that Indigenous Peoples had their own forms of government prior to colonization by Europeans. Many First Nations are fighting to re-establish that sovereignty.

The term may also refer to a group of Indigenous Peoples who were previously called a "band" by the Department of Indigenous Services Canada. "First Nation" can also mean a group or several groups of Indigenous Peoples who have the same ethno-cultural background.

Gap (for employment equity)

Situation in which a designated group has a lower representation in the workplace than their representation in the labour market. The difference between the internal representation and the external representation, expressed as a negative number, is the gap.

Also referred to as the "degree of underrepresentation."

Gay

A person who is attracted to those of the same gender; often used to refer to men only.

Gender binary

The view that there are only two distinct, opposite and static genders (masculine and feminine).

Gender expression

Way in which a person presents and communicates gender identity to society through clothing, name, pronoun choice, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours and traits, used publicly to express ones' gender.

How one expresses gender might not necessarily reflect one's actual gender identity.

Gender identity

Gender that a person feels inside. It is a psychological quality, so unlike biological sex, it can't be observed or measured – only reported by the individual. Gender nonconforming, gender variant, or genderqueer are some terms sometimes used to describe people who don't feel they fit into the categories of male or female.

Gender roles

Socially constructed and culturally specific behaviour, appearance and other expectations imposed on women (femininity) and men (masculinity).

Genocide

Deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic, racial, national or religious group.

Physical genocide is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and biological genocide is the destruction of the group's reproductive capacity. Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group.

Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred, and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly … families are disrupted [through establishment and operation of residential schools] to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

Harassment

Any behaviour that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g., touching, pushing), comments (e.g., jokes, name-calling), or displays (e.g., posters, cartoons). The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits harassment on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic characteristic, and an offence that has been pardoned. Other human rights legislations may have other grounds of harassment.

Sexual harassment includes offensive or humiliating behaviour that is related to a person's sex, as well as behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, unwelcome, hostile, or offensive work environment, or that could reasonably be thought to put sexual conditions on a person's job or employment opportunities.

Personal harassment is not covered by human rights legislation. While it also involves disrespectful and unwelcome behaviour that demeans or embarrasses an employee, the behaviour is not based on one of the prohibited grounds named above. Nevertheless, some employers choose to include personal harassment in their anti-harassment policies.

Abuse of authority occurs when a person uses authority unreasonably to interfere with an employee or the employee's job. It includes humiliation, intimidation, threats, and coercion. It does not include normal managerial activities, such as counselling, performance appraisals, and discipline, so long as these are not done in a discriminatory manner. Abuse of authority unrelated to a prohibited ground is not covered by human rights legislation. Nonetheless, some employers state in their anti-harassment policies that abuse of authority will not be tolerated.

Heterosexism

System of practices or beliefs which communicate that straight people are inherently superior. It includes the assumption that everyone is, or must be, straight (heterosexual). Like other forms of prejudice and discrimination, heterosexism awards privilege and rights to members of the dominant group – straight people – that are not accorded to gay, lesbian, or bisexual people. For example, straight people do not have to change the law to have their marriage recognized, or to receive spousal benefits.

Homophobia

An irrational fear and hatred of gay and lesbian people. It can range from derogatory comments, to harassment, to violence (gay bashing), to silencing, to denial of rights and benefits that others receive. It is also the fear of feelings of love for members of one's own sex and therefore the hatred of those feelings in others.

Human rights

Rights and freedoms one has simply because they are a person. These rights recognize the equal dignity and the inherent inalienable indivisible interrelated rights of all people in the world regardless of nationality, place of residency, gender, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, ability, gender identity or any other status. All people are equally entitled to human rights without discrimination. Rights are often expressed and guaranteed in law. Human rights also obligate governments to act in a certain way or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights of individuals or groups.

Implicit bias / unconscious bias

Thoughts and feelings that we are unaware of or mistaken about their nature. Implicit bias is shaped and deeply ingrained in our thinking and emotions by our lived experiences with our family, community, co-workers, religion, media, politicians, and other influential people. They become learned associations between a particular group and a particular characteristic. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Regardless of how fair-minded someone may think they are, we all have some degree of unconscious bias. Thus, "implicit bias" describes the automatic negative or positive attitudes or associate stereotypes we have with people that we encounter. This influences our understanding, actions, and decisions without our conscious knowledge.

Inclusion

Recognition, value and leverage of differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce evolving human rights framework. Inclusionary policies bring historically and currently excluded individuals and groups into processes and decision-making.

Indigenous Peoples

The Indigenous or original inhabitants of Turtle Island/Canada – First Nations, Inuit and Métis. There are many other words which Indigenous peoples use to describe themselves. It is always best to ask how they wish to be named.

Under the federal Employment Equity Act, Indigenous People are referred to as "Aboriginal Peoples" and defined as "persons who are Indians, Inuit or Métis".

Institutional oppression

Systematic mistreatment of a particular social group that is supported and enforced by society through a network of institutional structures, policies, and practices that create advantages and benefits for some, and

discrimination, oppression, and disadvantages for others. Institutions include international and domestic companies, governments, public organizations (e.g. education, criminal justice system, health care, etc.), families, religious, media, etc.

