

## ***Definitions and Terms***

*Note: Definitions and terms are to be considered in the context of the board's RCH Policy and Administrative Procedures*

### **Ableism**

A pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. Like other forms of oppression, ableism operates on individual, institutional, and cultural levels. (Source: Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations)

### **Aboriginal People(s)**

A collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution (the Constitution Act, 1982) recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples, as defined by the Indian Act: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. The term "Aboriginal people" refers to all the Aboriginal people in Canada collectively, without regard to their separate origins and identities. Adding the 's' to people, emphasizes that there is a diversity of people within the group known as Aboriginal people. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

### **Aboriginal Self-Government**

Governments designed, established and administered by Aboriginal peoples under the Canadian Constitution through a process of negotiation with Canada and, where applicable, the provincial government. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

### **Affirmative Action**

Affirmative action refers to concrete steps that are taken not only to eliminate discrimination - whether in employment, education, or contracting - but also to attempt to redress the effects of past discrimination. The focus of the policy or program(s) is typically in such areas as recruiting, hiring, promotion, training, et cetera. (Source in Part: Answers.Com)

### **African Nova Scotian**

A person of African descent who resides in or originates from Nova Scotia. It is a term that replaced the identifier of "Black" for a people.

### **African Canadian**

A person of African descent who resides in or originates from Canada. It is a term that replaced the identifier of "Black" for a people.

### **Africentric/Africentricity**

Centered or focused on Africa or people of African descent, especially in relation to historical or cultural influence. It is grounded in several traditional African values and principles of respect, conduct, and other ways of being in and relating to the world. Africentric theory strives to be poly-centric, in that it is inclusive of a range of diverse world views.

**Ageism**

The pervasive oppression of people based on their age. Discrimination is typically directed to the young and aged. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Ally**

A person who supports marginalized, silenced, or less privileged groups without being a member of those groups. This person will typically directly confront and challenge systems of oppression. Actions are carried out while honoring leadership from the marginalized group(s). An ally acts against oppression with a belief that eliminating oppression ultimately benefits everyone. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas; and Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations)

**Anti-Racism**

Anti-racism examines explicitly issues of power and equality. It includes actions to counter racism in its various forms.

**Anti-Racism Education**

Anti-racism education is critical pedagogy that places history, race, and inequity of power relations as the central components for discourse and redress. The principle practice of anti-racism education is to challenge and combat racism in all its forms in the education process. The commitment is to ensure equitable outcomes for all learners and to build a just and humane society for all people. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Anti-Semitism**

Prejudice and/or discrimination, either on a personal, societal, or institutional level, against Semitic people (primarily Jews).

**Assimilation**

The process whereby minorities, the marginalized, or newcomers to society are encouraged or forced to give up their cultural way of life and accommodate as quickly as possible to values and culture of the mainstream society. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Asexual**

A person who is non-sexual; sometimes by choice, politics, or physiology.

**Assessment**

Gathering of information or data on student learning.  
(Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Bias**

Prejudice of a general or specific nature, usually in the sense of favouring one particular point of view or ideology.

**Bigotry**

An intolerance of opinions, lifestyles, and identities different from one's own.

**Biphobia**

The fear, denial, or hatred of bisexual people. Biphobia is different from homophobia in that it recognizes that heterosexual or homosexual identified people can discriminate against bisexuals/bisexuality.

**Bisexual**

A term generally used to refer to people whose sexual, romantic, and/or emotional orientation/identity is to both sexes.

**Bullying**

Intentional persistent, unwelcome behaviour. It may include verbal, psychological, physical, social, and sexual aggression. It may be repeated over time by an individual or group of individuals, and can be overt or covert. Bullying creates or exploits an imbalance of power between victim and bully.

**Bystander**

A person who is present when bullying or other inappropriate activity takes place, and who does not intervene, either directly, or indirectly.

**Class**

See “*Socio-Economic Status*”.

