

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Ableism**

A belief system that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than others. Ableism may be conscious or unconscious, and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. It can limit the opportunities of persons with disabilities and reduce their inclusion in the life of their communities.

### **Acceptance**

Affirmation and recognition of those whose race, religion, nationality, values, beliefs, etc. are different from one's own. Acceptance goes beyond 'tolerance' which represents a "coming to terms" with difference rather than an embrace or approval of it.

### **Adverse Impact**

The impact, whether intended or not, of employment practices that disproportionately affect groups such as visible minorities and women. Though a practice may appear neutral, it has a discriminatory effect on groups protected by human rights and/or employment legislation.

### **Ageism**

Ageism refers to two concepts: a socially constructed way of thinking about older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging and a tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young, thereby failing to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons. Ageism also includes discrimination that is more systemic in nature, such as in the design and implementation of services, programs and facilities. Age discrimination involves treating persons in an unequal fashion due to age in a way that is contrary to human rights law.

### **Ally**

A member of a different group who works to end a form of discrimination for a particular individual or designated group.

### **Anti-Oppression**

Strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others.

### **Anti-Racism**

An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism.

**Antisemitism**

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred or blame. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. The IHRA definition provides examples, which may serve as illustrations, found here.

**Attitude**

An individual's state of mind which makes them react in certain ways towards social events or objects; a consistent pattern of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and reactions.

**Barrier**

An overt or covert obstacle which must be overcome for equality and progress to be possible.

**Bias**

A subjective opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination, often formed without reasonable justification, which influences the ability of an individual or group to evaluate a particular situation objectively or accurately.

**Bona Fide Occupational Requirement**

A workplace prerequisite that is directly related to the requirements of a specific job and which employers may consider when making decisions on the hiring and retention of employees.

**Conciliation**

An informal communications process aimed at getting two or more parties to establish meaningful dialogue, narrow down issues in dispute, and suggest cooperative ways of resolving conflict.

**Creed**

A professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship. A belief in a god or gods or a single supreme being or deity is not a requisite.

**Cultural Assimilation**

The full adoption by an individual or group of the culture, values and patterns of a different social, religious, linguistic or national ethos, resulting in the diminution or elimination of attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of the original individual or group. Can be voluntary or forced.

**Culture**

The mix of ideas, beliefs, values, behavioural and social norms, knowledge and traditions held by a group of individuals who share a historical, geographic, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic and/ or social context. This mix is passed on from one generation to another, resulting in a set of expectations for appropriate behaviour in seemingly similar contexts.

**Designated Groups**

Social groups whose individual members have been historically denied equal access to employment, education, social services, housing, etc. because of membership in the group. In the Employment Equity Act, the four designated groups are: women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.

**Discrimination**

The denial of equal treatment and opportunity to individuals or groups because of personal characteristics and membership in specific groups, with respect to education, accommodation, health care, employment, access to services, goods, and facilities. This behaviour results from distinguishing people on that basis without regard to individual merit, resulting in unequal outcomes for persons who are perceived as different. Differential treatment that may occur on the basis of any of the protected grounds enumerated in human rights law.

**Diversity**

A term used to encompass the acceptance and respect of various dimensions including race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, age, physical abilities, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

**Dominant Group**

Defined as the group that controls the major elements of a society's norms and values. The dominant group is often but not always the majority.

**Employment Equity**

A program designed to remove barriers to equality in employment for reasons unrelated to ability, by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, remedying the effects of past discrimination, and ensuring appropriate representation of the designated groups (women; Aboriginal peoples; persons with disabilities; and visible minorities). Employment Equity can be used as an active effort to improve the employment or educational opportunities of members of minority groups and women through explicit actions, policies or programs.

**Equity**

A 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.

**Ethnic Group**

Refers to a group of people having a common heritage or ancestry, or a shared historical past, often with identifiable physical, cultural, linguistic and/or religious characteristics.

**Ethnicity**

The multiplicity of beliefs, behaviours and traditions held in common by a group of people bound by particular linguistic, historical, geographical, religious and/or racial homogeneity. Ethnic diversity is the variation of such groups and the presence of a number of ethnic groups within one society or nation.

