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This Glossary is by no means an exhaustive list of definitions related to our communities, and has been carefully crafted in the hopes that it will aid in the facilitation of shared understandings around equity, inclusion and awareness.

"_____ism"

Harmful beliefs, behaviours or institutional practices by a group or person with power directed against specific groups, rationalized by an underlying belief that certain people are superior to others. Examples include: ageism, anti-semitism, audism, cis-sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, racism, sexism, shadism, sizeism.

"_____phobia"

A learned dislike, aversion, or an extreme, irrational fear and/or hatred of a particular group of people. It is expressed through beliefs and tactics that devalue, demean and terrorize people. Examples include: biphobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and others.

Accommodation

An adjustment made to policies, programs and/or practices to enable individuals to benefit from and participate in the provision of services equally and perform to the best of their

ability. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code or other similar codes. Accommodation with dignity is pursuing the principle that our society should be structured and designed for inclusiveness.

Ally

A person who works to end a form of oppression that gives them privilege(s). Allies listen to, and are guided by, communities and individuals affected by oppression. Forms of oppression include: able-ism, ageism, audism, classism, biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, and others.

Anti-Racism

Beliefs, actions, policies and movements developed to actively identify and eliminate prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

**Asexual**

A sexual orientation where a person experiences little or no sexual attraction.

Barrier

Any overt or covert obstacle that prevents a person from fully taking part in all aspects of society. For example, a belief, policy, practice, object or environment that prevents or limits a person's access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

Bias

A subjective opinion, predisposition, preference, prejudice, generalization or inclination, formed based on personal characteristics or stereotypes.

Bisexual

A person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender, though not necessarily at the same time.

Biphobia

Negative attitudes, feelings, or irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of bisexual people and their communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as bisexual, leading to discrimination, harassment or violence against bisexual people.

Bullying

The use of threat, coercion, or force to cause fear, distress or harm to a person.

Coming Out

A process of revealing more openly to self or others one's LGBTQ identity.

Cis/Cisgender

Cisgender is used to explain the phenomena where a person's gender identity is in line with or "matches" the sex they were assigned at birth. Cis can also be used as a prefix to an assortment of words to refer to the alignment of gender identity and the assigned at birth sex status including; cisheteronormativity, cissexual, cisgender, cis male, and cis female.

Cisheteronormativity

Cisheteronormativity ("cis" meaning "the same as") refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are cisgender and that everyone accepts this as "the norm". The term cisheteronormativity is used to describe systemic prejudice against trans. This form of systemic prejudice may go unrecognized by the people or organizations responsible.

Cisheterosexism

A system of oppression that considers cis people to be superior to trans people. It includes harmful beliefs that it is "normal" to be cis and "abnormal" to be trans. Examples include scrutinizing the genders of trans people more than those of cis people or defining beauty based on how cis people look.

Colonization

The process of focusing on and devaluing people's differences in order to dominate and control them, including various economic, political and social policies by which a powerful group maintains or extends control over other people or areas.

Cross-Dresser

A person who, for various reasons, wears gender atypical clothing or occasionally dresses in clothing of the "opposite" gender. They may or may not self-identify as a cross-dresser.

Culture

The sum of many things an individual learns (and may modify or pass on) from being immersed in a particular context – the shared (or perceived to be shared) ideas, beliefs, values, behavioural norms, knowledge, customs and traditions of a group of people who share some historical, geographic, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic or social context.

Cultural Competence

A person’s ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence has four components: (a) Awareness of one’s own cultural worldview; (b) Attitude towards cultural differences; (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and (d) Cross- cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to better understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Differently-Abled

An umbrella term used to describe people with different physical, emotional, and cognitive abilities.

Disability

Under the medical model, this term refers to a limitation or loss of physiological abilities, whether apparent or not. These can be physical, cognitive, learning, and visual disabilities. Under the social model, disability is identified as a disadvantage or a restriction of activity caused by systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society.



Discrimination

Any form of unequal treatment based on a ground protected by human rights legislation, that results in disadvantage, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits. Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional; and it may occur at an individual or systemic level. It may include direct actions or more subtle aspects of rules, practices and procedures that limit or prevent access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to others.

