

Glossary of Terms

Ableism	Ableism is a pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. Like other forms of oppression, ableism operates on individual, institutional and cultural levels. Deeply rooted beliefs about health, productivity, beauty, and the value of human life, perpetuated by the public and private media, combine to create an environment that is often hostile to those whose physical, emotional, cognitive, or sensory abilities fall outside the scope of what is currently defined as socially acceptable.
Access	A way of approaching or reaching or entering; the right or opportunity to reach or use of visit. Client access is the extent to which consumers are represented and/or participate in the planning, development, delivery and administration of those services.
Ageism	Ageism is the pervasive oppression of people based on their age. Discrimination comes from the societal myth that older and younger people cannot perform certain cognitive or affective standards in the same way simply because they are younger or older. Therefore, based on people's ages, they have unfairly prescribed roles.
Ally	Ally a person who supports marginalized, silenced, or less privileged groups without actually being a member of those groups. This person will often directly confront and challenge systems of oppression. Anti-Racism more than an intellectual opposition to the principles of racial supremacy, it is the recognition of racism as part of institutional structures and the struggle to stop power and gain based on racism and/or race bigotry.
Anti-Semitism	Anti-Semitism refers to political, social and economic agitation and activities directed against Jewish people. Anti-Semitism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against Semitic people (mostly Jews). This can be based on hatred against Jews because of their religious beliefs, their perceived group mentality, and sometimes on the erroneous belief that Jews are a "race".
Assimilation	Assimilation means to make similar. It is the process whereby newcomers to society are encouraged to give up their cultural way of life and accommodate as quickly as possible to values and culture of the host society. It is an ethnocentric, one-way process of cultural exchange, in that only the newcomer is expected to adapt, with the implied promise that group acceptance will be the social reward.
Bias	Bias is an inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.
Bigotry	Bigotry is an unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes or prejudices.
Biphobia	Biphobia is the fear or hatred of bisexual people. This term addresses the ways that prejudice against bisexuals differs from prejudice against other queer people. There is often biphobia in gay, lesbian, and trans communities, as well as straight communities.

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Bisexual/Bi	Bisexual/Bi is someone who is or is capable of being attracted to members of both sexes or genders as prescribed by the binary gender system. Many people avoid this term because of its implication that there are only two sexes/genders to be sexually attracted to and thus reinforces the binary gender system.
Classism	Classism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people because of their real or perceived economic status or background.
Determinants of Health	Definable entities that cause, are associated with, or induce health outcomes. Public health is fundamentally concerned with action and advocacy to address the full range of potentially changeable determinants of health – not only those which are related to the actions of individuals, such as health behaviours and lifestyles, but also factors such as income and social status, education, employment and working conditions, access to appropriate health services, and the physical environment. These, in combination, create different living conditions which impact on health.
Diversity	Diversity is all the differences that people bring to an organization or group. Diversity includes knowing how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to age, ethnicity, class, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, as well as religious status, gender expression, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, and work experiences. Finally, we acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but also can be fluid, we respect individual rights to self-identification, and we recognize that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.
Ethnicity	Ethnicity is a group of people thought to have (or believe they have) a common way of thinking, feeling and acting, based on a shared common geographic and social history.
Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism is an attitude that one's own culture, society, or group is inherently superior to all others. Judging other cultures by your own cultural standards and since, of course, other cultures are different, they are therefore inferior. Ethnocentrism means an inability to appreciate others whose culture may include a different racial group, ethnic group, religion, morality, language, political system, economic system, etc. It also means an inability to see a common humanity and human condition facing all women and men in all cultures and societies beneath the surface variations in social and cultural traditions.
Equity/ Equitable	Equity means fairness. Equity in health means that people's needs guide the distribution of distribution of opportunities for well-being. Equity in health is not the same as equality in health status. Inequities occur as a consequence of differences in opportunity, which result, for example in unequal access to health services, nutritious food or adequate housing. In such cases, inequalities in health status arise as a consequence of inequities in opportunities in life.
FtM/MtF	FtM/MtF is two more genders. Also abbreviations used to refer to specific members of the trans community. FtM or F2M, stands for female-to-male, as in

