Glossary of Terms

[Updated December 2023]

Introduction

The Glossary of Terms corresponds to our everyday understanding and use of language. These definitions are not fixed or static; they are fluid and can change over time. In our diverse society, individual and identity differences can affect the meaning and interpretation of these terms. It requires awareness and understanding of how they interplay and impact personal experience within the workplace and, more broadly, society. The Glossary of Terms is not exhaustive and is not an extension list of terms that may be used in an organization per operations, core beliefs, values, commitment(s), or mission. Members and agencies can add terms that employees and clients can refer to regarding their organization's policies, procedures, and practices.

[Note: This is a living document that OCASI will update on an ongoing basis as our collective understanding of these terms and definitions evolve and deepen. Please contact us if you have comments by sending an email to policyevents@ocasi.org]

Terms

"_____" isms refer to harmful beliefs, behaviours, or institutional practices of a group or person with power. These individuals target specific groups with the underlying assumption that certain people are superior to others. Examples include ageism, anti-Semitism, audism, cis-sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, Racism, sexism, and shadeism.

"_____" Phobia is a term used to describe a person's hatred based on fear, prejudice, negative stereotypes, beliefs, or views toward people—for example, lesbian, gay, queer, transgender, or members of another religion.

Fear is a normal reaction to a threat, while a phobia leads to a fear response even when the person is not in danger. A phobia connects to hatred, oppression, and a sense of superiority. Examples include homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and Islamophobia.

2SLGBTQIA+[1&2] is an acronym for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the plus reflects the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify or identify as part of sexual and gender-diverse communities, who use additional terminologies.

Ableism[3] is a term used to describe assumptions and practices that often lead to unequal treatment and oppression of people with apparent or assumed physical, intellectual, or behavioural differences.

Access is "the right or opportunity to reach, use, or visit; admittance." The access impacts how people engage with, interact, and receive opportunities, services, or programs.

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[1] https://www.middlebury.edu/institute/about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dei/lgbtq#:~:text=*2SLGTBQIA%2B%20is%20an%20acronym%20for,people%20choose%20to%20self%2Didentify.

[2] https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/free-to-be-me/2slgbtqi-plus-glossary.html

[3] Definition adapted from http://www.streetsie.com/ableism-definition-normal/.

Access Barriers are any barriers that prevent people from using facilities, equipment, programs, services, and online tools.

Accessibility is "the ability of people to reach places and services and the ability of places to be reached by people and goods." Accessibility is a concept that promotes the full participation of all members of society, regardless of race, ability, religion, gender identity, gender expression, or creed, so that all groups of people can benefit from all aspects of community, civic, and urban life.

Accommodation is the legal duty under the Ontario Human Rights Code is to consider the needs of persons with disabilities up-front, which means designing inclusive and accessible buildings, processes, programs, or services. It is the understanding and action to remove barriers in existing physical structures, systems, or attitudes that create barriers. Where it is impossible to remove barriers without undue hardship, special arrangements must be made so that persons with disabilities can fully participate.

Accomplice is a person who works within a system and "directly challenges institutionalized/systemic racism, colonization, and white supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures."[4] Accomplices aim to fight racial injustices on an institutional level.

Ally[5] is a dominant group member who acts against oppression out of a belief that eliminating oppression will benefit the targets of oppression and dominant group members. In the struggle against racism, for example, white people are allies who take leadership from activists who are people of colour and First Nations, Metis & Inuit people. Allies often make changes on an individual level.

Anti-colonial is a term that describes resistance to regimes and forces of colonial movements and ideologies. It is often used in the context or discussion of inequities in society and the collective battle within communities that are occupied, colonized, and exploited.

Anti-oppression[6&7] is the lens by which we see power, privilege and oppression, recognizing their various manifestations and seeking to mitigate these structures with a goal towards equity and social justice. Anti-oppression initiatives seek to identify different forms of oppression and reduce their effects to equalize power imbalance in communities and societies.

Anti-racism is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate Racism.

Audism is the idea that one is superior is based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears, discrimination against or oppression of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Bias is an inclination, learning, opinion, perspective, preference, or prejudice formed without reasonable justification and influences a person's or group's ability to evaluate a particular situation accurately or objectively; an unfounded preference for or against it.

