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economies
OF SCALE

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YOU NEED

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experts
IN MUNICIPALITIES

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advocate

WIC Glossary of Terms

Diversity and inclusion work has a long history in Canada. People have been working for centuries to create societies where every human being has the opportunity to live a safe, healthy and fulfilled life. As this work evolves over time, so does the language we use to describe what we're working towards. A common language can help us avoid confusion and misunderstanding, especially if our different experiences cause us to interpret terms differently. Just talking about terms can start conversations or get people to share their ideas – an important step in creating welcoming and inclusive communities.

A lot of the terms in this glossary refer to social groups (e.g. people with disabilities, white people, LGBTQI people). As groups who have faced discrimination gain space in society to speak about their experiences, they sometimes take the names they have been called for years (e.g. Eskimo) and rework them into positive terms that are more accurate and give them a sense of pride and dignity (e.g. Inuit).

And it's not about political correctness. Using the names that people have chosen for themselves not only shows respect, but language affects how we think about something, and positive language is one way to build positive interactions.

We welcome you to use the terms in this glossary – but know that some people may prefer one term over another. Be open to learning, and if you're not sure, ask people, "How would you like to be addressed?"

Ableism (noun)

Attitudes, policies and practices in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities are assumed to be less worthy of respect and consideration, and less able to contribute and take part in society than people without disabilities. Ableism can be conscious or unconscious and happens at individual, institutional and systemic levels.

Aboriginal People (noun)

This is the overall term used in Canada's 1982 Constitution Act to refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. The word recognizes the fact that Aboriginal peoples are the original people of Canada. There are many other words that Aboriginal people use to describe themselves and these may change over time. If you're unsure, it's always best to ask what name people prefer.

Accessible (adj)/Accessibility (noun)

A general term for how easily something (e.g., device, service, physical environment, information) can be used and enjoyed by people with a broad range of disabilities (cognitive, visual, hearing etc.). Often, making something accessible requires conscious effort to plan and design environments, materials and services to make sure they don't have barriers for people with disabilities. Most strategies for planning and design, because they are created by people who don't have disabilities, don't take into account these barriers, and this results in everyday things being inaccessible. Examples of accessibility include curb cuts for people in wheelchairs, or materials written in plain language for people with cognitive disabilities. The term accessible can also be used to refer to things like cost, transportation, and reading level. For example we can say that a document is written in "accessible language", or that an event is "accessible by public transportation". The terms accessible and barrier-free are often used interchangeably.

Accommodation (noun)

Making changes to certain rules, policies, workplace cultures and physical environments to ensure that they don't have a negative effect on a person because of the person's mental or physical disability, religion, gender or any other social group they belong to. In a workplace, accommodation is a way to balance the needs of individuals and employers. Some examples of accommodation: flexibility in days off or work hours to accommodate special holidays or prayer times, providing a document in an accessible format like large print. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that an employer has a legal duty to accommodate an employee's individual needs, to the point where it would result in huge financial costs for the employer or seriously harm business.

Ageism (noun)

Discrimination against people based on the age they are, or the age they are thought to be. Ageism usually discriminates against older or younger people, based on the idea that they have little to contribute, are not a priority in society, or are 'difficult to deal with'. Ageism operates at many levels, from assumptions that might seem innocent about a person's abilities, to systemic discrimination like media depictions of youth as apathetic, dangerous and lazy. Another example of ageism is health programs not collecting data on sexual activity from elderly people, based on the assumption that they are not having sex. This can result in excluding older people, and perhaps a higher rate of sexually transmitted infections in this population that could have been prevented.

AINP

Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program: The AINP is an economic immigration program run by the Government of Alberta and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Its goal is to attract and retain immigrants to Alberta who are ready and able to work in certain jobs. People who are nominated by the Government of Alberta, as well as their spouses and dependent children, can apply to be permanent residents as a Provincial Nominee. The goal of the AINP program is to channel people who work in jobs that currently need workers in Alberta to have their applications for permanent residency rushed.

Ally (noun)

An ally is a person from a mainstream group who acts against discrimination because they believe that eliminating it will benefit people in both the margin (the targets of discrimination) *and* the mainstream. For example, in the struggle against transphobia, cisgender people can be allies if they support the work and leadership of people who are transgender, and actively work to learn about and act against transphobia.

Barrier (noun)/Barrier-free (adj)

A barrier is anything that prevents a person from fully taking part in all aspects of society, or that makes something (e.g. a device, service, physical environment, information) inaccessible. They include physical barriers like stairs, uneven pavement, narrow pathways, or architectural barriers. There may also be information or communication barriers, like a document that's not available in large print, technological barriers like traffic signals that change too quickly or meeting rooms without assistive listening systems for people who are hard of hearing. There are also attitudinal barriers, such as assuming that a person with a disability cannot perform a certain task or, in an organization, policy or practices barriers, such as not offering multiple ways to complete a test as part of a job interview. Barrier-free means that all barriers have been eliminated, so all people can fully participate. The terms barrier-free and accessible are often used interchangeably.