Dominant Group

A group that is considered more powerful and privileged in a particular society or context and that has power and influence over others.

Drag King/Drag Queen

Someone who dresses in the clothing of the “opposite” gender for performance. Drag performers can be of any gender identity or sexual orientation.

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Duty to Accommodate

The legal obligation that employers, organizations, service providers and public institutions have under human rights legislation to ensure fair and equal access to services in a way that respects the dignity of every person, if to do so does not create undue hardship. The principle of dignity strives to maximize integration and promote full participation in society, in consideration of the importance of privacy, confidentiality, comfort, autonomy, individuality and self-esteem.

Equality

The practice of ensuring equal treatment to all people, without consideration of individual and group diversities.



Equity

The practice of ensuring fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities. Access to services, supports and opportunities and attaining economic, political and social fairness cannot be achieved by treating individuals in exactly the same way.

Equity honours and accommodates the specific needs of individuals/ groups.

Ethnicity

A socially defined category or membership of people who may share a nationality, heritage, language, culture and/or religion.

Gay

A person whose enduring physical, romantic, spiritual, emotional, and/or sexual attractions are to people of the same gender. The word can refer to men or women, although some women prefer "lesbian." Sometimes used as an umbrella term for the LBGTO community.

Gender

Gender is based on the expectations and stereotypes about behaviours, actions, and roles linked to being a "man" or "woman" within a particular culture or society. The social norms related to gender can vary depending on the culture, and can change over time.

Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming/ Gender Variant

Individuals who do not follow gender stereotypes based on the sex they were assigned at birth. They may identify and express themselves as "feminine men" or "masculine women" or as androgynous, outside of the categories "boy/man" and "girl/woman." People who are gender non-conforming may or may not identify as trans.

Gender Binary

A social system whereby people are thought to have either one of two genders: “man” or “woman.” These genders are expected to correspond to birth sex: male or female. In the gender binary system, there is no room for living between genders or for transcending the gender binary. The gender binary system is rigid and restrictive for many people whose sex assigned at birth does not match up with their gender, or whose gender is fluid and not fixed.

Gender Expression

How a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes.

All people, regardless of their gender identity, have a gender expression and they may express it in any number of ways. For trans people, their

chosen name, preferred pronoun and apparel are common ways they express their gender. People who are trans may also take medically supportive steps to align their body with their gender identity.

Gender Identity

A person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. A person’s gender identity is fundamentally different from and not related to their sexual orientation.

Gender Norms

The gender binary influences what society considers “normal” or acceptable behaviour, dress, appearance and roles for women and men. Gender norms are a prevailing force in our everyday lives. Strength, action, and dominance are stereotypically seen as “masculine” traits, while vulnerability, passivity, and receptiveness are stereotypically seen as “feminine” traits. A woman expressing masculine traits may be chastised as “overly aggressive,” while a man expressing “feminine” traits may be labelled as “weak.” Gender norms can contribute to power imbalances and gender inequality in the home, at work, and in communities.

Gender Role

The oppressive culturally and historically specific expectations and restrictions that are placed on a person based on whether they are assigned at birth as male or female.

Gender Spectrum

The representation of gender as a continuum, as opposed to a binary concept.

Harassment

A course of comments or actions, such as unwelcome attention, jokes, threats, remarks, name-calling, touching or other behaviours that are known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome, offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, or demeaning. Harassment under human rights legislation is based on the prohibited/protected grounds.

Hate Crime

Criminal acts which promote hatred against identifiable groups of people, motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. Although individuals and groups that promote this destructive form of human rights-based discrimination often defend their right to “free speech,” it is a criminal offense to disseminate hate propaganda and/or to commit hate crimes.

Heteronormativity

Refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are heterosexual and that everyone accepts this as “the norm”. The term heteronormativity is used to describe prejudice against people that are not heterosexual, and is less overt or direct and more widespread or systemic in society, organizations, and institutions. This form of systemic prejudice may even be unintentional and unrecognized by the people or organizations responsible.