**First Nation**

A term that came into common usage in the 1980's, to replace the term "Indian," which some people find offensive – it has no legal definition. "First Nation peoples" or "First Nations" refers to the Indian peoples of Canada, both status and non-status, who are descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada who lived here for millennia before explorers arrived from Europe and can also refer to a community of people as a replacement term for "band" (see "Band"). First Nation peoples are one of the distinct cultural groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. There are 52 First Nations cultures in Canada, and more than 50 languages. The term "First Nation" is not interchangeable with "Aboriginal," because it does not include Métis or Inuit.

**Genocide**

The United Nations defines genocide as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

**Harassment**

Harassment is a form of discrimination. It involves any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates you, whether subtle or overt. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment.

**Hate Crime**

The Criminal Code of Canada defines Hate Crime as an offence committed to intimidate, harm or terrify not only a person, but an entire group of people to which the victim belongs. Crimes are motivated by hate, prejudice or bias on the basis of grounds such as colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability. In such cases, the sentencing principles of the Code (section 718.2) can be enforced to impose an increased sentence. As noted in a separate entry, Hate Propaganda offenses are covered under specific sections of the Code.

**Hate Group**

An organization that – based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities – has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics. These organizations spread propaganda intended to incite hatred toward certain groups of people; advocate violence against certain groups on the basis of sexual orientation, race, colour, religion etc.; claim that their identity (racial, religious etc.) is 'superior' to that of other people; do not value the human rights of other people.

**Hate Propaganda**

Negative ideologies and beliefs transmitted in written, verbal, or electronic form in order to create, promote, perpetuate, or exacerbate antagonistic, hateful, and belligerent attitudes and action or contempt against a specific group or groups of people. The Criminal Code defines Hate Propaganda as “any writing, sign or visible representation that advocates or promotes genocide or the communication of which by any person would constitute an offence under section 319.”

**Human Rights**

In Canada, human rights are protected by federal, provincial and territorial laws. The Canadian Human Rights Act and provincial/territorial human rights codes protect individuals from discrimination and harassment in employment, accommodation and the provision of services. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects every Canadian's right to be treated equally under the law. The Charter guarantees fundamental freedoms such as (a) freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.

**Immigrant**

One who moves from their native country to another with the intention of settling permanently for the purpose of forging a better life or for better opportunities. This may be for a variety of personal, political, religious, social or economic reasons.

**Inclusion**

The extent to which diverse members of a group (society/organization) feel valued and respected.

**Indigenous**

First used in the 1970's, when Aboriginal peoples worldwide were fighting for representation at the U.N., this term is now frequently used by academics and in international contexts (e.g., the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). Indigenous is understood to mean the communities, peoples, and nations that have a historical continuity with pre-invasion, pre-settler, or pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, as distinct from the other societies now prevailing on those territories (or parts of them). Can be used more or less interchangeably with "Aboriginal," except when referring specifically to a Canadian legal context, in which case "Aboriginal" is preferred, as it is the term used in the Constitution.

**Intersectionality**

The experience of the interconnected nature of ethnicity, race, creed, gender, socio-economic position etc., (cultural, institutional and social), and the way they are imbedded within existing systems and define how one is valued.

**Intolerance**

Bigotry or narrow mindedness which results in refusal to respect or acknowledge persons of different backgrounds.

**Inuit**

A circumpolar people who live primarily in four regions of Canada: the Nunavut Territory, Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland and Labrador), and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (western Arctic). "Inuit" means "people" in the Inuit language of Inuktitut; when referring to one person use the word "Inuk," which means "person." Inuit are one of the ethno-cultural groups comprising the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. The Inuit are not to be confused with the Innu, who are a First Nations group living in southeastern Quebec and southern Labrador.

**Islamophobia**

Fear, hatred of, or prejudice against the Islamic religion or Muslims.

**Marginalization**

With reference to race and culture, the experience of persons outside the dominant group who face barriers to full and equal participating members of society. Refers also to the process of being “left out” of or silenced in a social group.