Bias (noun)

A tendency to be for or against an individual or group without a justified reason. A bias limits a person or group's ability to look at a situation objectively, and shapes how they act in the situation, often unfairly. An example of a bias is a landlord believing that it's easier to rent to people who speak English as a first language. There may be no good reason for her to believe that, but it will influence her actions when she decides who to rent to.

Bisexual (adj)

A person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to members of more than one gender.

Canadian Citizen (noun)

A person who is either Canadian by birth (they were either born in Canada or born outside Canada to a parent who is a Canadian citizen) or who received Canadian citizenship through naturalization. To get Canadian citizenship by naturalization, a person must first become a permanent resident. Once they've lived in Canada for a certain amount of time, know English or French, and pass a citizenship test, they may be granted citizen status.

CCMARD

The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination: CCMARD is part of an international network of cities interested in improving their policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance. Cities that sign onto the coalition agree to the Ten Common Commitments. CCMARD's goal is to share lessons learned and support the strengthening of policies to counter discrimination and achieve social inclusion. The international coalition is coordinated by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

CIC

Citizenship and Immigration Canada: The federal department that's responsible for immigration and citizenship, and that creates policies and procedures that determine who can move to Canada from another country, for how long, what work they can do and what public services they can use. In addition, CIC gives funding to other organizations to offer immigrant settlement services.

Cisgender (adj)

Someone whose gender identity (the gender they feel themselves to be) matches the gender they were assigned at birth. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender. Cisgender people are the mainstream in Canada, and experience cisgender privilege as a result of this. Examples of cisgender privilege include using women's or men's public bathrooms without a risk of being harassed for being in the 'wrong bathroom', having your gender as an option to check off on forms, or seeing a doctor without worrying that you won't get treatment because doctors are scared or unfamiliar with your gender.

Class/Classism (noun)

Class describes the differences between those who are in the mainstream of the economy and those who work in the margins or outside the mainstream economy. Characteristics of class include income, wealth (sometimes inherited), formal education, networks of influence, and access to resources. In a class system, the wealth of those at the top results from exploiting the labour of those at the bottom and middle. Classism refers to the practices and beliefs that assign different value to people according to their perceived social class, i.e. people of lower class are seen as having less value.

Cognitive Disability (noun)

There are many definitions of and variations of cognitive disability. Some cognitive disabilities are the result of someone's genetics or a traumatic brain injury. Other cognitive disabilities may be based in the chemistry or structure of the person's brain. People with mild cognitive disabilities may have difficulty with some mental tasks whereas people with deeper cognitive disabilities may need assistance with parts of daily living. This category also includes learning disabilities.

Colonization (noun)

The process of a group of people creating a settlement or colony with the goal of taking control of a piece of land, territory, or country, as well as its wealth and resources. It usually involves a large group of the colonizers moving to the 'new' location, and expanding their civilization and culture into this area. If there are already people living on that land, colonization involves moving or conquering the original inhabitants of the area, the indigenous population. The strategies and the impacts of colonization are very different in different times and different places across the world. In what is now called Canada, European colonizers displaced Aboriginal people and restricted their movement. In addition, through treaties, the Canadian government's Indian Act and other means, Aboriginal people were systematically killed and their cultural practices made illegal. Aboriginal children were taken from their families and experienced violence and abuse for the purpose of 'reeducating' and controlling them. The effects of colonization are still with us, and there is still systemic discrimination against Aboriginal people in this country.

CTA

Come Together Alberta: CTA was created as a part of WIC in 2011 to support the attraction and integration of newcomers, in response to concerns from Alberta municipalities that they weren't able to deal with what seemed like a greater visibility of newcomers, particularly in smaller municipalities. As of 2014, CTA has created a set of online tools and good practice videos, convened two province-wide gatherings, and conducted a needs assessment on the current state of municipal work around immigration. CTA initially focused on the attraction, retention and integration of newcomers, but its focus has since evolved and expanded to look at how diverse segments of Alberta's population are integrated into the labour force and social fabric of communities.

Culture (noun)

Culture refers to the collective beliefs, values, knowledge, economy, and ways of life of a group of people who share certain historical or current experiences. Culture is not fixed and it changes constantly. Culture gets shaped by the land and the spaces that people inhabit together – riding the subway, taking a ferry to work, cod fishing, tending cattle, or living in a high-rise condominium. Culture can also be shaped by language, religion, racialization, gender, experiences of immigration, social class, political affiliations, age,

sexual orientation, ethnicity, and the experience or lack of experience with discrimination. Culture is passed on and reinforced through tradition, art, language and ritual. Culture can also be seen as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices of an institution, organization or group – a company can have a ‘workplace culture’.