Casteism is also referred to as caste-oppression or caste-stigma. Casteism is the

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[4] Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice. (2016).
[5] Lopes, Tina and Thomas Barb, *Dancing on Live Embers Challenging Racism in Organizations.* (2006).
[6] University of Toronto, Glossary of Terms (EDI)
[7] Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues. (2016). https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/831486?ln=en

categorization and discrimination of people based on caste and analogous systems of inherited status, a form of discrimination based on descent. It is estimated to affect more than 260 million people worldwide.[8]

Class is the categorization and discrimination of groups or persons with similar social positions and certain economic, political, and cultural characteristics.

Culture is the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, norms, communication styles and way of life of individuals who share certain ethnic, historical, linguistic, racial, religious, and social backgrounds. Culture is a complex and dynamic organization/categorization of meaning, knowledge, artifacts, and symbols that guide human behaviour. It accounts for shared thoughts and action patterns and contributes to human, social and physical survival.

Cultural Competence is a set of consistent attitudes, behaviours, and policies that come together in an agency, organization system, or among professionals, enabling them to work on cross-cultural issues effectively. Individuals, organizations, and systems can function and perform effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Cultural Diversity[9] or Diversity is a broad term that refers to differences among people. Often used within the context of culture, education, organizations, or workplaces, it relates to differences among individuals and groups. Diversity is commonly understood in terms of dimensions that include but are not limited to race, age, place of origin, religion, ancestry, skin colour, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability/ability, marital, parental, or family status, same-sex partnership status, gender identity, creed, educational background, literacy level, geographic location, income level, cultural tradition, and work experience.

Disability Justice focuses on critically examining disability and ableism to other forms of oppression and identities such as race, class, and gender, and responds to the invisibilized lives of people who live at intersecting oppressions – "disabled racialized people, immigrants with disabilities, queers with disabilities trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities, people with disabilities who are houseless, people with disabilities who are incarcerated, people with disabilities who have had their ancestral lands stolen, amongst others."[10]

Discrimination is the manifestation of prejudice. The granting and denying of civil liberties and opportunities to individuals or groups to access services, goods and facilities, education, employment, and health care. Discrimination may occur based on age, developmental or mental disability, ethnicity, gender, marital or family status, nationality, physical, race, religious or political affiliation, or sexual orientation. Discrimination becomes more blatant when two or more factors (e.g., economic status, class, and racial visibility) coincide. This behaviour results in minorities being maltreated/mistreated or excluded.

Diversity[11] reflects the variety of individuals' unique dimensions, identities, qualities, and characteristics.

Decolonizing is a process that describes the reversal of colonial oppression and the recovery of practices, traditions, and teachings that have been erased, forgotten, or exploited.

[8] Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues. 2016.
http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/HRC/31/56&Lang=E
[9] Adapted from Inclusive Community Organizations: A Tool Kit (Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 2004). This definition focuses on what is meant by "diversity" and not on the models/frameworks to address diversity, such as Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression (ARAO); Cultural Competency; or Cultural Sensitivity
[10] https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/disability-justice-a-working-draft-by-patty-berne
[11] https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx

Decolonizing includes respecting indigenous oral traditions and narratives, preserving indigenous ways of doing things, and disengaging from Western colonial norms.

Dominant Group refers to 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 middle class, thirty to sixty-five years of age, university educated, from central Canada. [12]

Equality is treating people the same, and is based on the assumption that everyone is the same and has the same needs.

Equity[13] is treating people based on their needs, which enables and ensures all individuals have equitable opportunity and access and benefit from a service, program, accommodation, or resource.

Equity-seeking[14] is used to refer to communities that experience collective oppression and barriers to participation in society. These may include attitudinal, historical, social, and environmental barriers based on, for example, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, economic status, nationality, race, sexual orientation, and transgender status. Equity-seeking groups identify barriers to equal access, opportunity, and resources arising from historic disadvantage and ongoing discrimination, and actively seek social justice, redress and remedies.

There is an ongoing discussion about which term is more appropriate - equity-seeking or equity-deserving. Some people feel that to 'seek' something puts the person in a subordinate position of 'asking'. Some people feel the term 'deserve' is based on merit, and whether the person is 'worthy'.

(OCASI will continue to use the term equity-seeking, because we believe equity is a matter of human rights and to seek does not imply 'to ask'; rather it is to 'assert' one has human rights. We believe it demonstrates the agency of the communities/population demanding their freedom; as opposed to deserving which is determined by a force external to the communities/population. We will monitor the ongoing discussion on terms and update as appropriate).

Gender Expression/Gender Presentation[15] describes the external characteristics and behaviours socially defined as masculine or feminine such as dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions. People's behaviours convey something about their gender identity or that others interpret as meaning something about their gender identity. It is recognized that gender identity and gender expression/gender presentation may be fluid and may change over time.