Internal representation (for employment equity)

Percentage of employees in an organization that are from a designated group. Internal representation is determined by dividing the number of designated group members by the total number of employees in an organization.

Internalized dominance

Situation where members of the dominant group accept their group's socially superior status as normal and deserved, while denying demonstrated oppression and inequalities experienced by others. Internalized dominance normalizes relationships, making it difficult for the dominant group to see their own privilege gained by belonging to the dominant group and for them to see the power inequities and disadvantages for the non-dominant groups.

Internalized oppression

Process by which a member of an oppressed group consciously or unconsciously comes to accept and live out inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the group by its oppressors. It is an acceptance of the negative identity as defined by the larger society and of the stereotypes assigned to them. As a result, the oppressed group internalizes their own inferiority, and accepts the superiority of the dominant group ultimately believing that the oppression is deserved and is as a result of their own personal shortcomings. The oppressed group often behave in the way that actually reflects the interests of the dominant group and thus are not necessarily in the best interest of the oppressed group.

Internalized subordination

Situation in which members of an oppressed social group accept the superior status of the dominant group, and their own subordinate status as deserved, natural and inevitable.

Interpersonal oppression

Interactions between people where people use conscious or unconscious oppressive behaviour, insults or violence.

Intersectionality

Complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia, classism and more) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

It is the intersectional oppression that occurs due to a combination of oppressions that produce a distinct form of discrimination as opposed to a stand-alone form of discrimination. Keeping an intersectional approach in mind with all the work that you do ensures that the historical, social and political contexts have all been taken into account. For example, the systems of oppression faced by a white gay male will be different than that faced by a woman of colour who is a lesbian.

The combination of myriads of discrimination produces unique and distinct forms of oppression which is different from each separate grounds of discrimination. The different factors "intersect", contributing to multiple grounds of discrimination at the same time. Intersectionality also takes into account the historical, social and political context and recognizes the unique experience of the individual based on the intersection of all relevant grounds.

Inuit

Indigenous people of Northern Canada (including in Nunavut, Northern Quebec, northern coast of Labrador, Western Arctic in Northwest Territories and Yukon). They are from parts of Greenland and Alaska.

The family of languages of the Inuit which is known, especially to its speakers, as Inuktitut.

An Inuit person is known as an Inuk.

Islamophobia

Outlook or worldview involving an unfounded fear, hatred, and prejudice against Islam or Muslims, which results in practices of exclusion harassment and discrimination. Islamophobia can be subtle or overt such as the verbal harassment or physical violence against a Muslim person.

Labour force (for employment equity)

Term used by Statistics Canada that refers to people in Canada who are in the labour market. Defined as the portion of the Canadian population 15 years of age and over who are employed, unemployed and actively looking for work, or on layoff and available for work.

Labour market availability (for employment equity)

Availability of designated group members, under the Employment Equity Act, in the workforce from which the employers could hire. This information is compiled by ESDC (Economic and Social Development Canada) and based on the census and the survey for people with disabilities.

Lesbian

Woman who is primarily romantically and sexually attracted to women.

2SLGBTQ+

Acronym used to refer to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, interchangeable with GLBT, LGTB, 2SLGBTQ+, etc.

Additional letters are sometimes added to the acronym, such as LGBTIQQ2S to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning and 2-spirit folks.

The plus acknowledges that not all expressions and identities are captured in the acronym, and that expression and identity are fluid and ever evolving.

Marginalized people

People who are not included in decision-making processes and have little influence or power in mainstream economic, political, education, cultural and social activities. Individuals or groups pushed to the edge of society by not allowing them a place within it and labelling them outside of the societal "norm.

Métis people

People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis people, as distinct from First Nations, Inuit, or non-Indigenous People. Métis are not recognized in the Indian Act but are defined as "Aboriginal" in the Constitution s.35.2

The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree. They are united by the Michif Language and are generally from the Red River area of Manitoba but have spread across the Prairies.

Métis (with a small m) are people of mixed Indigenous / European heritage who do not have the cultural, linguistic or geographic linkages to the Red River Métis.

Tensions exist between the Métis National Council and Indigenous people of mixed blood in the Eastern part of the country, with each claiming rights to the term.

Micro-aggressions

Brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their social group; generally happening below the level of awareness of well-intentioned members of the dominant culture.

Misogyny

Hatred, contempt or prejudice against women and/or girls.

Non-binary

Someone who does not identify as a binary gender (man or woman) but may identify somewhere in between.

Not all trans people are non-binary.

Many (though not all) non-binary people do not use 'he' or 'she' pronouns and may instead use 'they' or 'ze', or something else. They may opt for the prefix 'Mx.' Instead of Ms. or Mr.

Oppression

Situation in which a social group exploits (knowingly or unconsciously) another social group to its own benefit. It results in privilege for the dominant group and disenfranchisement for the target group. Oppression can be achieved through force, and/or through the control of social institutions and resources of society. After a while, it does not require the conscious thought or effort of individual members of the dominant group. Unequal treatment becomes institutionalized, systemic and looks "normal".

Oppression prevention

Conscious implantation of systemic and institutionalized measures to proactively prevent and address oppression.