**Classism**

Prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people because of their real or perceived economic status or background. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Colonialism**

A policy by which a nation maintains or extends its control over foreign dependencies. The acquisition and colonization by a nation of other territories and their peoples. Typical aspects of colonialism include: racial and cultural inequality between ruling and subject people, political and legal domination by the imperial power, and exploitation of the subject people. Many commentators see colonialism as a key cause of uneven development. (Source: Answers.Com/Scientific American)

**Neo-colonialism**

A policy whereby even in the presence of independence, a major power uses economic and political means to perpetuate or extend its influence over underdeveloped nations or areas. (Source: Answers.Com/Scientific American)

**Community partnerships**

Relationships between institutions and community groups where all the members are equal partners, where the experiences of community members are equally recognized, respected, and valued, and where all community members share in the decision-making process of the institutions. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Critical Literacy**

The awareness of language as an integral part of social relations. It is a way of thinking that involves questioning assumptions; investigating how forms of language construct or are constructed by particular social, historical, cultural, political and economic contexts; and examining power relations embedded in language and communication. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Cross-Dressing**

Cross-dressing is to receive pleasure from dressing in clothing typically seen as characteristic of the “opposite” sex. This term is frequently used in place of transvestite. Cross-dressing can be practiced by people identifying as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

**Culture**

Culture is the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, perspectives, language, and way of life of a people who share a background based on history, experience, geography, norms, or other factors. Culture is both collective and individual lived experience and consequently may shift and may contain paradoxes, and even oppositional elements. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Cultural Competency**

A set of behaviours, attributes, and policies enabling an agency or individual to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. (Minority Executive Director Coalition, Washington State)

**Curriculum**

Curriculum includes the general and specific expectations/outcomes for student learning as prescribed by the Public School Program and related curriculum documents. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Hidden Curriculum**

The idea that schools do more than deliver the assigned curriculum. It includes educators’ personal values, their unquestioned assumptions and expectations, as well as the physical and social environment of the school. (Source: Henry et. al., 2000, p. 233)

**Designated Groups**

“Designated Groups” is an Employment Equity Act term referring to the groups who have experienced employment disadvantage in the past, and are therefore under-represented at various levels in the workplace. These groups include: Aboriginal people, people of African descent and other people of racialized groups, women (in non-traditional areas), and persons with disabilities.

**Disability**

According to the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disability is an evolving concept. In addition, disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**Persons with Disabilities**

Article 1 of the above UN Convention states that “[p]ersons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

**Discrimination**

An act of making distinctions among social groups based on such characteristics as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, faith, gender, ability, or sexual orientation that leads to inequitable treatment of members of the targeted groups. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*) In contrast to prejudice, discrimination is behaviour.

**Institutional Discrimination**

Discrimination, backed by institutional power, results in the effects of withholding and limiting access to the rights, freedoms, privileges, opportunities, benefits, and advantages that are available to other members of society. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Systemic Discrimination**

Includes policies, practices, and procedures that have an exclusionary impact on various groups of people with shared identities, including, but not limited to, race, age, disability, SES, and/or gender. Institutional barriers, for example, job postings, hiring procedures, or unrealistic/irrelevant entrance requirements may have an unintentional effect of excluding specific groups. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Diversity**

Diversity is a term used to describe the many differences and similarities that exist among people. Diversity includes differences such as gender, cultural background, race, religious and moral values, education, social status, age, sexual orientation, political views, et cetera. (Source: Department of Education: *Respect for Diversity: A Planning Resource*)

**Elder**

Any person regarded or chosen by an Aboriginal nation to be the keeper and teacher of its oral tradition and knowledge. This is a person who is recognized for his or her wisdom about spirituality, culture and life. Not all Elders are "old". An Aboriginal community and/or individuals will typically seek the advice and assistance of Elders in various areas of traditional as well as contemporary issues. (Source: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.) Many peoples of African descent also traditionally use the term Elder, typically in deference to age.

**Employment Equity**

An approach designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of opportunity in employment by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, redressing the effects of historic and continued discrimination, and affirming appropriate representation of designated groups. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Equality**

Equality is the state, quality, or ideal of sameness or uniformity.

**Equity**

Equity refers to fairness, principles of justice used to correct or supplement the law (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*). Its purpose is to rectify the limitations of equality, which if adhered to in its strictest sense, may result in unfairness or injustice.