**Métis**

The Métis people originated in the 1700’s when French and Scottish fur traders married Aboriginal women, such as the Cree, and Anishinabe (Ojibway). Their descendants formed a distinct culture, collective consciousness and nationhood in the Northwest. Distinct Métis communities developed along the fur trade routes. Today, it is sometimes used as a generic term to describe people of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry, but in a legal context, it only refers to descendants of specific historic communities (e.g., the inhabitants of the Red River Colony in today’s Manitoba) or specific groups (e.g., the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement, a contemporary community in today’s Alberta) or the people who received land grants or scrip from Canadian government. The term is sometimes contentious, as each Métis organization defines membership using different terms. Canada has the only constitution in the world that recognizes a mixed-race culture, the Métis as a rights-bearing Aboriginal people.

The Métis National Council website defines Métis as “a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.”

**People of Colour**

A term which applies to non-White racial or ethnic groups; generally used by racialized peoples as an alternative to the term “visible minority.” The word is not used to refer to Aboriginal peoples, as they are considered distinct societies under the Canadian Constitution. When including Indigenous peoples, it is correct to say, “people of colour and Aboriginal / Indigenous peoples.”

**Power**

The ability to influence others and impose one’s beliefs.

**Prejudice**

A state of mind; a set of attitudes held, consciously or unconsciously, often in the absence of legitimate or sufficient evidence.

A prejudiced person is considered irrational and very resistant to change, because concrete evidence that contradicts the prejudice is usually dismissed as exceptional. Frequently prejudices are not recognized as false or unsound assumptions or stereotypes, and, through repetition, become accepted as common sense notions.

The terms “racism” and “prejudice” are sometimes used interchangeably but they are not the same. A primary difference between the two is that racism relies on a level of institutional power in order impose its dominance.

### **Privilege**

The experience of unearned freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded some people because of their group membership or social context.

### **Race**

Modern scholarship views racial categories as socially constructed, that is, race is not intrinsic to human beings but rather an identity created, often by socially dominant groups, to establish meaning in a social context. This often involves the subjugation of groups defined as racially inferior, as in the one-drop rule used in the 19th-century United States to exclude those with any amount of African ancestry from the dominant racial grouping, defined as “white”. Such racial identities reflect the cultural attitudes of imperial powers dominant during the age of European colonial expansion. This view rejects the notion that race is biologically defined.

### **Racial Discrimination**

According to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (to which Canada is a signatory), racial discrimination is “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which nullifies or impairs the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”

### **Racial Profiling**

Any action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on assumptions about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, or place of origin rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or differential treatment. Profiling can occur because of a combination of the above factors, and age and/or gender can influence the experience of profiling. In contrast to criminal profiling, racial profiling is based on stereotypical assumptions because of one’s race, colour, ethnicity, etc. rather than relying on actual behaviour or on information about suspected activity by someone who meets the description of a specific individual.

### **Racialization**

The process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics, etc.



**Racism**

Racism is a belief that one group is superior to others performed through any individual action, or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination. There are three types of racism: Institutional, Systemic, and Individual.

**Racist**

Refers to an individual, institution, or organization whose beliefs and/or actions imply (intentionally or unintentionally) that certain races have distinctive negative or inferior characteristics. Also refers to racial discrimination inherent in the policies, practices and procedures of institutions, corporations, and organizations which, though applied to everyone equally and may seem fair, result in exclusion or act as barriers to the advancement of marginalized groups.

**Sexism**

Prejudice or discrimination based on sex, usually though not necessarily against women; behaviours, conditions or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex. Sexism may be conscious or unconscious, and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. It can limit the opportunities of persons with disabilities and reduce their inclusion in the life of their communities.

**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.

**Social Oppression**

Social oppression refers to oppression that is achieved through social means and that is social in scope—it affects whole categories of people. This kind of oppression includes the systematic mistreatment, exploitation, and abuse of a group (or groups) of people by another group (or groups). It occurs whenever one group holds power over another in society through the control of social institutions, along with society's laws, customs, and norms. The outcome of social oppression is that groups in society are sorted into different positions within the social hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Those in the controlling, or dominant group, benefit from the oppression of other groups through heightened privileges relative to others, greater access to rights and resources, a better quality of life, and overall greater life chances. Those who experience the brunt of oppression have fewer rights, less access to resources, less political power, lower economic potential, worse health and higher mortality rates, and lower overall life chances.

**Stereotype**

A preconceived generalization of a group of people. This generalization ascribes the same characteristic(s) to all members of the group, regardless of their individual differences.

### **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. This occurs in institutions and organizations, including government, 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.