Outing

Revealing an individual's sexual orientation or trans status.

Outing can expose queer and trans people to violence.

Patriarchy

Social system in which the bulk of power, authority, and control in society is held by men. Such a system assigns greater importance to male identities and issues of importance to men.

Person with disabilities

Person who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Under the federal Employment Equity Act, "persons with disabilities" are those who self-identify as having a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who (a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or (b) believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment. This definition also includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

Positive policies and practices (for employment equity)

Initiatives that help create a respectful and responsive working environment for all employees, including designated group members under the Employment Equity Act, and that help attract increased numbers of individuals from underrepresented designated groups into the organization's workforce. Positive policies and practices go beyond the mere elimination of barriers; they replace barriers with a favourable work environment that actively promotes a representative workforce.

Powerful ideas

Ideas that shape how we act as a society and reinforce oppression. Such ideas are based on societal beliefs, values, attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes, which can lead to discrimination or oppression of others. (Examples: women are inferior: men are strong, women are emotional; people with disabilities are inferior: people with mental health disabilities are violent; non-White people are inferior: Indigenous Peoples want handouts from the government; Black men are innately more violent; gay, lesbians, bisexual and trans people are inferior: same-sex relationships are immoral; etc.)

Prejudice

Pre-judgement based on stereotyped ideas or attitudes about a group, of which the person is a member. It is a feeling or belief, not a behaviour. These negative feelings or beliefs are frequently not recognized as unsoundly based assumptions because of the frequency with which they are repeated. For example, feelings of prejudice grow from the belief that certain people are inferior and should be treated accordingly. They become common sense notions which are widely accepted and are sometimes used to justify acts of discrimination. Prejudice sometimes develops into systemic oppression.

Privilege

Unearned power, entitlement and access which gives dominant group members economic, social and political advantages solely because they are members of the dominant group (e.g. born into that social group). Consequently, there is unearned disadvantage and lack of access for non-dominant group members, solely because they are members of the non-dominant group. The dominant group benefits by having the economic, social and political advantages and ensuring that the non-dominant group does not access those advantages but continues to experience disadvantages and oppression.

Pronouns

Term that refers to a person's gender, such as 'he/she', 'him/her', 'herself/himself', 'hers/his', 'they/them'. Assuming pronouns based on someone's appearance can lead to errors and assumptions. Therefore, it is always best to ask an individual what their pronoun is to ensure inclusivity.

Pronouns such as 'he' and 'she' come with certain expectations about how someone expresses their gender identity. This can often feel limiting to someone who doesn't fit into the binary (i.e. man/woman) identity. Using gender-neutral pronouns such as 'they'/'them'/'ze', etc. can be more inclusive.

QPOC

Acronym for queer people of colour. Another term used is QTIPOC (queer, transgender, and intersex people of colour).

Queer people of colour often experience intersecting oppressions on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation and other factors.

Queer

Term widely used among the 2SLGBTQ+ communities because of its inclusiveness.

Race

Social construct or identity created by socially dominant groups, to establish meaning in a social context in society. It is a social category or construct used to classify people by physical features such as skin colour, hair texture, facial characteristics, or stature. There is, in fact, more genetic variation within a single "race" than there is between two different "races". Despite the fact that there is no scientific or biological basis for the term "race", ideas about racial differences continue to thrive.

Racial equity

Equitable distribution of resources and influence, in ways not shaped by racism and racial identity. In a racially divided society and world, racial equity is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, race does not determine a person's or group's socioeconomic outcomes and every person is able to reach their full potential. As a process, there is meaningful implementation of institutional policies, practices and infrastructures to address the root causes of structural racial inequity.

It requires racialized and white people to analyze and challenge the daily ways in which power and white privilege (re)produce racial inequities. The progress of racial equity work is measured by the degree to which racialized people benefit from actions taken, and the extent to which power and influence is more equitably shared.

Racial justice

Uprooting historical racist systems and replacing them with fair, just and equitable policies and practices. It is not just the absence of racial discrimination and inequities but the presence of deliberate systems, supports and proactive reinforcements to achieve equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Racial profiling

Any act of suspecting or targeting a person for greater scrutiny or differential treatment on the basis of stereotypes or assumed characteristics or behaviour based on colour, race, ethnicity, religion, ancestry or a combination of these, rather than reasonable and individual suspicion for reasons of safety, security or public protection. Age and/or gender can also influence the experience of profiling.

It is different from criminal profiling which isn't based on stereotypes but rather relies on actual behaviour or on information about suspected activity by someone who meets the description of a specific individual. In other words, criminal profiling is not the same as racial profiling since the former is based on objective evidence of wrongful behaviour while racial profiling is based on stereotypical assumptions.

Examples include: a police officer stopping a young Black man walking on the street because of the stereotype and assumption that young Black men are more likely to have committed crimes; law enforcement officer stopping a Black or Brown Muslim because of the stereotype or assumption that Muslims are likely to commit terrorist acts; a medical practitioner refusing to provide necessary health care during a medical crisis to an Indigenous person because of the stereotype or assumption that Indigenous people are drunk; a restaurant refusing to serve a Chinese person because of the stereotype or assumption that the person will expose them to SARS or COVID-19.