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Gay	moving from the female pole of the spectrum to the male. MtF, or M2F, then, refers to people moving from the male location to the female. FtM may sometimes identify as a transman and MtF might identify as a transwoman. Someone who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to members of their own sex or gender. In certain contexts, this term is used to refer only to those who identify as men.
Gender	A societal construct referring to roles, characteristics, behaviours, appearances, and identities that develop through cultural interpretations of genetic sex. One's sense of being woman, man, girl, boy, androgynous, or something else entirely, or of being perceived as woman, man, etc.
Gender Identity	Gender Identity is the gender with which a person identifies, or is identified. This can be different from a person's assigned gender, which is determined as birth to be male or female or manipulated to resemble one or the other. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexuality are not necessarily linked.
Heterosexism	Heterosexism is the concept that heterosexuality and only heterosexuality is natural, normal, superior, and required. This can refer to any institution or belief system that excludes or makes invisible questioning, lesbian, non-labelling, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gay people, as well as any system that constructs queer sexualities as deviant, wrong, or immoral. Heterosexism is deeply rooted in the culture and institutions in our society. Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia all stem from and are supported by heterosexism.
Heterosexual	Heterosexual is a person who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to members of a gender or sex which is seen to be "opposite" or other than the one with which they identify or are identified.
Homophobia	Homophobia is the irrational fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex. Homophobia ranges from dislike and avoidance of homosexuals, to discrimination against them in employment, to acts of violence sometimes referred to as 'gay bashing'. The word phobia implies an irrational fear.
Inclusion	An inclusive society creates both the feeling and the reality of belonging and helps each of us reach our full potential. The feeling of belonging comes through caring, cooperation and trust. The reality of belonging comes through equity and fairness, social and economic justice, and cultural as well as spiritual respect. The term "inclusion" can imply that there are people in the centre who have the privilege of including others in their space.
Internalized Homophobia	Internalized Homophobia is the fear or hatred of, or discomfort with one's own queer sexuality. Internalized homophobia is linked to low self-esteem and is presumed to be a contributing factor in the high rates of suicide among queer teens.
Internalized Racist Oppression	Internalized Racist Oppression is the internalization by racialized people of the images, stereotypes, prejudices and myths promoted about racialized people in this country. Our thoughts and feelings about ourselves, people of our own racial group or other racialized people are based on these racist messages we receive from the broader system. It is a multi-generational process.

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Intersectional Identities	Intersectional identities is the concept that a person's identity does not rest on solely one factor, e.g., sexual preference, race, gender, etc. Hence, no single element of one's identity is necessarily supreme, although certain identities can take precedence over others at certain times. An intersectional approach 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 (Ontario Human Rights Commission, <i>AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TO DISCRIMINATION</i>)
Intersex	Intersex is an anatomical variation from typical understandings of male and female genetics. The physical manifestation, at birth, of genetic or endocrinological differences from the cultural norm. Also a group of medical conditions that challenge standard sex designations, proving that sex, like gender, is a social construct. Intersex and transgender folks share some overlapping experiences and perspectives, but the terms are not synonymous, and the issues are not the same. "Intersex" or "intersexual" is used today in favour of the term "hermaphrodite."
Lesbian	Lesbian is one who identifies as a woman who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to others who identify as women.
Oppression	The unilateral subjugation of one individual or group by a more powerful individual or group, using physical, psychological, social or economic threats or force, and frequently using an explicit ideology to sanction the oppression. Refers also to the injustices suffered by marginalized groups in their everyday interactions with members of the dominant group. The marginalized groups usually lack avenues to express reaction to disrespect, inequality, injustice and lack of response to their situation by individuals and institutions that can make improvements.
Patriarchy	Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources.
Power	Power is the ability to exercise control. Having access to systems and resources as legitimated by individuals and societal institutions.
Prejudice	Prejudice is a positive or negative attitude toward a person or group, formed without just grounds or sufficient knowledge--will not be likely to change in spite of new evidence or contrary argument. Prejudice is an attitude.
Privilege	Privilege is an "unearned advantage" that works to "to systematically over-empower certain groups" in our society. Privilege assigns dominance simply based on race, sexuality, or gender, among other factors of identity. Privilege is "an invisible package of unearned assets" that members of privileged groups "can count on cashing in every day," but about which they "are meant to remain oblivious."
Queer	Queer is an umbrella identity term encompassing lesbians, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labelling people, transgendered folks, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. "Queer" originated

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as a derogatory word. Currently, it is being reclaimed by some people and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as queer to distance themselves from the rigid categorizations of "straight" and "gay". Some transgendered, lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labelling, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of this term due its connotations of deviance and its tendency to gloss over and sometimes deny the differences between these groups.