Deaf (adj)

If it's spelled with a lowercase 'd', 'deaf' means the inability to hear. 'Deaf' with a capital 'D' refers to members of the Deaf community who see themselves as part of a language minority and who share common values, traditions, language, and behaviors. Members of the Deaf community do not perceive themselves as having 'lost' their hearing and do not think of themselves as handicapped, impaired, or disabled. They celebrate their culture because it gives them the unique experience of sharing a common identity, history, and language. American Sign Language (ASL) is a language used by many people who are deaf.

Disability (noun)

Physical, mental, or emotional conditions that, because of the society we live in, limit or shape a person's participation in society. Disabilities may involve mobility, agility, visual, speech, hearing, learning, and cognitive characteristics. While old ideas about disability thought that a person with a disability was defective or impaired, currently we know that it is not the person's characteristics (e.g. using a wheelchair) that are the problem. It's that our environment and society generally isn't built for people with disabilities (e.g. sidewalks without curb cuts) – that's what creates the disability. Other examples of our society not being built for people with disabilities include documents that aren't available in formats like Braille or large print, and a lack of employment opportunities for people with cognitive disabilities. As a result, everyday living is made difficult, stressful or impossible, leading to the discrimination, segregation, and isolation of people with disabilities. Canadian law now requires employers to accommodate people with disabilities to ensure their maximum participation and contribution.

Discrimination (noun)

Unjust intentional or unintentional actions based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical/mental disability, ancestry, age, place of origin, marital/family status, source of income, or sexual orientation, that have a negative effect on an individual or group. Discrimination can occur in education, housing, health care, employment, and the delivery of services, goods, and facilities.

Levels of Discrimination

Individual Discrimination: When an individual discriminates against others for being members of a particular social group. For example, an employer who rejects all black job applicants, a landlord who refuses to rent an apartment to someone on social assistance, a police officer who beats a Muslim immigrant suspect, or a group of teenagers who decide to paint a swastika on a Jewish temple.

Institutional Discrimination: When organizations or institutions (e.g. schools, municipalities, corporations) have policies, procedures or informal practices that give one social group (usually a mainstream group) advantages over another (usually a marginalized group). For example, a company only gives days off for Christian religious holidays, or when a university doesn't offer supports for students with visual impairments. The 'culture' of an organization, what is seen as 'normal' and 'acceptable', is reinforced by the organization's policies. Because people from mainstream groups are more often in positions of power in organizations, the people who make decisions often don't see the impact of discriminatory practices on people from marginalized groups, and this creates an organizational culture of discrimination. Institutional discrimination can be addressed by reviewing, reforming or restructuring organizations and policies so they're equitable for everyone.

Systemic Discrimination: Systemic discrimination occurs when a whole society or culture has widespread beliefs, practices and systems that advantage one social group over another. When discrimination is woven into the fabric of our society, it's more powerful, and more difficult to root out. For example, transgender people experience systemic discrimination in Canada. This means that the idea that transgender people are abnormal, unhealthy, deviant or dangerous shows up in every structure of our society – the legal system, health care, housing, employment, as well as media and the arts. Because many people hold such ideas about transgender people, laws and policies are created that discriminate against them; but because those laws and policies are in place, it's easy to believe that those discriminatory ideas are 'natural' and right. This creates a cycle of discrimination that's hard to end.

Diversity (noun)

Diversity describes all the ways that people are different, including the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. A broad definition of diversity includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — what we most often think about when we hear 'diversity' — but also age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. Diversity also describes differences in ideas, perspectives, and values. Diversity is inevitable in human society – the important thing is to recognize and respect diversity in ways that don't create discrimination. The terms diversity, equality, equity, human rights and inclusion are sometimes used interchangeably to describe work that is about opposing injustice and making sure that everyone can live a safe, healthy life, but in fact they have quite different meanings.

Economic Class (adj)

A category of immigrants selected to come to Canada because of their skills and their ability to contribute to the economy. Economic Class immigrants include skilled workers, provincial and territorial nominees (see: AINP/PNP), business immigrants, Quebec skilled workers and Canadian Experience Class members, and their spouses and dependants.

Equality (noun)

Equality means treating everyone the same, and providing everyone with access to exactly the same resources, services and opportunities, regardless of differences in their social group or situation. It assumes that we're all starting from a 'level playing field', that we've all had access to the same resources and opportunities, and that none of us have experienced systemic discrimination or privilege. When working on inclusion, it is important to distinguish between approaches that focus on equality as compared to equity.