Racial Reconciliation

Reconciliation involves three ideas.

First, it recognizes that racism is both systemic and institutionalized, with far–reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for equity seeking groups.

Second, reconciliation is engendered by empowering local communities through relationship- building and truth–telling.

Lastly, justice is the essential component of the conciliatory process—justice that is best termed as restorative rather than retributive, while still maintaining its vital punitive character

Racialization

Very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular "race", and then on that basis, subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment.

Racialization process involves the dominant group that ascribes a racial identity on the non-dominant group for the purpose of continued domination as demonstrated during Colonialism and Imperialism. The racialized group may gradually identify with, and even embrace, the ascribed identity and thus becomes a self-ascribed race.

Racialization is a fluid process. The process by which people are identified by racial characteristics is a social and cultural process. That is, a social order might "racialize" a group through media coverage, political action, economic control and the production of a general consensus in the public about that group. A particular community might be "racialized" at a point in history but then later "pass into" whiteness (e.g. Irish Canadians).

Historically, it has been white people who have had/have the social, political, and economic power to 'name' and 'categorize' people of colour and Indigenous peoples according to white people's categories of 'race.' As a result, in popular, dominant discourse, the word 'race' has typically been used to refer to people of colour and Indigenous people (i.e., people who were seen by white people as 'not like us'/not white).

While white people are also technically racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white, and as such, white people may not see themselves as part of a 'race' but still as having the authority to name and racialize 'others'. Thus, white people are not considered "racialized".

Racialized people

People who have been the targets of racism and racialization. Racially visible is another term used to refer to racialized people.

The term "racialized people" is used instead of terms such as "visible minorities", "non-whites" which have a negative connotation and treat "white" as the norm to which racialized persons are to be compared to. This term expresses race as a social construct rather than as a description of perceived biological characteristics. (See racialization)

Racism

Aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and whiteness and that devalue, stereotype, and label racialized communities as "other", inferior, or render them invisible.

Individual racism is the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of an individual that support or perpetuate racism. It can be conscious or unconscious, intentional, or unintentional, active, or passive.

Institutional racism refers to ways in which institutions create and maintain racial inequity, as a result of policies, procedures and practices within and across institutions, intentionally or not, that create privileges or advantages for white people and disadvantages or exclusion of racialized people.

Systemic racism refers to formal and informal policies, procedures, and practices that privilege white people and that excludes, marginalizes, denies, and exploits racialized people. It may be conscious or unconscious, intentional, or unintentional, obvious, or subtle. Systemic racism is supported by institutional bias, economic and political power and by powerful (often unexamined) ideas which make racism look normal and justified.

Structural racism recognizes that our society is historically based on white leadership, dominance and privilege which currently frames and shapes public policies, institutional practices, political representations, cultural and social beliefs and values. Structural racism results in the socio-economic disadvantages and oppression of racialized people and perpetuates racial inequity. Structural racism recognizes the interconnectedness of history, culture, politics, economics and social norms and values and how each of these independently and together re-enforce the oppression of racialized groups.

Representative workforce (for employment equity)

Situation in which the representation of the employment equity designated groups at all levels (i.e., each occupational group) in the workplace reflects their representation in the labour market.

Safe space

Place or environment where a person or a group of people who have been marginalized to come together to discuss their experiences together and where they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

Self-identification

Process by which an individual identifies as belonging to a particular equity-seeking group.

Employment equity measures, or other efforts to ensure diversity and representation, are based on self-identification. The Employment Equity Act provides a process for individuals to identify themselves as a member of one or more designated groups. This is done through a workforce survey of employees. Self-identification is voluntary and it must be kept confidential. The organization must collect self-identification data about its workforce in order to plan and implement the employment equity program.

Settler colonialism

Form of colonialism that displaces Indigenous population of the colonized territory with "settlers". It is based on colonial or imperial power over Indigenous populations. Historically in Canada, settlers were Europeans who migrated, established permanent residency, and colonized Canada. Settler colonialism can include violent depopulation of the Indigenous population to more subtle, legal means such as assimilation or bring Indigenous people within the colonial framework.

Sexism

Systemic and individual practices that discriminate on the basis of gender which privilege and benefit men, subordinate and disadvantage women, and debase woman-identified values and behaviour.

Special measure (for employment equity)

Temporary measure targeted at a specific designated group in a particular occupation (such as targeted recruitment or special training initiatives aimed primarily at correcting employment imbalances stemming

from past discrimination, over a specified period of time). These measures are intended to expedite the recruitment, selection and promotion of qualified designated group members to achieve full representation.

Stereotype

Attribution of a series of traits or over-generalizations of assumptions and beliefs associated with people from a particular group membership (i.e., race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, etc.). It is the prejudgment or expectation that people have about every person from a particular group membership (e.g. personality or characteristic, preference, ability, etc.). There are positive and negative forms of stereotypes - some demonize while others romanticize groups of people. Both are dangerous because they don't allow people to meet and interact as individuals. Stereotypes can also result in prejudice and discrimination.

Transgender / trans, trans*

Umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity and/or expression differ from conventional expectations based on their assigned biological birth sex.