Gender Identity[16] is an individual's understanding of themselves as male or female, man or woman, or something other or in-between. An individual's gender identity has nothing to do with their genitalia or chromosomes.

Harassment: The *Ontario Human Rights Code* defines harassment as a vexatious ('hard to cope with"; "troubling to the nerves or peace of mind") comment or behaviour that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment includes words, actions and gestures that are offensive to an individual and insult, humiliate, demean, and undermine a person's worth

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[12] Lopes, Tina and Thomas, Barb, *Dancing on Live Embers Challenging Racism in Organizations.* (2006).

[13] https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-inclusion-glossary-of-terms/#E

[14] https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/equity-seeking-groups and https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-inclusion-glossary-of-terms/#E

[15] Adapted from Trans Inclusion Policy, Centre for Women and Trans People, University of Toronto. (2008).

[16] Ibid.

and dignity. [17]

Heterosexism is the belief that heterosexuality is the norm, and individual, institutional, and systemic results from that belief.

Identity is a subjective sense of coherence, consistency, and continuity of self based on personal and group history.

Inclusion[18] ensures all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and practices, and are supported equitably in a culturally responsive and healthy environment.

Institutions are organizational arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken (e.g., corporations, criminal justice system, education system, health care system, government, religious communities, and others).

Institutional/systemic discrimination refers to attitudes, patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of an organization or sector's social or administrative structures and create or perpetuate a position of disadvantage for and oppression of marginalized and racialized groups.

Institutional Racism is a practice in organizations intended to discriminate against racialized people through policies or behaviours[19].

Integration is the process that allows groups and persons to become fully participating members in the cultural, economic, political, and social life of society while at the same time retaining their own cultural identity.

Internalized Racism[20] refers to a form of self-hatred based on members of an oppressed group cognitively and emotionally accepting all or some aspects of negative stereotypes about themselves.

Intersectionality[21] is a theory and analytic framework created by African-American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. It analyzes the complex and interconnected way social categorizations (e.g., race, class, gender, age) and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage overlap in the experience of oppressed and marginalized individuals. "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects." - Kimberle Crenshaw 2017

Lived Experience is an important form of expertise that recognizes that people with life experiences related to social identity have a deeper knowledge of its strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Life experiences combined with professional expertise can benefit societies and communities when they inform design, programming, and policy decisions.

Marginalization is the social process by which individuals and groups are (unintentionally or intentionally) kept from access to power and resources, and are considered unimportant, peripheral or less valuable to the main group or society.[22]

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[17] Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH). *Creating Inclusive Spaces, Plain Language Version*. (2005).

[18] https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx

[19] https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/how-to-explain-structural-institutional-and-systemic-racism/

[20] https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/internalized-racism

[21] KW Krenshaw. (1989). *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. Chicago Unbound

[22] https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-inclusion-glossary-of-terms/#M

Behaviours, actions, policies, and social institutions are used to keep various forms of power and privilege away from specific individuals and groups. Denying individuals and groups access to educational, social, legal, and economic resources ensures they remain "on the margin" or disadvantaged. [23]

Microaggressions are subtle, everyday interactions that convey bias against a marginalized group and are often disguised as compliments or innocent questions. Some are intended to cause harm; others are unintentional. However, the target of microaggressions often experience them negatively and may experience mental health problems, including increased depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Oppression is the domination of an individual or group by another, more powerful individual or group, using cultural, economic, physical, psychological, or social threats or force and frequently using an explicit ideology to justify the oppression. As a systemic misuse of power, oppression enables dominant groups to exert power and control over target groups by limiting rights, freedom, and access to resources and information.[24]

Prejudice is a frame of mind that tends to prejudge a person or a group unfavourably by attributing specific characteristics to every member of a group. These unfavourable assumptions often go unrecognized because of the frequency with which they are widely accepted and are used to justify acts of discrimination.

Privilege is unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group(s) in society. It can also refer to the relative privilege of one group compared to another.[25]

Power-sharing is the division of power between individuals or groups within organizations, communities, and societies. If power is shared equitably it has the potential to contribute to stability and de-centralize control and authority from only one person or group.[26]

Race refers to socially constructed differences among people based on characteristics such as accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth.[27]

Racialized People are persons who do not identify as primarily white in race, ethnicity, origin, and/or colour, regardless of their birthplace or citizenship. The term "racialized" is used as a more current term than "visible minority" from the Employment Equity Act (1995).[28]

Racialization refers to the process of social construction of race: "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life."[29]

Racism is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes but it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these are unconsciously held and have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels, in particular, individual, systemic and

[23] OAITH, *Creating Inclusive Spaces, Plain Language Version* 2000

[24] University of Toronto, Glossary of Terms (EDI)

[25] Ontario Human Rights Commission. Glossary of Human Rights Terms

[26] National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. Building Community Power for Health Equity: A Curated List. (2023).