Equity (noun)

Equity involves trying to give people *what they need* to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equity acknowledges that we're different: some people may be advantaged and already have greater access to resources and opportunities, and others may be disadvantaged, and as a result have different or additional needs. These disadvantages can be from historical injustices or current discrimination. Equity asks us to 'level the playing field'. It requires that we provide different or additional resources to those in greater need, so that they can have the same opportunities as those who are advantaged. For example: If you and I are sharing a cake, equality means we split the cake exactly in half. But if I just had dinner and you haven't eaten since breakfast, equity means that you get the larger share of cake so that we can both feel full at the end of the day. Another example of equity is to provide scholarships specifically for Aboriginal students, knowing that Aboriginal people experience systemic discrimination that can make it harder for Aboriginal students to go to university. When people are treated with *equality*, we ignore our differences. When they are treated with *equity*, differences are recognized, celebrated, and made use of to realize each person's full potential.

ESDC

Employment and Social Development Canada: The department of the Government of Canada responsible for creating, managing and delivering social programs and services, such as Old Age Security, job training, or parental leave. The department used to be called Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).

Ethnicity (noun)/Ethnic (adj)

An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population of people whose members identify with each other, based on a real or assumed common ancestry. Ethnicity assumes that the group of people shares cultural traits and a group history. Some ethnic groups also share languages or religions, while others share a common group history but not a common language or religion. Essentially, ethnicity can be thought of as an attachment that a person or a group feels towards a common cultural heritage. While everyone belongs to an ethnic group, in Canada the word is often used to identify marginalized or less powerful cultural identities (for example, Aboriginal people, racialized people, or immigrants).

Family Class (adj)

An immigration category that allows family members of a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident to be sponsored to come to Canada.

Feminism (noun)

In its simplest form, a system of ideas and practices that works towards inclusion and equity for women. Feminism emerged from groups of women across the world that advocated for better economic, political and social conditions for women. However, through the years it has expanded its focus to work towards equity for all marginalized people. Feminism doesn't want a world where women are dominant over men, although many people use this inaccurate argument to dismiss how useful feminism has been in improving conditions for many people, and how important it is in continuing to work towards inclusion and equity.

First Nation(s) (adj or noun)

One of the three distinct cultural groups of Aboriginal Peoples (the others being Métis and Inuit). This term started being used in the 1970s to replace the word 'Indian,' which some Aboriginal people find offensive (although others don't find it offensive). The word 'First' recognizes the fact that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of what is now called Canada. The word 'Nation' stresses that Aboriginal peoples had their own forms of government before European colonization. Many First Nations people are working to reestablish that sovereignty. The term also refers to what was previously called a 'band' by the Department of Indian Affairs. There are over 630 First Nations governments in Canada, representing 52 nations or cultural groups, and more than 50 languages. Many individuals prefer to be referred to by their specific nation e.g. Cree, Dakota, Dené, Anishanaabé, Ojibwé, Black Foot, etc.

FNMI (adj)

First Nations, Inuit and Métis. A term that reflects the diversity of Aboriginal people in Canada.

Gay (adj)

Used to describe a man whose enduring emotional, physical, spiritual and/or sexual attraction is to other men. However, gay is often used as an umbrella term for anyone who is attracted to people of the same gender (i.e. lesbians and gay men).

Gender (noun)

Social categories that assign qualities of masculinity and femininity to people, and calls them men or women. Sex and gender are not the same. Sex refers to the biological state of having certain genitalia, certain chromosomes or certain hormones in one's body; while gender is about one's appearance, mannerisms and roles, or one's internal sense of gender (see gender identity/gender expression). Words that refer to gender include man, woman, transgender, masculine, feminine, and genderqueer; words that refer to sex include female, male and intersex. Gender characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures. It's important to consider gender when we're trying to create inclusive policies, practices and beliefs. Discrimination happens when our people or social structures act on the belief that people of some genders have more value than people of other genders.

Gender Identity/Gender Expression (noun)

Gender identity is a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender – their internal sense of being a woman, a man, feminine, masculine, transgender etc. A person's gender may or may not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Gender expression is the way a person presents and communicates their gender identity to society, through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, body characteristics, behaviours or traits. The traits and behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity are specific to each culture and change over time. You cannot assume someone's sexual orientation from their gender identity and gender expression. Also referred to as 'gender presentation'.

Hate Crime (noun)

Hate crimes are activities that harm or threaten harm to the physical security, property, or dignity of someone from, or someone who is thought to be from, a particular social group. Hate crimes include physical assaults, graffiti, vandalism, threatening phone calls or electronic communication, fire-bombing, and destruction of religious facilities. The intent of a hate crime is not only to threaten an individual, but to create fear in an entire social group. The most common kinds of hate crimes reported to and investigated by police in Alberta are those that target people based on their real or perceived race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

Homophobia (noun)

Negative attitudes and feelings towards non-heterosexual people. Homophobia assumes that heterosexuality is more normal than, and superior to, homosexuality. These negative attitudes can result in discrimination that is subtle or blatant, including things like name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence. Anyone who is non-heterosexual (or assumed to be) can be the target of homophobia. Internalized homophobia is negative attitudes and feelings homosexual feelings in oneself.