Heterosexism

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and preferable. The result is discrimination against bisexual, lesbian and gay people that is less overt, and which may be unintentional and unrecognized by the person or organization responsible for the discrimination.

Homophobia

Negative attitudes, feelings, or irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of gay, lesbian, or

people and communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as “homosexual.” It is used to signify a hostile psychological state leading to discrimination, harassment or violence against gay, lesbian or people.

Human Rights

The universal entitlement that all people should have access to freedom, justice and protection from discrimination and harassment, and that people should have equal access to a climate that preserves the dignity and worth of individuals and groups.

Inclusion

An approach that aims to reach out to and include all people, honouring the diversity and uniqueness, talents, beliefs, backgrounds, capabilities and ways of living of individuals and groups.

Indigenous Peoples

An umbrella term for self-identified descendants of pre-colonial/pre-settler societies. In Canada these include the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as separate peoples with unique heritages, economic and political systems, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. While the collective term has offered a sense of solidarity among some indigenous communities, the term should not serve to erase the distinct histories, languages, cultural practices, and sovereignty of the more than fifty nations that lived in Canada prior to European colonization.

Internalized Oppression

When members of a marginalized group accept negative aspects of stereotypes assigned to them by the dominant group, and begin to believe that they are inferior. The incorporation by individuals within an oppressed group of the prejudices against them within the dominant society can result in self-hatred, self-concealment, fear of violence,

feelings of inferiority, resignation, isolation, and powerlessness. It is a mechanism within an oppressive system for perpetuating power imbalance.

Intersectionality

When two or more oppressions overlap in the experiences of an individual or group, creating interconnected barriers and complex forms of discrimination that can be insidious, covert and compounded.

Intersex

A term used to describe a person born with reproductive systems, chromosomes and/or hormones that are not easily characterized as male or female. This might include a woman with XY chromosomes or a man with ovaries instead of testes. Intersex characteristics occur in one out of every 1,500 births. Typically intersex people are assigned one sex, male or female, at birth. Some intersex people identify with their assigned sex, while others do not, and some choose to identify as intersex. Intersex people may or may not identify as trans or transgender.

Lesbian

A woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to women.

Marginalization

To relegate individuals or groups to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group by excluding them from meaningful participation and/or confining them to the outer edges of society.

Misogyny

The hatred and denigration of women and characteristics deemed feminine.

Transmisogyny

Negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

MSM

A man who has sex with men.

Oppression

The obvious and subtle ways dominant groups unjustly maintain status, privilege and power over others, using physical, psychological, social or economic threats or force. Frequently an explicit ideology is used to sanction the unfair subjugation of an individual or group by a more powerful individual or group, which causes injustices in everyday interactions between marginalized groups and the dominant group.

Pansexual

A person who has the potential for romantic and sexual attraction to people of any gender or sex.

Passing

This is the privilege given to a person who is believed to be a member of a dominant group (i.e., non-trans, cisgender, white, non-disabled). When a trans woman is passing, (i.e., believed to be a cisgender woman) she has an easier time accessing privilege(s).

Polyamory

The practice, state or ability of having more than one intimate, sexual and/or romantic relationship at the same time.

Power

Access to privileges such as information/knowledge, connections, experience and expertise, resources and decision making that enhance a person's chances of getting what they need to live a comfortable, safe, productive and profitable life. Each person has different levels of power in different contexts depending on a personal combination of privileges and oppression.

Poz

An abbreviation referring to an HIV positive person.

Prejudice

A negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics, rather than empirical evidence.

Privilege

Unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that provide unfair advantage for members of the dominant group(s) in society. People are not always aware of the privileges they have. Examples include: cissexual privilege, straight privilege, male privilege, white privilege.

Queer

Formerly derogatory slang term used to identify LGBT people. Some members of the LGBT community have embraced and reinvented this term as a positive and proud political identifier when speaking among and about themselves.

Questioning

A period where a person explores their own sexual and/or gender identity, reflecting on such things as upbringing, expectations from others, and inner landscape. The person may not be certain if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans and may be trying to figure out how to identify themselves.