### **Tolerance**

A liberal attitude toward those whose race, religion, nationality, etc. is different from one's own. Since it has the connotation of 'to put up with', the term "acceptance" is now preferred.

### **Visible Minority**

Term used to describe people who are not white. Although it is a legal term widely used in human rights legislation and various policies, currently the terms racialized minority or people of colour are preferred by people labelled as 'visible minorities'.

### **White**

A social colour. The term is used to refer to people belonging to the majority group in Canada. It is recognized that there are many different people who are "White" but who face discrimination because of their class, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, language, or geographical origin. Grouping these people as "White" is not to deny the very real forms of discrimination that people of certain ancestry, such as Italian, Portuguese, Jewish, Armenian, Greek, etc., face because of these factors.

### **White Privilege**

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.

Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation – Abridged Glossary of Terms

<https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1>

### **Gender**

Gender is a system that operates in a social context to classify people, often based on their assigned sex. In many contexts this takes the form of a binary classification of either 'man' or 'woman'; in other contexts, this includes a broader spectrum.

### **Sex/Gender Binary**

The notion that there are only two possible sexes (male/female) and genders (man/woman), and that they are opposite, distinct and uniform categories. This view also asserts that gender is determined by sex.

### **LGBTQI2S**

An acronym for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Two Spirit". This acronym is often used as an umbrella term to encompass a broad spectrum of identities related to gender and attraction. This acronym takes many forms.

### **Ally**

An ally is someone who believes in the dignity and respect of all people and takes action by supporting and/or advocating with groups experiencing social injustice. An ally does not identify as a member of the group they are supporting (e.g., a heterosexual person can act as an ally for gay people and communities; a cisgender lesbian can act as an ally for trans people and communities). As described in this definition, the responsibilities of trans allyship are reserved for those who do not themselves identify as trans, most commonly cisgender people. The specifics of trans allyship vary depending on the circumstance but can be summed up through acts of supporting and including trans identities within all aspects of community. Equally important is the recognition that allyship is an ongoing process of support, as opposed to a singular goal or achievement which can be attained and then forgotten. Acting as an ally to trans communities means constant re-assessment of one's surroundings in terms of their inclusion of, and accessibility to, trans community members. Acknowledging and incorporating the voices of trans community members, as well as their needs and wishes, is an essential part of allyship. Otherwise, allies risk alienating and further sidelining the communities they intend to support. Allyship is a never-ending process of education, as allies learn more about the social systems and institutions that continue to isolate, stigmatize and discriminate against trans and gender variant people. Only through education can allies gain the skills and language to recognize and help to disrupt, the workings of these systems, which are otherwise invisible to many cisgender individuals.

### **Sex/Assigned Sex**

Sex / assigned sex is the classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and

reproductive organs. The reason we say assigned sex versus biological sex is to acknowledge that sex is often a value determined by medical professionals and is commonly assigned to newborns based on visual assessment of external genitalia.

Inclusion here of the recognized category of “intersex,” frequently overlooked in discussions of sex, serves as a reminder that even at the level of biology, sex is not a binary system.

### **Gender Identity**

Gender Identity is a person’s internal and individual experience of gender. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither or another gender entirely. A person’s gender identity may or may not correspond with social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others. It is important to remember that gender identity is not the same as sex / assigned sex.

### **Gender Expression**

The way a person presents and communicates gender within a social context. Gender can be expressed through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours, which are often associated with masculinity and femininity. The ways in which gender is expressed are culturally specific and may change over time. May also be referred to as gender presentation or gender performance.

### **Attraction**

Often referred to as sexual orientation, this classifies a person’s potential for emotional, intellectual, spiritual, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual interest in other people, often based on their sex and/or gender. Attraction may form the basis for aspects of one’s identity and/or behaviour.

### **Intersex**

Refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. The designation of “intersex” can be experienced as stigmatizing given the history of medical practitioners imposing it as a diagnosis requiring correction, often through non-consensual surgical or pharmaceutical intervention on infants, children and young adults (some people may not be identified as “intersex” until puberty or even later in life).

### **AFAB**

An acronym that refers to someone who was assigned female sex at birth. This may also be expressed as Coercively Assigned Female at Birth (CAFAB).