Human Rights (noun)

A set of rights and freedoms that all human beings are entitled to. Human rights are often guaranteed by provincial, national or international laws. Examples of human rights include the right to life, work, and education, and freedom of expression. Making sure that everyone's human rights are respected is an important part of inclusion work, but inclusion goes further by ensuring that we value diversity and that everyone has what they need to live full, healthy lives.

Identity (noun)

Someone's sense of who they are as a person, or a social group's sense of the unique characteristics that they share. Individual identity is complex, and can be shaped by characteristics that you can't choose, such as age, race, or ethnicity; or by your traits and values, such as open-mindedness or being a direct communicator. It can also be shaped by characteristics that change over time, like your occupation, your citizenship, or your political opinions. For inclusion work, three important things to note about identity are that sometimes it is chosen (e.g. occupation), and sometimes it isn't (e.g. class); that each of us have multiple identities that we carry with us all the time; and that identities aren't neutral – they carry lots of meanings that influence how an individual or group sees themselves and how others see them (see, for example, Race).

Immigrant (adj or noun)

A person who moves from one country to another and settles permanently in the new country. Immigrants choose to move, while refugees are forced to flee.

Inclusion (noun)

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming community embraces human differences, sees them as strengths, and offers respect in both words and actions for all people.

An inclusive community is a community where 'we' is everyone.

Indigenous (adj)

Indigenous means 'native to the area'; in this sense, Aboriginal people are indigenous to North America. As it is the term used internationally, it is being used more and more by Aboriginal writers and scholars.

Intersectionality (noun)

A more in-depth way of looking at social interactions and discrimination. The concept of intersectionality recognizes that each of us belongs to many different social groups and has many different identities, all at the same time. Some of these identities are in the margins and some are in the mainstream of society and the organizations we're part of. Intersectionality recognizes that we're not just one thing; for example, an Aboriginal man is not just Aboriginal, nor just a man. He also may be middle-class, transgender, able-bodied, and Métis. One of his identities is no more valid than any other, and the particular mix of his identities gives him a very specific experience. If we are trying to respect intersectionality in our inclusion work, we have to look at many different angles of diversity (e.g. race, gender identity, gender, sexual orientation, disability etc) instead of just one, and pay attention to how they shape people's experiences in very specific ways.

Intersex (adj)

A general term used for a variety of conditions where someone is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit society's typical definitions of female or male. For example, someone might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. There is a history of doctors diagnosing infants, children and young adults as 'intersex', or performing operations to 'correct' their sex so that it fits squarely into society's sex categories of woman or man, instead of letting the child grow up to determine their own gender identity and sexuality. Therefore, many intersex people experience being intersex as either stigmatizing or violent.

Inuit (adj or noun)

Aboriginal peoples in Northern Canada who live above the tree line in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Northern Quebec and Labrador. The word means 'people' in the Inuit language Inuktitut. The Inuit are one of the three cultural groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (the others being Métis and First Nations). The term is also used internationally – in 1977 the Inuit Circumpolar Conference officially adopted the name 'Inuit' as a replacement for the name Eskimo, which is now seen to be an inappropriate term.

Labour Market Impact Assessment (noun)

A Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) is a document that an employer in Canada usually has to get from the Government of Canada before they can hire a foreign worker. The employer applies for an LMIA; if they get a positive LMIA, it means that the Government of Canada agrees that there is a need for a foreign worker to fill that job and that no Canadian worker can do the job.

Lesbian (noun)

A woman whose enduring emotional, physical, spiritual and/or sexual attraction is to other women.

LGBTQI (adj)

Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Queer, and Intersex. There are several variations of this acronym but this is a common one. The acronym is an umbrella term that describes people who have a sexual orientation or gender identity that is marginalized or not seen as 'normal' (because heterosexual is seen as 'normal'). The term recognizes that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer and intersex people have some shared experiences, and it is used as a banner under which to work together to achieve inclusion on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Mainstream (adj or noun)

The center group, or in-group. The mainstream group in a society or organization sets the tone for the society, and its preferences become the norms of the society. The mainstream group provides most of the leadership for carrying out the functions of the society and they generally have more opportunities and access to resources. For example, people who don't have disabilities are the mainstream group in Canadian society. Most of the time, society operates in a way that is designed by and comfortable for people who don't have disabilities. The mainstream may or may not be conscious of its role and higher status. Everyone is a member of one mainstream group or another: for example, a working class Jewish lesbian, who may be marginalized because of her religious beliefs or her sexual orientation, may not have a disability. When we talk about the mainstream (e.g. people *without* disabilities), we contrast it with the margin (e.g. people *with* disabilities).