Identifying as transgender, trans, or trans* can only be decided by an individual for themselves and does not depend on criteria such as surgery or hormone treatment status.

Transgender is often abbreviated to 'trans' or 'trans*' (the asterisk demonstrates the inclusion of non-binary and/or non-static gender identities such as genderqueer and genderfluid).

Transphobia

Unrealistic or irrational fear and hatred of trans people. It is based on negative stereotypes and misconceptions that are then used to justify and support hatred, discrimination, harassment, and violence towards trans people.

Transphobia is a pattern of negative behaviour towards trans people which can begin with misgendering and deadnaming, and can lead to aggression, violence and even murder.

Transsexual

Someone who changes their anatomy as part of the transition to living as another sex. Surgery and/or hormone therapy are the two most common methods.

It is an older term originating in the medical/psychological communities.

Two-spirit (2-Spirit or 2S)

Term used within some Indigenous communities, encompassing sexual, gender, cultural, and/or spiritual identity.

This umbrella term was created in the English language to reflect complex Indigenous understandings of gender and sexuality, and the long history of sexual and gender diversity in Indigenous cultures.

This term may refer to cross, multiple, and/or non-binary gender roles; non-heterosexual identities; and a range of cultural identities, roles, and practices embodied by two-spirit peoples.

Unceded territory

Indigenous land title that has not been surrendered, transferred or acquired by the Crown or Canadian government. Therefore, the unceded territory still belongs to that Indigenous community.

Under-representation (for employment equity)

Situation when the percentage of employees in an organization that are from a designated group (the "internal representation") is below their representation in the external labour market ("external representation"). It is determined by dividing the number of designated group members by the total number of employees in an organization.

Undue hardship

Legal term used in the accommodation process.

Courts and tribunals in human rights cases define undue hardship as an excessive and substantial disruption or interference with an employer's operation such that the accommodation requested would alter the essential nature of the organization or significantly affect its viability.

Factors considered under the Canadian Human Rights Act for undue hardship are costs, health and safety. Other human rights legislation may have other factors.

Undue hardship does not mean minor inconvenience or interference. Reasonable accommodation measures must be taken unless it is impossible to do so without creating undue hardship.

Universal design

Design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" does not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

Values

A person's core or fundamental principles or standards of behaviour that serve as guiding principles (e.g., equality, freedom, competitiveness, beauty, compassion, fairness, etc.). Values are ideas of worth about things, concepts and people. Values are considered important and influence our beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Values are often shared by members of a society, serving as a guide for what is "good" or "bad."

Visible minority

An outdated term that has been criticized for several reasons, including that racialized people are, in fact, the global majority. In Canada, racialized people form over one fifth of the overall population and in large cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, racialized people are the numerical majority.

This is a term used in the Employment Equity Act. The Act defines "*visible minority*" as *"persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."* The term is mainly used as a demographic category by Statistics Canada in connection with the Employment Equity Act.

White fragility

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

White privilege

Unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed upon people solely because they are white. Generally, white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

White privilege is the implicit or systemic advantages that white people have at the expense of racialized people who experience racism. Examples include the ability to be unaware of race; the assurance that police will not stop them because of their race; the expectation that, as a white person, they can shop without being

followed by shop workers; white people speak for themselves and not their "race"; the assumption that getting hired or promoted was due to their competence, and not because of their "race."

Whiteness refers to upholding white privilege and white superiority without being conscious of it.

Workforce analysis (for employment equity)

Assessment of an organization's internal workforce to determine whether or not the representation of the four designated groups in the organization is consistent with their external representation in the labour market.

Workforce availability (for employment equity)

Data for the designated groups compiled from the census and the survey on persons with disabilities, which provides the percentage of designated group members present in the Canadian labour force. This data is compiled by Treasury Board for the federal public service and based on ESDC's Labour Market Availability (LMA).

Workforce survey (for employment equity)

Survey conducted to obtain information on the composition of an organization's workforce. Pursuant to the Employment Equity Act, an organization must provide a self-identification questionnaire to all employees to determine the number of designated group members in each of the occupations throughout its workforce.

Xenophobia

Irrational fear, distrust or hatred of strangers, foreigners or anything perceived as foreign or different. The object of hatred can be a population group present within a society (e.g., recent immigrants), which is not considered part of that society. However, the hatred may also be directed against a group which has been present for centuries. This latter form can elicit or facilitate hostile and violent reactions, such as mass expulsion of immigrants, or in the worst case, genocide.

Appendix A

Employment Equity

Aboriginal Peoples

• Term used in the federal Employment Equity Act to refer to Indigenous People and defined as "persons who are Indians, Inuit or Métis".

Barriers

• Formal or informal policies or practices (written or unwritten) that disproportionately restrict or exclude designated group members based on factors unrelated to the nature of work, merit, or safety. Barriers can be obvious and direct, or they can be embedded in systems and may seem neutral on their face but have negative impacts on a particular group.

Designated group

• One of the four designated groups under the Employment Equity Act: women, "Aboriginal Peoples", "visible minorities" and persons with disabilities.