**Equitable Environment**

An environment in which everyone can see, hear, and feel the implementation of equity, and a climate where everyone acts according to the principles of equity and social justice. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Equity Programming**

Programming designed to remove barriers to equity by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices. Such programming is intended both to redress the effects of historic injustice and to prevent inequities. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Equity Education**

The critical pedagogy around equity concepts, practices, and issues.

**Ethnic**

An adjective used to describe groups that share a common language, race, religion, or national origin. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Ethnicity or Ethnic Group**

A population of people whose members identify with each other, either on the basis of a presumed common genealogy or ancestry or recognition by others as a distinct group or by common cultural, linguistic, religious, or territorial traits.

**Ethnocentrism/Ethnocentric**

The tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture. It is defined as the viewpoint that "one's own group is the centre of everything," against which all other groups are judged. It implies that one's own culture, society, or group is inherently "normal" and therefore superior to all others. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Ethnocultural Group**

A group of people who share a particular heritage or background. Everyone belongs to an ethnic group. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Eurocentric**

Centered or focused on Europe or people of European descent, especially in relation to historical, cultural or economic influence. It is typically a worldview centered on Europe and people of European descent. (Source: Dictionary.com)

**Evaluation**

Means a judgment made about the value of information or data. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Feminism**

Social, cultural, and political movements, theories, and doctrines that are concerned with cultural, political, and economic practices and inequalities that discriminate against women. It is also an ideology focusing on equality of both sexes. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**First Nation(s)**

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the First Nations peoples in Canada, both Registered ("Status") and Non-Registered ("Non-Status"). (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

There are three categories of First Nations people in Canada: Registered ("Status") First Nations, Non-Registered ("Non-Status") First Nations, and Treaty First Nations. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada):

**Registered ("Status") First Nations**

People who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government.

**Non-Registered ("Non-Status") First Nations**

People who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the Indian Act, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights.

**Treaty First Nations**

A person who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

**First Nation**

"First Nation" has been adopted by some First Nation communities to replace the term "Indian band." A band is defined as a body of First Nation people for whose collective use and benefit lands have been set apart or money is held by the Crown, or declared to be a band for the purposes of the Indian Act. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

**Fluid Identity**

The concept that identity is not rigid, but can and does change. This idea is often used in terms of gender, sexuality, and race, as well as other factors of identity. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Gay**

The word *gay* is now standard in its use to refer to people whose orientation is to the same sex. *Gay* is distinguished from *homosexual* primarily by the emphasis it places on the cultural and social aspects of homosexuality as opposed to sexual practice. Many people reserve *gay* for males, but the word is sometimes used to refer to both sexes; when the intended meaning is not clear in the context, the phrase *gay and lesbian* may be used. (Source: Dictionary.com)

**Gender**

A societal construct referring to roles, characteristics, behaviours, appearances, and identities that develop through cultural interpretations of genetic sex. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Gender Identity**

The gender with which a person identifies, or is identified. This can be different from a person's assigned gender, which is determined at birth to be male or female or manipulated to resemble one or the other. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexuality are not necessarily linked. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Harassment**

Any improper conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another person or persons in the workplace, and that the individual knew, or ought reasonably to have known, would cause offense or harm. It comprises any objectionable embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. The incident(s) may be persistent, or may be a single incident. (Source: Nova Scotia Human Rights Act)

**Hate Crime**

A criminal offence committed against a person or property, the motive for which is based in whole or in part upon the victim's race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation. (Halifax Police Department) Hate crime also includes "...communication of statements in any public place" that might incite "hatred against any identifiable group where such an incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace". (Source: Criminal Code, Section 318, 319)

**Hate Propaganda**

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, section 320. (Source: *Criminal Code of Canada*)

**Hegemony**

The predominant influence, as of a state, region, or group, over another or others. It refers to the way in which a ruling class will represent its interests as being everyone's interests. (Source: Answers.Com)

**Heritage**

Heritage may be collective or individual customs, traditions, privilege and so on, passed on through generations. For purposes of this policy document, it is inclusive of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, etc.

**Heterosexism**

The notion that only heterosexuality is natural, normal, superior, and required. This can refer to any institution or belief system that excludes or makes invisible any group other than heterosexual identified. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Heterosexual/Heterosexuality**

Heterosexual is a term generally used to refer to people whose sexual identity/orientation is to the “opposite” sex.