Margin (noun)/Marginalized (adj)

Individuals or groups who are excluded, ignored, or kept at the outer edge of a society or organization, often as a result of systemic discrimination. People at the margins are usually aware that they have lower status than the mainstream. Just like the mainstream, people may be marginalized in some ways or places, and not in others. For example, a white gay man may be in the margin in his workplace but be in the mainstream in the gay community because of his maleness and whiteness. When we talk about the margins (e.g. gay), we contrast it with the mainstream (e.g. heterosexual).

Métis (adj or noun)

One of the three distinct cultural groups of Aboriginal Peoples (the others being First Nations and Inuit). The term Métis originally referred to people of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry. Now Métis refers to a person who identifies as Métis, has Métis ancestry, or is accepted by the Métis Nation as Métis. Métis people have a unique history, culture and language that draws on their diverse ancestry such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree. Métis Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are recognized in the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982.

Multiculturalism (noun)

Multiculturalism has been a federal policy in Canada since 1971, and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988. Multiculturalism promotes the acceptance of different cultures, encourages us to live together peacefully, and respects the right of everyone to value their own ethnicity and cultural background. It also encourages Canadians to recognize contributions made by the diversity of Canadians. However, saying that Canada is a multicultural society can sometimes hide the existence of discrimination and its impact on marginalized groups.

National Occupational Classification (noun)

The National Occupation Classification (NOC) is a list of all the occupations in the Canadian labour market. It describes the skill type and skill level of each job. The NOC is used to collect and organize job statistics (e.g. how many accountant jobs are available in the Canadian labour market right now) and to provide labour market information, and it is used to prepare Labour Market Opinions (LMO).

Newcomer (adj or noun)

An immigrant who has recently arrived in a country.

PDD

Persons with Developmental Disabilities: PDD is an Alberta program that funds services to help adult Albertans with developmental disabilities be a part of their communities and live as independently as they can. The term, which is mostly used in Alberta, can also be used as an umbrella term to describe a population of people who have disabilities that show up during childhood and create deficits in intellectual or adaptive skills. These can include intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or other neurological conditions. PDD can also be used to describe a field of work (e.g. "I work in PDD services.")

Person of Colour (noun)

This term began in the United States as one attempt by racialized people to name themselves, not as 'non-whites', 'coloured', 'ethnic', or 'visible minorities' but as people with a positive identity. It applies to people who are not white or Aboriginal.

Permanent Resident (noun)

A person who has been given a certain immigration status that means they can stay permanently in Canada. Permanent residents get most of the social benefits that Canadian citizens receive, including health care coverage; they can live, work or study anywhere in Canada; they can apply for Canadian citizenship; and they are protected under Canadian laws and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A permanent resident may have come to Canada as an immigrant or as a refugee. Permanent residents who become Canadian citizens stop being permanent residents. The old term for permanent resident is Landed Immigrant.

PNP

Provincial Nominee Program: This is the Government of Canada's name for the Canada-wide program that in Alberta is called the AINP.

Privilege (noun)

The unearned benefits and opportunities given to someone from a mainstream group just because they're a part of that group. Privilege is not based on the actual characteristics of an identity (for example, being a man or a woman), but on the value we place on these identities – for example, which identities are seen as better, superior, or more normal. How does privilege work? When we consciously or unconsciously see a particular social group as more valued or normal, we often think that a person from that group automatically deserves more respect, social status, better jobs or housing, without them having to do anything to earn it. People who have privilege often feel like they deserve to be treated this way, simply because they're used to it – this is called 'entitlement'. For example, many of us give men's opinions more weight and value than women's – often unconsciously, we somehow think men know more or deserve more respect, without them having to prove it. Thus, we sometimes give men more credit, more opportunities, or more rewards. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it and more obvious to those who don't. However, the tendency to give certain social groups privilege can be unlearned, and those of us with privilege can use it constructively to make communities more inclusive for those who don't have it.

Queer (adj)

Queer is and has been used as an aggressive insult against people who are (or are thought to be) homosexual. In the 1980s, in order to take away the word's negative power, some people in LGBTQI communities started reclaiming the word and now use it proudly to describe themselves. Some people use 'queer' as an umbrella term to mean LGBTQI.

Race (noun)

The term race refers to categories of people who have similar physical traits that are seen by society as significant, with the result that these categories of people are treated differently. For instance, differences and similarities in eye color are not thought to be significant in society – people generally don't categorize and treat others based on their eye colour – but differences and similarities in skin colour are thought to mean something significant. Historically, skin colour has been associated with physical and intellectual differences, with white skin being associated with more positive characteristics and darker skin with more negative characteristics. As a result, people have been treated differently based on their perceived race. Years of scientific work have debunked the idea that the human species can be categorized into sub-types based on skin colour and other physical characteristics. But social ideas about race remain a powerful force, and can result in discrimination. In fact, the concept of race only really matters because of the existence of racism.