Employment equity

• Program of proactive, positive measures designed to: 1) increase the representation of people from the "designated groups" in the workplace to a level that reflects their availability in the labour market; and 2) to identify and eliminate artificial barriers in the workplace (including systemic and attitudinal barriers) that prevent designated group members from accessing jobs, promotions, training, etc. The designated groups under the federal Employment Equity Act are women, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, and people with disabilities. These are groups that have historically faced under-representation in the workplace, and who continue to face disproportionate levels of unemployment, underemployment, and barriers in the workplace.

Employment systems

• Systems that include: recruitment, selection, hiring, development and training, promotion, retention and termination, and accommodation. These systems consist of formal and informal policies, practices and procedures.

Employment systems review

•   Examination of an employer's policies and practices governing the employment systems, in order to determine if there are barriers to members of the designated groups embedded in any of those policies or practices.

Equality

•   Situation in which everyone has equal social, political and economic rights and opportunities. Everyone is treated equally in terms of their ability and have the same access and opportunities to an outcome.

Equity

•   Condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences. Equity focuses on just and fair access and outcomes and refers to the rights of individuals and groups to an equitable share of resources and influence/power in society. Equity is the process that gives everyone what they need to fully participate and have the full range of opportunities and benefits to succeed.

Gap

•   Situation in which a designated group has a lower representation in the workplace than their representation in the labour market. The difference between the internal representation and the external representation, expressed as a negative number, is the gap.

•   Also referred to as the "degree of under-representation."

Goals

•   Numerical and non-numerical objectives that an organization plans to achieve within a specified period of time.

Inclusion

•   Recognition, value and leverage of differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce evolving human rights framework. Inclusionary policies bring historically and currently excluded individuals and groups into processes and decision-making.

Internal representation

• Percentage of employees in an organization that are from a designated group. Internal representation is determined by dividing the number of designated group members by the total number of employees in an organization.

Labour force

• Term used by Statistics Canada that refers to people in Canada who are in the labour market. Defined as the portion of the Canadian population 15 years of age and over who are employed, unemployed and actively looking for work, or on layoff and available for work.

Labour market availability

• Availability of designated group members, under the Employment Equity Act, in the workforce from which the employers could hire. This information is compiled by ESDC (Economic and Social Development Canada) and based on the census and the survey for people with disabilities.

Person with disabilities

• Persons who self-identify as having a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who (a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or (b) believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment. This definition also includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

Positive policies and practices

• Initiatives that help create a respectful and responsive working environment for all employees, including designated group members under the Employment Equity Act, and that help attract increased numbers of individuals from underrepresented designated groups into the organization's workforce. Positive policies and practices go beyond the mere elimination of barriers; they replace barriers with a favourable work environment that actively promotes a representative workforce.

Representative workforce

•   Situation in which the representation of the employment equity designated groups at all levels (i.e., each occupational group) in the workplace reflects their representation in the labour market.

Self-identification

•   Employment equity measures, or other efforts to ensure diversity and representation, are based on self-identification. The Employment Equity Act provides a process for individuals to identify themselves as a member of one or more designated groups. This is done through a workforce survey of employees. Self-identification is voluntary and it must be kept confidential. The organization must collect self-identification data about its workforce in order to plan and implement the employment equity program.

Special measure

•   Temporary measure targeted at a specific designated group in a particular occupation (such as targeted re¬cruitment or special training initiatives aimed primarily at correcting employment imbalances stemming from past discrimination, over a speci¬fied period of time). These measures are intended to expedite the recruitment, selection and promotion of qualified designated group members to achieve full representation.

Under-representation

•   Situation when the percentage of employees in an organization that are from a designated group (the "internal representation") is below their representation in the external labour market ("external representation"). It is determined by dividing the number of designated group members by the total number of employees in an organization.

Undue hardship

•   Legal term used in the accommodation process.

•   Courts and tribunals in human rights cases define undue hardship as an excessive and substantial disruption or interference with an employer's operation such that the accommodation requested would alter the essential nature of the organization or significantly affect its viability.

•   Factors considered under the Canadian Human Rights Act for undue hardship are costs, health and safety. Other human rights legislation may have other factors.

•   Undue hardship does not mean minor inconvenience or interference. Reasonable accommodation measures must be taken unless it is impossible to do so without creating undue hardship.

Visible minority

•	Term used in the Employment Equity Act and defined as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The term is mainly used as a demographic category by Statistics Canada in connection with the Employment Equity Act.

Workforce analysis

•	Assessment of an organization's internal workforce to determine whether or not the representation of the four designated groups in the organization is consistent with their external representation in the labour market.

Workforce availability

•	Data for the designated groups compiled from the census and the survey on persons with disabilities, which provides the percentage of designated group members present in the Canadian labour force. This data is compiled by TBS for the federal public service and based on ESDC's Labour Market Availability (LMA).

Workforce survey

•	Survey to obtain information on the composition of an organization's workforce. Pursuant to the Employment Equity Act, an organization must provide a self-identification questionnaire to all employees to determine the number of designated group members in each of the occupations throughout its workforce.

The Power of Inclusive Language – Some questions and some answers

Do I say 'Canada's Indigenous peoples' or 'our Indigenous peoples'?

NEITHER. The Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island are not owned by Canada or by an individual, which is what this language infers. Try to say 'the Indigenous peoples of what we now call Canada' instead.