Race

Culturally or socially constructed divisions of humankind, based on distinct characteristics that can be based on: physicality, culture, history, beliefs and practices, language, origin, etc. Racial discrimination is prohibited within Canada as part of the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the United Nations has a committee devoted to the elimination of racial discrimination.

Sex

The classification of people as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person's reproductive systems, hormones, chromosomes and other physical characteristics.

Sexual Orientation

The direction of one's sexual interest or attraction. It is a personal characteristic that forms part of who you are. It covers the range of human sexuality from lesbian and gay, to bisexual and straight.

Sex-Positive

An attitude that promotes and embraces the diversity of human sexuality, focusing on; advocating for a consent oriented culture, safe sex awareness, and comprehensive sex education that incorporates unbiased methods in its approach.

Social Determinants of Health

Things that are needed for people to avoid illness and to be physically, mentally and socially healthy (e.g. income, employment, housing, access to services).

Social Justice

A concept based on a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and individuals and groups are given equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties, and participation in the rights, freedoms and responsibilities valued by society.

Stealth

When a trans person is not “out” about being trans in their social circles (with friends, employers, colleagues). There are many different levels of being stealth, but in some cases a trans person may need to end contact with those who once knew them as their assigned at birth sex, move to new locations, or get a new job. These changes are significant, and may be due to personal reasons or based on physical, cognitive and/or emotional safety.

Stereotype

Overly simplistic, or unfounded assumptions or judgments about a group of people that disregard individual differences among group members and emphasize negative preconceptions that characterize all members of a group as being the same.

Stigma

Severe social disapproval or discontentment with a person or group on the grounds of their particular circumstance, usually based on differences from social or cultural norms.

Straight

A person who has romantic or sexual attractions to people of another gender.

Tokenism

The practice of making a symbolic effort towards involving an underrepresented group of individuals under the guise of inclusivity or equality, and is often seen within a group, committee, organization, or workplace. The action itself or the type of involvement of the underrepresented is limited, and the false appearance of inclusivity or equality can then be used to promote a false appearance that hides deeper systemic issues within the organization.

Trans/Transgender

Umbrella terms that describe people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man in society. “Trans” can mean transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over the gender spectrum. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross-dressers or gender non-conforming (gender variant or gender-queer).

Trans identities include people whose gender identity is different from the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex. Trans people may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments, such as hormone therapy and a range of surgical procedures, to align their bodies with their internally felt gender identity.

Transition

Refers to a host of activities that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender

identity. This may include changes to their name, sex designation, dress, the use of specific pronouns, and possibly medically supportive treatments such as hormone therapy, sex-reassignment surgery or other procedures. There is no checklist or average time for a transition process, and no universal goal or endpoint. Each person will decide what meets their needs.

Trans Man (FTM)/ Trans Woman (MTF)

A person whose sex assigned at birth is “female” and identifies as a man may also identify as a trans man (female-to-male, or FTM). A person whose sex assigned at birth is “male” and identifies as a woman may also identify as a trans woman (male-to-female, or MTF).

Transmisogyny

Negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

Transphobia

Negative attitudes and feelings and the aversion to, fear or hatred or intolerance of trans people and communities. Like other prejudices, it is based on stereotypes and misconceptions that are used to justify discrimination, harassment and violence toward trans people, or those perceived to be trans.

Transsexual

A person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. They may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments to align their bodies with their gender identity, such as hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery or other procedures or changes.

Two-Spirit

A term used by Indigenous People to describe from a cultural perspective people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, or intersex. It is used to capture a concept that exists in many different Indigenous cultures and languages. For some, the term two-spirit describes a societal

and spiritual role that certain people played within traditional societies; they were often mediators, keepers of certain ceremonies; they transcended accepted roles of men and women, and filled a role as an established middle gender.

WSW

A woman who has sex with women.

Ze/Hir

Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some gender variant persons. Pronounced /zee/ and /here,/ they replace "he"/"she" and "his"/"hers" respectively.