### **AMAB**

An acronym that refers to someone who was assigned male sex at birth. This may also be expressed as Coercively Assigned Male at Birth (CAMAB).

**Heterosexual**

A person who experiences attraction to people of a different sex and/or gender. Also referred to as “straight”.

**Gay**

A person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender—gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals or refer to male identified individuals only.

**Lesbian**

A female-identified person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender.

**Bisexual**

A person who experiences attraction to both men and women. Some bisexual people use this term to express attraction to both their own sex and/or gender, as well as to people of a different sex and/or gender.

**Asexual**

A person who may not experience sexual attraction or who has little or no interest in sexual activity.

**Pansexual**

A person who experiences attraction to people of diverse sexes and/or genders. The term pansexual reflects a desire to recognize the potential for attraction to sexes and/or genders that exist across a spectrum and to challenge the sex/gender binary.

**Cisgender**

A person whose gender identity corresponds with the social expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. E.g., imagine a newborn baby. The midwife who just delivered this child takes a look at the external genitalia, recognizes a vulva, and declares “she’s a girl,” thus assigning the child’s sex as ‘female.’ Based on this information, it’s generally assumed that this child would then grow up to identify themselves as a girl or woman. If that was the case, they could be described by the term cisgender. Cisgender, or cis for short, is a particularly important term in that it describes an extremely common, and in fact socially dominant, experience of gender identity in relation to assigned sex at birth. At first reading, it is often difficult for many people to distinguish the difference between sex / assigned sex and gender identity. This is quite common due to the fact that the two are frequently portrayed as essentially the same thing. One reason for this is that many individuals experience the sex they were assigned by medical professional at birth as very similar to their conception of their own gender identity. The term cisgender describes this particular relationship. Without access to the word cisgender, people have

often resorted to language like ‘real/normal men and women.’ Referring to cisgender individuals as ‘real’ or ‘normal’ when compared to trans individuals is particularly violent language in that it implies that trans men and woman are not in fact real or normal. This is inaccurate, and it excludes and alienates trans individuals from community, and propagates transphobic attitudes. Cisgender is the appropriate term whenever describing individuals whose gender identity aligns with the social expectations of them based on their sex assigned at birth.

### **The Trans Umbrella**

The term trans is frequently used as an umbrella term for a variety of other terms, including transgender, transsexual and can also refer to terms like genderqueer, agender, bigender, Two Spirit, etc. Some people may identify with these or other specific terms, but not with the term trans. Similarly, some people may identify as trans, but not with other terms under the trans umbrella. At their simplest, each of these terms has commonalities with the term trans, and yet they are all unique in their specific reference to the context of, and specific relationships between, conceptions of gender identity and identities simply because there is quite a lot of variation in the lived experience and identities of individuals who may identify, or be described, as trans.

The example above regarding a newborn baby represents only a fraction of the possibilities, and specifically those that remain within a binary (i.e. male, female) gender system. The reality is that for many people their experience of their own gender identity may not align with social expectations based on the sex assigned to them at birth, nor with any gender options available within a binary system. Acknowledging this means moving from a binary gender system to something better described through metaphor, like a spectrum with unlimited combinations of light, or a universe with the potential for unlimited constellations of gender.

### **Transgender**

Refers to a person who does not identify, either fully or in part with the gender associated with the sex assigned to them at birth, according to dominant social expectations. It is often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and may be called simply ‘trans’ for short.

### **Gender Non- Conforming**

An umbrella term for gender identities and/or gender expressions that differ from dominant cultural or societal expectations based on assigned sex. Other common terms associated with gender non-conforming are gender diverse and gender variant. Someone who is gender non-conforming may or may not also identify as trans.

### **Genderqueer**

A person whose gender identity exists outside of the gender binary. A person who identifies as genderqueer may identify as men, women, neither, both, or may reject gender entirely.

**Genderfluid**

A person whose gender identity is experienced as not being fixed and that shifts and varies over time and in relation to the context.

**Non-Binary**

An umbrella term to reflect a variety of gender identities that are not exclusively man or woman. Identity terms which may fall within this category may include, genderqueer, agender, bigender, or pangender.

**Agender**

A person who identifies as either having no gender or a neutral gender identity.

**Transfeminine**

An umbrella term for trans people who identify with or express femininity and may or may not also identify as a woman.