Why are Indigenous land acknowledgements made before meetings/conferences?

These statements show respect for Indigenous peoples and can also raise awareness about histories that are often suppressed or forgotten. This is a core and foundational component to true and authentic reconciliation within Canada. It is an acknowledgement of a people who were already here, living and thriving on these lands.

Sometimes these lands are acknowledged as unceded, which means that at no time in history have Indigenous peoples relinquished rights or title to the land to the government.

These acknowledgements should be made thoughtfully and with purpose as opposed to simply 'checked boxes' at the beginning of your meeting.

2SLGBTQ+

What is a 'preferred' pronoun?

A pronoun refers to a person's gender, such as 'he'/'she', 'him'/'her', 'herself'/'himself', 'hers'/'his'. Assuming pronouns based on someone's appearance can lead to errors and assumptions. This is why asking is more inclusive. Also, implying that one's pronoun is simply what they 'prefer' as opposed to simply how one expresses themselves is to deny someone their own agency by implying that they require another's permission to use what they 'prefer' rather than what simply **'is'** for them.

Why are gender-neutral pronouns used?

Pronouns such as 'he' and 'she' come with certain expectations about how someone expresses their gender identity. This can often feel limiting to someone who doesn't fit into the binary (i.e. man/woman) identity. Using a gender-neutral pronoun such as 'they'/'them'/'ze', etc. can make a non-binary individual feel welcome and respected.

What do you do if you don't know what gender someone uses?

Simply ask, "Which pronoun would prefer I/we use?" If you make a mistake and misgender someone, just apologize and move on in your conversation.

Do I say 'transgender' or 'transgendered'?

'Transgender' or 'trans' is the correct term. 'Transgendered' is grammatically incorrect.

Do not say, "Tony is a transgender" or "The parade included many transgenders." Do say, "Tony is a person who happens to be transgender." or "The parade included many people from the trans community."

What is the difference between sex and gender?

Sex is considered biological. It is the genitalia you are born with, your chromosomes, genes and hormones.

Gender is a person's status in society as a man, woman or non-binary person. Conceptions of gender are influenced by several factors, including biological features, cultural and behavioural norms, and individual experience.

What is gender expression?

Gender expression is the way a person presents and communicates gender identity to society, through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours and traits, used publicly to express one's gender as masculine or feminine or something else.

Gender expression IS NOT an indication of sexual orientation.

What is cisgender?

'Cisgender' refers to an individual who identifies with their sex and gender assigned at birth.

For example, a cisgender man is a person assigned male at birth who identifies as a man. A cisgender woman is a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman.

What is non-binary and/or genderqueer and/or gender nonconforming?

These are terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. The terms are not the same as 'transgender' or 'transsexual' and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

Should I say 'sexual preference' or 'sexual orientation'?

Do NOT use the term 'sexual preference' as it is considered offensive and is typically used to suggest that being lesbian, gay or bisexual is a choice.

What does the acronym 2SLGBTQ+ represent?

2S – two-spirit

L – lesbian

G – gay

B – bisexual

T – transgender

Q – queer

+ – the plus acknowledges that not all expressions and identities are captured in the acronym, and that expression and identify are fluid and ever evolving.

What is 'two-spirit'?

Two-spirit is an Indigenous term that includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender non-conforming identities. It is also what the '2S' stands for in 2SLGBTQ+; it's a person who identifies as having a spirit that is both masculine and feminine. Only Indigenous people can identify as being two-spirit.

What is homophobia?

Clinically, it refers to a fear and hatred of gays and lesbians. Homophobia ranges from derogatory comments to harassment, to violence, to silencing ("as long as they don't talk about it," etc.), to denial of human rights.

What does the rainbow flag symbolize?

The rainbow has been a symbol of LGBTQ2S+ pride since the 1970s. Created by Gilbert Baker and flown in the first Pride parade in 1978. The following are the original colours and what they signify:

- Pink: sex

-Red: life

- Orange: healing

- Yellow: sunlight

- Green: nature

- Turquoise: magic/art

- Indigo: serenity

- Purple: spirit

Note: Some iterations of the Pride flag include a brown and black stripe. While great strides have been made in the queer community, Pride is still not always an inclusive space for Indigenous peoples, Black people and

racialized people. The new stripes are a visible symbol of the importance of these voices and experiences. This serves as a reminder that inclusion must be rooted in an intersectional approach to include those who have historically been and continue to be marginalized.

What does the trans flag symbolize?

The trans Pride flag was created in 1999. The light blue stripes at the top and bottom of the flag are the traditional colours for baby boys. The stripes next to them are pink, the traditional colour for baby girls. The stripe in the middle is white, for those who are intersex, transitioning or consider themselves having a neutral or undefined gender. The pattern is made as such so that no matter which way it is flown, it is always correct.

Can I say 'transsexual'?

'Transsexual' is not an umbrella term, like 'transgender'. It is an older term originating in the medical/psychological communities. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word 'transgender'. It is always best to ask which term a person prefers.

Do I say 'person with a disability' or 'disabled person'?