[27] Ontario Human Rights Commission. Racial discrimination, race and racism fact sheet.

[28] University of British Columbia. Equity and inclusion glossary of terms. (2023).

[29] Ontario Human Rights Commission. Racial discrimination, race and racism fact sheet.

societal.[30]

Settler Colonialism[31] refers to the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country or land through occupation, exploitation and imposition of their own cultural values, religions, and laws and making policies that do not favour the Indigenous Peoples. Settler colonialism requires genocide and is enacted through practices like the creation of reserves, residential schools, enfranchisement and abduction into state custody as well as practices like the extraction of natural resources through mining, pipelines and more.

Sexism is any action, attitude, behaviour, or language depicting women as inferior. Sexism is discrimination based on gender and the attitudes, stereotypes, and cultural elements that promote this discrimination.

Social Class is the hierarchical order of a society based on such indicators of social rank as education, family, income, occupation, ownership of property, etc.

Social Justice is a concept based upon the belief that every individual and group within a given society has a right to civil liberties, equal opportunity, fairness, and participation in the educational, economic, institutional, social, and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the community.

Structural Racism refers to a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we exist.[32]

Systemic Discrimination refers to patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for groups identified under the *Human Rights Code*.[33]

Systemic Racism consists of organizational culture, policies, directives, practices or procedures that exclude, displace or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers for them to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others.[34]

Targeted Universalism means setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal.[35]

Transgender[36] is frequently used as an umbrella term, which serves as a banner to cover all

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[30] Ibid.

[31] https://www.theindigenousfoundation.org/articles/what-is-settler-colonialism

[32] Adapted from Othering and Belonging Institute. Glossary of Key Terms: Race and Housing.

[33] Ontario Human Rights Commission. Glossary of Human Rights Terms

[34] Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate. Glossary - Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism.

[35] Othering and Belonging Institute. Targeted Universalism Policy and Practice. (2019)

[36] University of Toronto Centre for Women and Trans People. Adapted from Trans Inclusion Policy.

those who transgress society's notions of how biological sex, gender, and sexual orientation link together, i.e., anyone who crosses society's gender norms. A transgender person may feel society limits personal expression by maintaining two distinct gender constructs.[37]

Travesti (Brasil); Hijra (India); Vestido (Mexico); Binabe (Filipino; Mke-Simume (Swahili); Katoeys (Thai); Faka Fafini (Polynesian); Transformista (Spanish); A few of the many terms used to describe "trans," or "alternate" gender roles.[38]

Transphobia is a fear or hatred of Transsexual and Transgender people and those cross-gender elements that exist within all people[39].

Two-Spirit[40] is a term which originates from the First Nations' recognition of the traditions and sacredness of people who maintain a balance by housing both the male and female spirit. Today, Two-Spirit people can be Indigenous people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, other gendered, third/fourth gendered individuals who walk carefully between the worlds and the genders.

White Privilege refers to the inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice. This concept does not imply that a white person has not worked for their accomplishments but rather, that they have not faced barriers encountered by others.[41]

White Supremacy refers to the idea that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs and actions of white people are superior to racialized peoples and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White supremacy expresses itself interpersonally as well as structurally (example: through our governments, social, economic and social systems).[42]

World Majority People (or Global Majority) is a term that emphasizes racialized people are 70 to 80 percent of the world's population. It links local and national racial equity work to global struggles for racial justice.[43]

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[37] The 519 Church Street Community Centre TS/TG 101 by the Meal Trans Programme
[38] Creating Inclusive Spaces Provincial Training Series - Information Package
[39] University of Toronto Centre for Women and Trans People. Adapted from Trans Inclusion Policy.
[40] University of Toronto Centre for Women and Trans People. Adapted from Trans Inclusion Policy.
Lopes, Tina and Thomas, Barb, *Dancing on Live Embers Challenging Racism in Organizations*
[41] Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Glossary of Terms.
[42] Adapted from Department of National Defence, Anti-racism lexicon.
[43] Adapted from Lopes, Tina and Thomas, Barb, *Dancing on Live Embers Challenging Racism in Organizations*