Racialization (noun)

Using social and biological markers (e.g. skin colour, cultural habits, hair, language, accents, religion, political beliefs and surnames) to label or perceive a person as 'non-white'. If you're racialized, you're likely to be marginalized and face discrimination at some level. The word 'racialization' reminds us that it's not race itself that causes discrimination or unequal treatment – it's the way people see race, lumping certain people together into 'racial' groups, and the way we treat people because of this. Racialization makes race 'real', in that it takes racial categories that don't necessarily mean anything, and turns them into discrimination.

Racism (noun)

Discrimination against racialized people. A belief, action, or practice that either blatantly or subtly gives value and 'normal-ness' to white people and whiteness, and that devalues, stereotypes, and labels racialized people as 'other', different, or less than. Like discrimination, racism happens at individual, institutional and systemic levels, and like discrimination, racism has the effect of disadvantaging an individual or a group and limiting access to benefits available to other members of society.

Refugee (adj or noun)

An individual or group who leaves their country of origin because they fear they will be persecuted based on their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion. A refugee claimant is a person who has made a claim for protection as a refugee. Refugee claimant is more or less the same as 'asylum-seeker,' which is a term that is more often used internationally.

Religious Discrimination (noun)

Institutional and individual practices that discriminate against a person because of their religion or perceived religion. A common form of such discrimination in Canada is employers not allowing people to observe their religious practices in the workplace. Supreme court cases have recently ruled that employers must accommodate employees who need to pray or take days for religious holidays that are not recognized in the list of Christian-based holidays such as Easter and Christmas. Two forms of religious discrimination we also hear about frequently are Islamophobia (hatred or fear of Muslims, although many racialized non-Muslims such as Sikhs have been the targets of Islamophobic acts) and Anti-Semitism (discrimination against Jewish people).

Representation (noun)

Representation is one way to determine whether a social group is marginalized in a political system, field or work or organization. If we say that an organization (e.g. a municipal workforce) is 'representative', we mean that the proportions of people from different social groups (e.g. people with disabilities, women, working class people) in the organization are similar to the proportions of people in the average population. If a certain group is 'underrepresented', their proportions in the organization are lower than in the average population. Often, underrepresentation is not a coincidence, but a result of systemic discrimination. For example, if the average population of Aboriginal people in a community is about 8%, but only 2% of the municipal workforce is Aboriginal, Aboriginal people may be facing discrimination in hiring or retention.

Reverse Racism (noun)

A term that is sometimes used to describe acts of discrimination towards non-racialized, or white, individuals or groups. Racism, however, is not just about individual actions, but a society-wide system that advantages white people and disadvantages racialized people (see systemic discrimination). Therefore, racialized people and communities cannot in fact be 'racist' towards white people. The only way racialized people could be 'racist' is if the entire structure of our society was changed to only advantage racialized people, and put white people on the receiving end of racism.

Seniors (noun)

Generally, people over the age of 65. Seniors may be marginalized based on ideas about the value of their work, ideas, and bodies. Ageism shows up in situations where older people are more quickly fired from jobs despite their greater experience, when elderly people's autonomy is not respected in medical decisions, or in emotional or physical elder abuse that can happen in families or care facilities.

Sexism (noun)

Discrimination based on sex or gender, usually perpetrated against women or females based on the idea that women or femininity is less valuable than men or masculinity. Sexism happens at individual, institutional and systemic levels.

Sexual Orientation (noun)

Who we are romantically attracted to and want to be sexually intimate with. While popular belief holds we are either solely attracted to men, or to women, and that this orientation remains constant throughout one's life, studies show that most people are not at one extreme end of this scale, but be at some position in between, and that one's sexual orientation can change over time.

Temporary Foreign Worker (noun)

A temporary foreign worker (TFW) is a person who is legally in the country on a work permit that is valid for a specific amount of time. The Government of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program allows employers to hire people from outside Canada to fill temporary labour shortages when qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents aren't available to work those jobs.

Transgender/Trans (adj)

An umbrella term for people who don't fit into society's gender categories of woman or man. Transgender people feel that the gender they were assigned at birth doesn't fit with their internal sense of gender identity, either in whole or in part. Transgender is the opposite of cisgender. The term transgender may include transsexual people, male and female cross-dressers, 'transvestites,' 'drag queens', 'drag kings', and intersex people. Transgender people (just like cisgender people) may be of any sexual orientation (e.g. heterosexual, gay, bisexual, queer). Many people use transgender and transsexual interchangeably, and debates are currently underway in these communities about these terms. If you're unsure, ask people what terminology they prefer.

Transphobia (noun)

Fear of and negative attitudes towards people who do not fit into society's gender categories of woman or man. These negative attitudes can result in discrimination that is subtle or blatant, including things like name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence. Anyone who is (or who is perceived to be) transgender or transsexual can be the target of transphobia. Like other forms of discrimination, transphobia is often invisible to people who are not its targets.