**Transmasculine**

An umbrella term for trans people who identify with or express masculinity and may or may not also identify as a man.

**Transsexual**

This term is most frequently associated with movement from one side of the gender binary to the other with strong feelings for the need to transition medically. For some people this is a stigmatizing term because of its historical association with mental illness, and the implication that a person's gender identity is not valid unless they medically transition. It is important to note that someone may still identify with the label of transsexual without medical intervention.

**Transition**

Frequently discussions around trans identities are focused on the ways in which individuals may align elements of their identity and bodies with their gender identity. While many voices in popular culture may use the expression "sex change" to describe these processes, the term transition is much more appropriate, being preferred and used by members of trans communities. It refers to a variety of social, medical and/or legal changes that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity. For many trans individuals, pursuing some form of transition is essential to their overall health and well-being. This is evident in research data related to the impacts of transition on suicidal behaviour within trans communities. For instance, Ontario's Trans Pulse study found that

27% of respondents who were planning, but had not yet begun, transition had attempted suicide within the last year, compared to only 1% of those who had transitioned medically (Bauer, Hammond, and Travers 2010). The potential elements of transition can be broken down into three categories. It's important to note that none of these three categories are required steps as part of a process of transition. The transition process is a very personal one. Each individual trans person will decide the ways in which they may choose to transition, or not, depending on what is comfortable and accessible to them.

## **Social Transition**

This expression is used to describe the common ways in which individuals may choose to publically affirm their gender identity in social environments. This may include changes to:

- name(s)
- pronouns
- gender expression (e.g., clothing, accessories, mannerisms, way of speaking, etc.);
- access to gendered spaces (e.g., washrooms, change rooms, religious/community spaces)

Social transition is often the most common form within elementary or secondary school contexts. Educators can create safer and more inclusive spaces for trans persons who socially transition by structuring opportunities for students to share their preferred names and pronouns and respecting these requests throughout the year. Equally important is creation of a class culture of respect and understanding, including clear guidelines regarding the ways in which everyone, including trans and gender variant students, can show respect for diverse expressions of gender. This could include lesson plans, media, books, movies, television, theater, music and web content that are trans-inclusive and that reflect gender diversity.

## **Pronouns**

Using a person's self-determined pronouns at their request, is a way of validating that we all have the right to live our truth, to share our truth, and to be granted safety, respect and dignity in doing so. This involves knowledge about personal pronoun options beyond she/her/hers and he/him/his when referring to someone in the third person. Some people go by the non-binary, gender neutral pronoun set; they/ them/theirs. Over time, we have also seen the addition of other non-binary, gender neutral options.



## Medical Transition

Medical transition is often at the focus of discussion of trans identities, despite the fact that the term represents only one potential part of the transition process. As with social transition, medical transition can involve a variety of procedures and treatments. Potential elements of medical transition can include:

- Counselling/support (from psychologists, vocal/ behavioural coaches, social workers, etc.)
- Hormone therapy (e.g., administering testosterone, estrogen, hormone blockers)
- Gender affirming surgical procedures (e.g., hysterectomies, orchiectomies, oophorectomies, vaginoplasty, phalloplasty, mastectomy, tracheal shaving, facial feminization, etc.)

Within an Ontario context, some of these transition stages are covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). This means that residents of the province will not be required to pay out of pocket for these support services. However, given the limited number of medical professionals and facilities equipped to offer these services, there are often challenges in access due to prolonged wait times and prohibitive travel costs for those living outside of major urban centres. Many trans people and their families are unable to access inclusive healthcare, and community advocacy for improvements to the healthcare system is ongoing. As with any medical procedure, the details of medical transition are part of the private relationship between an individual and their health care providers. On a personal level, each individual interested in transitioning has the right to decide what processes they will undertake. There is no universal model for what medical transition looks like, and an individual's gender identity or sex cannot be assumed simply by knowing which procedures someone has or hasn't undergone.

An important element of a trans-inclusive classroom is an understanding of appropriate discussions around bodies and transition. Boundaries around discussions of bodies in transition can be part of broader discussions around respecting one another's privacy (including recognizing inappropriate questions, such as whether a trans person has undergone gender-affirming 'bottom' surgery or not). Educators can create safer spaces for medical transition by doing their own research into the subject so as not to feel compelled to ask for details from individual students, or their family members, who may have undergone transition or who may be at the beginning stages of transition.