'Person with a disability' is the preferred term. It is important to use language that focuses on the person and not the disability (e.g., "Fiona uses a wheelchair for mobility" rather than "Fiona's disabled." Such language ensures that the person is not defined by their disability.

DO NOT say 'handicapped', or 'retarded' – these are offensive.

What is ableism?

Ableism is discrimination against people with disabilities, including the expression of hate for people with disabilities, denial of accessibility, rejection of applicants with a disability for housing and jobs, institutionalized discrimination that perpetuates poverty amongst people with disabilities, etc.

What does accessibility mean in relation to people with disabilities?

Accessibility means ensuring that people with disabilities are able to participate without any barriers. Whether it is a physical environment, transportation, reading material and/or communication technology. 10

What are some common barriers faced by people with disabilities?

A physical environment that is not accessible

A lack of assistive technology (e.g., sign language interpreter, videos with subtitles, etc.)

Negative attitude of people towards disability

Services, systems and policies that don't include persons with disabilities or that hinder the participation of all people

What are attitudinal barriers?

Stereotyping – assuming that persons with disabilities have a poor quality of life or that they are unhealthy because of their impairments.

Stigma, prejudice and discrimination: these attitudes may come from people's ideas related to disability – someone may see disability as a personal tragedy or as an indication of the lack of ability to behave as expected in society.

By thinking of disability as a social responsibility to provide support to all people so they can live independent and full lives, we can work to recognize and address challenges that all people, including those with disabilities, experience.

What is an invisible disability?

Invisible disabilities are often considered hidden disabilities. People often assume that disabilities are physical or visible, when in fact a lot of disabilities are not apparent. A few examples that could be classified as hidden disabilities are: HIV, dyslexia, multiple sclerosis, mental health problems.

It is important to note that invisible disabilities impact a person's day-to-day life, and you should not judge why certain accommodations have been put in place for the individual. For example, a person may hold an accessible parking permit and not appear to have a need for the close-proximity parking. However, here are a few invisible reasons why they may: back or brain injury, chronic illness/pain, heart condition, oxygen impairment.

What is institutional racism?

Also known as 'systemic racism', it is a form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions. Organizational programs, policies or procedures that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of colour, including unintentionally or inadvertently. An example of this is racial profiling.

Do I say 'coloured person' or 'person of colour'?

'Person of colour' is the correct term. To be a 'coloured person' is to be seen as an 'other'. It's establishing that the default race is white, that white is the baseline. 'People of colour' is used in solidarity among racial groups and marginalized people across the country. Where there is solidarity, there is a sense of inclusivity, community and understanding.

What is "Reverse Racism"?

A term created and used by white people to deny their white privilege. Those in denial use the term reverse racism to refer to hostile behavior by people of color toward whites, and to affirmative action policies which allegedly give 'preferential treatment' to people of color over whites. In societies where white culture is dominant and where white supremacy is widespread, there is no such thing as "reverse racism." *(Adapted from Colours of Resistance)*

What is cultural appropriation?

Theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification or profit – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgement or respect for its value in the original culture. The dominant culture will assume their right to take the non-dominant cultures elements.

For example, dressing up for Halloween in Indigenous regalia, turban or hijab would be offensive to someone of that culture. Another example occurs where Indigenous art is duplicated and sold by large companies rather than the artists themselves.

'Person of colour' vs. 'racialized person'?

Both of these terms are acceptable. However, someone may prefer one over the other. If so, allow them to identify themselves in their preferred manner.

'Racialized person' is more prevalently used because it suggests that an individual or group has been ascribed a certain identity, rather than focusing on colour or the size of a community. This term recognizes that race is a social construct.

AWARENESS

What is the difference between inclusion and diversity?

People and organizations will often use the words 'diversity' and 'inclusion' interchangeably, when their meanings are very distinct. 'Diversity' is the noun and refers to the representation of various people from different experiences. It is essentially the 'who'. Whereas, 'inclusion' is the verb and refers to the act of including a mix of people.

Verna Myers says it best: "Diversity is being asked to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance."

What is the difference between equality and equity?

Equality seeks to give everyone the same opportunities. However, equity seeks to give everyone the same opportunities while recognizing their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers, such as socio-economic upbringing.

What is an equity lens?

An equity lens is a tool that can help ensure that your organizations' policies and programs are equitable for all members. It ensures equitable treatment of members from diverse communities when planning and developing the policies, programs and services of the organization.

What are systemic barriers?

These are barriers that are sometimes hidden (intentionally or unintentionally) within society that ultimately exclude certain groups or communities of people from fully engaging. These systemic barriers are often reinforced by existing policies, practices and procedures.

What is an ally and how can I be an ally?

An ally is a member of a privileged group, who advocates against oppression. An ally works to create social change rather than participate in oppressive actions.

You can be an ally by:

Actively supporting the struggle

Standing up/speaking out, even when you feel scared

Transferring the benefits of your privileges to those who have less

Acknowledging that the conversation is not about you

Listening with openness

What is a trigger warning?

A statement notifying that content (as in a text, video, presentation, etc.) may be disturbing or upsetting. They can be used to protect users from content that may contribute to pre-existing mental health issues (e.g., sharing photos about an eating disorder, that might trigger or, worse, inspire someone who is currently dealing with anorexia).