**Homogeneous/Homogeneity**

Similar or the same.

**Homosexual**

A person who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to members of what they identify as their own sex or gender. Because of its clinical roots, many people no longer use this term.

**Homophobia**

A fear, hatred, or ignorance of homosexuality or homosexuals, or the fear of being/becoming homosexual.

**Internalized Homophobia**

The fear or hatred of, or discomfort with one's own GLBQTT sexuality.

Internalized homophobia is linked to low self-esteem and is presumed to be a contributing factor in the high rates of suicide among GLBQTT teens. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Homophobic Bullying**

Bullying which focuses upon a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

**Human Rights**

The equal and inalienable rights of every person to inherent dignity and equality. Human Rights Legislation is a framework of laws that ascribe, measure, and enforce the entitlements of a people in a given society. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Indian**

The term formerly used to denote First Nations people. The term "Indian" collectively describes all the Indigenous people in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Originating from the phrase *in Deus* (“in God” or “God’s children”), its use is no longer appropriate in reference to First Nations people. It remains, however, the legal term as outlined in the Indian Act.

**Indigenous**

Indigenous means “belonging to”, “native of”, or “first”. Therefore, it has long been considered that the indigenous people of Canada are the Aboriginals of this country. However, in recent years the African Nova Scotian population has used it in reference to the first Africans to arrive in Nova Scotia. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Instigator**

A person who is responsible for encouraging, inciting, provoking, or carrying out an inappropriate behaviour or act.

**Intersex**

Intersex refers to a person having both male and female sexual characteristics and/or organs; at birth an unambiguous assignment of male or female cannot be made. (Source: Dictionary.com) Intersex is the term that replaces hermaphrodite.

**Inuit**

The people who originate in/near the Arctic, and are one of the three groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Their homeland stretches from the northeastern tip of Russia across Alaska and northern Canada to parts of Greenland. *The term "Eskimo," applied to Inuit by European explorers, is no longer seen as appropriate.* The name *Inuit* means 'the people' in the language Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is *Inuk*, which means 'person'. (Source: Government of Canada: *Canadian Arctic Profiles*)

**LGBTTTQQI**

This stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgendered, Two-Spirited, Queer, Questioning, and Intersexed.

**Lesbian**

A woman whose sexual, romantic, or emotional orientation/identity is to women.

**Métis**

The word "Métis" is French for "mixed blood." Descendants of the Red River Valley area, they are typically comprised of a mix of French, Cree, and Scottish. The Canadian Constitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three Aboriginal peoples. It is the term referring to "a person, who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation". (Source: Government of Canada)

Note that Métis organizations in Canada have differing criteria about who qualifies as a Métis person. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) Some of these organizations are not recognized by the federal government. (For more information, contact the Native Council of Nova Scotia.)

**Minority Group**

A Minority Group is any group that is socially defined as different from the dominant group in society, is at a power disadvantage, receives less than its proportionate share of scarce resources due to its power disadvantage, and finds its differential treatment justified in terms of socially defined differences. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Multicultural/Multiculturalism**

This term refers to any or multiple cultures. Typically, the aim of multiculturalism is to foster recognition of and respect for cultural diversity.

**Multicultural Education**

An approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It includes curriculum and pedagogy that recognizes and values the experiences and contributions of all cultural groups. In Canada, multicultural education seeks the inclusion of all racial and cultural groups that have contributed to the creation of vibrant multiracial, multicultural, multi-linguistic, pluralistic Canada. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Nationality**

The status of belonging to a particular nation by origin, birth, or naturalization. It may include a people having common origins or traditions and often constituting a nation. (Source: Answers.Com)

**Native**

A word similar in meaning to "Aboriginal." "Native peoples" is a collective term to describe the descendants of the original peoples of North America. The term, native, is increasingly seen as outdated (particularly when used as a noun). (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

**Oppression**

A systematic social phenomenon based on the difference between social groups that involves ideological domination, institutional control, and the promulgation of the oppressor group's ideology, logic system and culture on the oppressed group. The result is the exploitation of one social group by another for its own benefit, real or imagined.

(Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Intersections of Oppression**

These occur when an individual is defined by more than one oppressed element of their identity. Often these intersections are used to further oppress an individual; this manifests frequently in situations where an individual is forced to choose one oppressed element of their identity over another for political reasons. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Paternalism**

A policy or practice of treating or governing people in a “fatherly” manner, especially by providing for their needs without giving them rights or responsibilities. It assumes a superior-inferior relationship. (Source: Dictionary.com)

**Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**People/Person of Colour**

This refers to non-European non-white persons, such as someone of African or Asian descent. This seemingly modern term actually dates from the late 1700s and was revived in the late 1900s. (Source: Dictionary.com) For political purposes (recognizing the unique historical context of the First Peoples of Canada), the term is not applied to people of Aboriginal descent. *See also “Racialized People”.*

*The following are in reference to genealogy or ancestry, and are not necessarily related to one's place of birth:*

**People/Person of Aboriginal Descent**

A person of First Nation, Métis Nation, or Inuit ancestry;

**People/Person of African Descent**

A person of African ancestry;

**People/Person of Asian Descent**

A person of Asian ancestry;

**People/Person of European Descent**

A person of European ancestry.

**Power**

The ability to exercise control; having access to systems and resources as legitimated by individuals and societal institutions. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Prejudice**

The process of pre-judging a person or group negatively, usually without adequate evidence or information. Frequently, prejudices are not recognized as being false or of unsound assumptions. Through repetition they come to be accepted as “common-sense notions” and, when backed up with power, result in acts of discrimination and oppression. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Privilege**

An "unearned advantage" that works to systematically over-empower certain groups in society/the world. Privilege assigns advantage simply based on factors of identity, such as gender, race, sexuality, nationality. (Peggy McIntosh, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*.)

**Queer**

An historically derogatory umbrella identity term encompassing lesbians, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labeling people, transgendered folks, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. Some people try to “reclaim” the word and use it as a statement of empowerment. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold it to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexuals is generally considered offensive. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas; and Answers.Com)

**Questioning**

This term (related to LGBTTTQQI) refers to people who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation.

**RCH Incident**

A situation of unacceptable behaviour having inappropriate components, based on such things as race, homophobia, sexual harassment, etc.

**RCH School Advisor**

The RCH School Advisor is the individual at each school site who functions as a primary liaison for receiving and communicating RCH related information.

**Racially Visible People**

See “*Racialized People*”.

**Race**

A classification of humankind into groups of people of common ancestry, distinguished by physical characteristics such as skin colour, shape of eyes, hair textures, or facial features. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*) Race is a social construct, often used as a political/economic tool.

**Racialized People**

Replaces the term “racially visible people” and “visible minority”. Its use reinforces the notion of race as a social and political construct, and that racializing is an act done to people.

**Racism**

Prejudice or discrimination stemming from beliefs in racial superiority coupled with the ability to exert power over a person or a group because of difference of racial, cultural, or ethnic background. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*) Racism = prejudice + discrimination + power.

**Institutional Racism**

An exercise of notions of racial superiority by social institutions through their policies, procedures, practices, and organizational culture and values, either consciously, or unconsciously. Institutional racism results in the unequal treatment of, or discrimination against, individuals, or groups, with non-dominant identities. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Internalized Racist Oppression**

The internalization by people of colour of the images, stereotypes, prejudices and myths promoted by the racist system about people of colour. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Internalized Racial Superiority**

A multigenerational process of receiving, acting on, internalizing, invisibilizing, and legitimizing a system of privilege. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Reserve**

A Reserve, as defined by the Indian Act, is a tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for the use and benefit of a First Nation. Some First Nations have more than one reserve. Many First Nations now prefer the term “First Nation” or “First Nation community,” and no longer use “reserve.”

**On-reserve/off-reserve**

These terms are modifiers to qualify people or things that are or are not part of a reserve. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

**Religion**

An ideology (ideas and beliefs) which a group of people share about their place in existence and creation. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Religious Oppression**

The subordination, marginalization and persecution of an individual or group based on their religious or non-religious belief and/or practices. It may occur on individual, cultural/societal, and institutional levels. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Sexual Harassment**

Includes comments, gestures or physical conduct of a sexual nature where an individual knows, or ought reasonably to have known, that it is unwelcome and personally offensive. It is an expression of power, authority, intimidation and/or control and is usually coercive in nature. Sexual harassment includes gender-based and sexual orientation, or perceived orientation, based forms of harassment. Harassment is not limited to harassment within the meaning of the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*.