## Legal Transition

For the most part legal transition refers to the process of changing the ways in which official (provincial or federal) documentation refers to an individual's sex designation. This process

differs substantially between regions and jurisdictions, but can include updates to documents such as:

- Birth certificate
- Passport
- Citizenship card
- Driver's license
- Health card

The process of accessing gender-affirming identification can be time consuming and complex. Many countries, including Canada, have yet to create sex or gender categories for identification that are reflective of the actual diversity existent within their populations. Countries like Germany, Nepal and Australia have all acknowledged the need for such updates to state identification and have created further designation options outside of the gender/sex binary which reflect a more diverse spectrum of identity.

### **Queer**

A term used by some in LGBTQ communities, particularly youth, as a symbol of pride and affirmation of diversity. This term makes space for the expression of a variety of identities outside of rigid categories associated with sex, gender or attraction. It can be used by a community to encompass a broad spectrum of identities related to sex, gender or attraction (as with the acronym LGBTQ), or by an individual to reflect the interrelatedness of these aspects of their identity. Queer was historically a derogatory term for difference, used in particular to insult homosexuality and LGBTQ people. Although sometimes still used as a slur, the term has been reclaimed by some members of LGBTQ communities.

### **Questioning**

An umbrella term that often reflects a process of reconciling three different pieces of information: 1) The feelings you have within yourself about the attraction(s) you experience and/or how you experience gender; 2) The language you have available to you to frame those feelings; and 3) The sense you have of how this will impact your interactions with other people in a social context.

### **Two Spirit**

An English umbrella term to reflect the many words used in different Indigenous languages describing the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction and its interconnectedness to community and spirituality. The term seeks to restore traditional identities and roles forcefully suppressed or stamped out through the process of European Colonization. Some Indigenous people identify as Two Spirit rather than or in addition to identifying as LGBTQI.

### **Cisnormativity**

A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges cisgender identities and gender norms, and ignores or underrepresents trans identities and/or gender diversity by

assuming that all people are cisgender and will express their gender in a way that aligns with perceived gender norms.

**Cissexism**

Prejudice and discrimination against trans or gender diverse identities and/or expressions. This includes the presumption that being cisgender is the superior and more desirable gender identity.

**Transphobia**

Fear and/or hatred of any transgression of perceived gender norms, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is trans and/or gender diverse (or perceived to be) can be the target of transphobia.

**Heteronormativity**

A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges heterosexuality, and ignores or underrepresents diversity in attraction and behaviour by assuming all people are heterosexual.

**Heterosexism**

Prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable form of attraction.

**Homophobia**

Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is LGB (or assumed to be) can be the target of homophobia.

**Mononormativity**

A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges attraction to a single sex and/or gender and ignores or underrepresents diversity in attraction and behaviour by assuming all people are monosexual.

**Monosexism (Binegativity)**

Prejudice and discrimination in favour of single sex and/or gender attraction. This includes the presumption of monosexuality as the superior and more desirable form of attraction.

**Biphobia**

Fear and/or hatred of bisexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is or is assumed to be bisexual or experiences attraction to multiple sexes and/or genders can be the target of biphobia.

**Perceived Gender Identity**

The assumption that a person is trans, cisgender or genderqueer without knowing what their gender identity actually is. Perceptions about gender identity are often predicated on stereotypes relating to gender expression (e.g., what a man “should” look like).

**Perceived Gender Identity**

The assumption that a person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual without knowing how they actually experience attraction. Perceptions about attraction are often predicated on stereotypes relating to gender expression (e.g., what a heterosexual woman “should” look like).

**System of Oppression**

The unjust and harmful exertions of power, authority or control that are built into the structures, operations and institutions of a society.

**Intersectionality**

The concept of intersectionality recognizes how each person simultaneously exists within multiple and overlapping identity categories (including but not limited to: ability, attraction, body size, citizenship, class, creed, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, race, religion.) An intersectional analysis recognizes that no individual’s experience of identity based oppression or privilege can be viewed solely within the context of any one single element of their identity. The ways in which an individual experiences systems of privilege and oppression are often impacted by the interplay of their various identity categories.