Transsexual (adj)

Someone whose sex they were assigned at birth does not fit their gender identity. A transsexual woman needs to live and experience life as a woman and a transsexual man needs to live and experience life as a man. Generally, transsexual people transition from either female to male or vice versa; unlike some transgender people who live between or outside these two genders. Some transsexual people may physically alter their body (e.g. with sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy) and their gender expression to fit their gender identity; others don't. Transsexual people (just like cisgender people) may be of any sexual orientation (e.g. heterosexual, gay, bisexual, queer). Many people use transsexual and transgender interchangeably, and debates are currently happening in these communities about these terms. If you're unsure, ask people what terminology they prefer.

Two-Spirit(ed) (adj)

A term that emerged in the 1990s that is used to describe Aboriginal people who may also identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer. Some describe people who are Two-Spirit as having a balance of male and female qualities. Prior to European colonization, most Aboriginal nations understood gender beyond male or female, and those who were Two-Spirit held special roles within their community, such as mediators, teachers and visionaries, based upon the belief in their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives. Today, the Two-Spirit movement is working towards reclaiming cultural teachings and restoring a place of honour for all Two-Spirited people. However, the term is not used by all Aboriginal communities.

Underrepresented (adj)

See 'Representation'.

Visible Minority (noun)

The term is used by the Government of Canada to categorize people into groups for the purpose of employment equity programs. It generally means 'racialized people'. Visible minorities are defined under the Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginals, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The term visible minorities is also used as a demographic category by Statistics Canada. In March 2007, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racism declared that the term 'visible minorities' and Canada's use of it was racist. They believed that the term indicates that 'white' is the standard, and everything else is 'different' – reinforcing the idea that white is the mainstream and everything else is the margin. Also, although there was a time when people of colour were generally a minority, Canada's population has changed a lot and this is no longer true. Thus, the term 'visible minority,' although it is still used in some laws, is losing its relevance.

Visitor Visa (noun)

An informal term for a temporary resident visa, a visitor visa is a sticker issued by a visa office and put in a person's passport that allows them to come into Canada temporarily. Also known as a tourist visa, the temporary resident visa may allow a person to enter Canada once or multiple times.

Visual Disability (noun)

Having visual acuity of 20/70 or less (when vision is corrected to the best degree with assistive devices like glasses) or a visual field of 140 degrees or less in the better eye. Visual disabilities include blindness, low vision and colour-blindness. In many cases, people with visual disabilities can use devices to help their vision, like computer screen readers. There are many ways to make information and architecture accessible or barrier-free for people with visual disabilities, like Braille, textured walking paths, guide dogs, and large-print materials.

White (adj)

Refers to people belonging to the mainstream (not necessarily the majority) racial group who enjoy skin colour privilege in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and anywhere European colonialism has created racism. People who are white may also face discrimination because of their class, sexual orientation, gender, religious, ability and age (see intersectionality). But this does not erase white skin privilege. The definition of 'white' has changed over time – at some points in North American history, Irish, Greek, and Italian people were not considered white. Some people use the term 'Caucasian' instead of white, but 'Caucasian' actually refers to an ethnic group of people who originate from the Caucasus region just northeast of Turkey, on the border between Asia and Europe. Caucasian is often used because to some, it sounds less 'offensive' than white. However, if we're trying to talk about race and racism, the term 'white' is actually more accurate.

WIC

Welcoming and Inclusive Community: The definition of a WIC that's used by the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) is: a WIC is one which is free from discrimination and where residents feel able to participate in all aspects of the social, cultural and economic life of the province. AUMA's WIC initiative started in 2008 as a partnership between AUMA and the Alberta Human Rights Commission, with the goal of supporting municipalities to create more welcoming and inclusive Alberta communities. The goals of the initiative were to help Alberta municipalities to increase their capacity to build a WIC, share good practices, and move provincial work in the area of inclusion and diversity forward. WIC currently offers education, support, a provincial network for strategizing and sharing good practices, as well as a set of online tools.

Women (noun)

People who identify as women, regardless of their biological sex. This means that transgender and cisgender women are both unequivocally women, and should be referred to, treated and thought of as women. Although women make up more than half of the Canadian population, they have faced systemic discrimination worldwide for many years. Unfortunately this discrimination remains today, and has been extremely difficult to root out because it is deeply woven into our beliefs, policies, institutions and social practices.

Work Permit (noun)

A document put out by CIC that says that a person can legally work in Canada. It sets out conditions for the worker that limit the type of work they can do, the employer they can work for, where they can work, and how long they can work.

Youth (adj or noun)

People aged 15 to 30, according to the Government of Canada. Youth may be marginalized based on the assumption that their choices, ideas, and contribution to society are less valuable than adults. For example, beliefs that youth don't know what's good for them become discrimination when laws prevent youth from making decisions about their own lives; and in a workplace, ageism can prevent youth from being seen as competent and being fairly compensated for their work.

WIC Glossary References

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