**Sexuality**

This word can be used as a general term to refer to sexual orientation, sexual object choice, or sexual preference. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Sexual Orientation/Identity**

Encompasses the range of human sexuality and identity, including gay and lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual orientations.

**Social Class**

A hierarchical social order or society based on wealth accessed, acquired, exercised, controlled, and maintained through family, occupation, ownership or property/resources, and financial/political powers. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*) See “*Socio-Economic Status*”.

**Social Justice**

A concept based on the belief that each individual and group has a right to equal opportunity, civil liberties, and full participation in the social, educational, economic, judicial, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibility of society. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Socio-Economic Status (SES)**

The term “socio-economic status” (or SES) more recently replaced the term “class” or “social class”. It is the relative social standing or prestige of an individual in a community based on such factors as income level, wealth, occupation, education, family, etc.

**Internalized Classism**

The acceptance and justification of classism by working class and people in poverty. Examples include: feelings of inferiority to higher-class people; disdain or shame about traditional patterns of class in one's family and a denial of heritage; feelings of superiority to people lower on the class spectrum than oneself; hostility and blame towards other working-class or people living in poverty; and beliefs that classist institutions are fair. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Stereotype**

The attribution of a characteristic(s) to an entire group. Stereotyping exaggerates the uniformity within a group and the differences among groups. (Source: Department of Education: *Racial Equity Policy*)

**Tokenism/Tokenizing**

The action of making a member of a marginalized and/or oppressed group the representative of or a spokesperson for that entire group, usually for the benefit of a larger, more privileged group. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Trans**

Abbreviation for transgender, transsexual, or some other form of trans identity. "Trans" can invoke notions of transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over borders. (Source: Definitions from School of the Americas)

**Transgender**

Transgender is being gender non-conforming or gender non-specific. A person who is transgender is someone who may not be comfortable with, or rejects, in whole or in part, their biologically assigned gender identity. Transgender is often used as an umbrella term to describe transsexual, transvestites/cross-dressers, and intersex people. (Sources: *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations*; and *The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth Project*)

**Transsexual**

Someone who has a strong and persistent feeling that they are living in the wrong sex. Transsexual people's sexual orientation can be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. Someone who is transsexual may be in the process of or has completed undergoing steps to change their sex. This may be done through hormones, surgery, or other means. (Sources: *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations*; and *The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth Project*)

**Transphobia**

Transphobia is the fear or hatred of, or discrimination against, people who are transgendered or transsexual. Prejudice can come from the heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual communities.

**Transvestite**

See "*Cross-Dressing*".

**Treaties**

Treaties, as defined by the Indian Act, are legal documents between government and a First Nations that confer rights and obligations on both parties. No two Treaties are identical. Certain Treaty rights include, but are not restricted to, entitlement to reserve lands and hunting fishing and trapping. To First Nations peoples, the Treaties are more than simply legal commitments. They are sacred agreements made by the parties. (Source: Department of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)

**Treaty Rights**

Rights to lands and entitlements that First Nations people legally have as a result of treaties. (Source: Department of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)

**Two-Spirited**

Two-spirited people are Aboriginal people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. (Source: Gay and Lesbian Educators of BC; Resources-Vancouver BC School Board Policies)

**Visible Minority**

The term was originally created by the Department of Employment and Immigration (Canada) to classify individuals into groups for the purpose of employment equity programs. The term has been criticized for several reasons, including that racialized peoples are, in fact, the global majority. It has been replaced with terms such as racialized people or person/people of colour. (Source: Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations)

**White Guilt**

White guilt refers to the concept of individual or collective guilt often said to be felt by some people of European descent for the racist treatment of people of colour by Whites both historically and presently. (Source: Answers.Com)

**White Privilege**

See “*Privilege*”.

**White Supremacy**

White Supremacy is a system based on assumptions in which political, economic, and social systems result in White people having more privilege and power than racialized people. The term is often associated only with apartheid or with extreme racist groups. However, White supremacy can be seen in any society, including Canada, where there is a racial hierarchy with Whites at the top. (Source: Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations)

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