Race	"Race" is NOT based on biology; it is a CREATED category with historical roots used to classify groups of people. Historically it was not determined by skin colour but by class inequalities (for example, the English defined the Irish as a "lower" race). During colonial expansion by European nations, race was defined in terms of skin colour where non-white people were considered "lower" races. Today, relationships between differently raced people are still determined by this moment in history and remain unequal, where white people have the most power and privilege and are considered the norm (i.e. non-raced). It is important to understand that white is also a created racial category.
Racialized Groups	Used to acknowledge "race" as a social construct and a way of describing a group of people. It is the process through which groups come to be designated as different and on that basis subjected to differential and unequal treatment. In the present context, racialized groups include those who may experience differential treatment on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, economics, religion (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2008).
Racism	Racism is racial and cultural prejudice and discrimination, supported intentionally or unintentionally by institutional power and authority, used to the advantage of one race and the disadvantage of other races. The critical element that differentiates racism from prejudice and discrimination is the use of institutional power and authority to support prejudices and enforce discriminatory behaviours in systemic ways with far-reaching outcomes and effects.
Religion	Religion is a group of people thought to have (or believe they have) a common belief system concerning ultimate meaning that (usually) assumes the existence of the supernatural.
Religious Oppression	Religious Oppression is the subordination, marginalization and persecution of an individual or group based on their religious or non-religious belief and/or practices.
Sexism	Sexism is a belief or attitude that one gender or sex is inferior to or less valuable than the other and can also refer to a hatred or distrust towards either sex as a whole, or creating stereotypes of masculinity for men or femininity for women. It is also called male and female chauvinism. Sexism can refer also to any and all systemic differentiations based on the gender of a person, not based on their individual merits. In some circumstances this type of sexism may constitute sex discrimination.
Sexual Orientation/ Sexual Preference/	These terms refer to categories of sexuality, as indicated by the object of one's sexual desire (e.g., members of the "opposite sex/gender, member of any gender, etc.)."Sexual orientation" can imply biological roots of sexual attraction, whereas "sexual preference" may connote an element of choice. Some people who see all these terms as loaded prefer the more general term

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Sexuality	"sexuality." Sexuality is a term that can be used as a general term to refer to sexual orientation or sexual preference.
Social Justice	A concept premised upon the belief that each individual and group within society is to be given equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties and participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the society.
Stereotype	Stereotype is a set of beliefs, generalized about a whole group of people.
Systemic Discrimination	The institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices which may appear neutral on the surface but which have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally and unintentionally. This occurs in institutions and organizations where the policies, practices and procedures (e.g. employment systems – job requirements, hiring practices, promotion procedures, etc.) exclude and/or act as barriers to racialized groups. Systemic discrimination also is the result of some government laws and regulations.
Tokenizing	Tokenizing is the action of making a member of a marginalized and/or oppressed group a spokesperson for that entire group, usually for the benefit of a larger, more privileged group.
Trans	Trans is an abbreviation for transgender, transsexual, or some other form of trans identity. "Trans" can invoke notions of transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over borders.
Transgender	Transgender is a term that has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who deviate from their assigned gender or the binary gender system, including intersex people, transsexuals, cross-dressers, transvestites, gender queers, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others. Some transgendered people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders. The term can also be applied exclusively to people who live primarily as the gender "opposite" to that which they were assigned at birth. These people may sometimes prefer the term "transsexual."
Transphobia	Transphobia is the fear or hatred of transgendered and transsexual people. Like biphobia, this term was created to call attention to the ways that prejudice against trans people differs from prejudice against other queer people. There is often transphobia in gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities, as well as straight communities.
White Supremacy	White supremacy is a system, historically constructed by white peoples and nations, to exploit and oppress nations and peoples of color. The point of the system is to maintain and perpetuate wealth, power and privilege for nations and peoples of European descent. White privilege is also a system, institutionally based, that (1) rewards and privileges white people solely because of their skin color and European origins; and (2) exempts whites and European-descended peoples from oppression. White supremacy anchors white privilege and racial oppression in our society, meaning that it is not simply about individual prejudice. Individual and organizational acts of racial prejudice are rooted in, and replicate, an entire social construct of white supremacy.