Health Equity and Diversity Glossary

This glossary is a compilation and adaptation from several sources. The basis was originally developed by Fran Endicott and Alok Mulheerjee, and updated and edited by Arnold Minors. Additional sources are cited throughout. References are attached.

This glossary is provided to bring some clarity and common understanding to some of the terminology within the Health Equity and Diversity fields. We recognize that language is constantly evolving and also limiting, thus we would like to encourage you to explore other sources to further enhance your understanding of these terms.

Ableism (or Ablism): Discrimination based on a person’s ability, coupled with a belief in the inherent superiority of those who do not have a permanent disability.

Aboriginal People: This is the overall term used in Canada’s Constitution Act 1982 to refer to Native Indians, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The word recognized the fact that many Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Canada. (Dancing on Live Embers, Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, 2006) We also recognize that this definition is not inclusive of all of the different social and personal identities of Aboriginal communities or ways that people and groups from Aboriginal communities self identify. Ultimately, it is up to communities and individuals how they choose to self identify.

Ageism: is a set of beliefs and attitudes that assume particular age groups have specific ways of behaving and acting. This prejudice can lead to the exclusion of people based on their age (Zine, 2004). An example of exclusion is leaving elderly people out of decisions about their own living situation on the grounds that they have some memory loss and therefore cannot make such decisions.

Anti-Semitism: is discrimination against Jews (Semitic peoples are descendants from Shem, son of Noah and include Jews and Arabs.) Anti-Semitism is used only in reference to Jews.

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
Access: includes the right, permission, liberty or ability to enter, approach, communicate with or pass to or from; freedom or ability to obtain, to make use of; the action of going to or reaching; and increase by addition. (American Heritage Dictionary 1995 & Webster’s Third International Dictionary 1995)

Access to Health Services: Access incorporates two aspects: client access – that is, the extent, to which clients are able to secure needed services, and organizational access – the extent to which diverse clients are represented and/or participate in the planning, development, delivery and administration of those services, (A Program for Action, Access to Health and Social Services for Members of Diverse Cultural and Racial Groups).

Anti-Oppressive Practice: Umbrella term that includes feminist, structural, anti-racist, radical approaches, perspectives and theories. Has a social justice, equity, human rights perspective/practices in the work and ways of seeing clients. (Farzana Doctor, 2005 see also http://aosw.socialwork.dal.ca/glossary.html)

Anti-racism: is an active and conscious choice that can be taken by anyone to challenge ideological, individual and systemic/institutional racism. It translates into resisting and fighting all forms of oppression against racialized people, (Zine 2004) and move forward in action toward an egalitarian society that is free of ideological, systemic/institutional and individual racism.

Bisexual: A person who is (emotionally, romantically and/or sexually) attracted to men and women.

Bias: A tendency to be for or against something without a reasonable justification. A bias influences an individual’s or group’s ability to evaluate a situation objectively.

Classism: is prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of a person’s income, lifestyle and status; an economic system that results in unfair distribution of resources leading to a violation of people’s basic human rights (Zine, 2004). For example, if only part-time, minimum-wage jobs without benefits are made available to
some people, they may work long hours at several jobs and still not be able to afford basic needs such as safe and stable housing, nutritious food, reliable transportation and holidays. Employees without benefits are also less likely to be able to pay for health care needs such as counselling and dental and eye care.

**Critical Thinking**

“Critical thinkers are clear as to the purpose at hand and the question at issue. They question information, conclusions and points of view. They strive to be clear, accurate, precise and relevant. They seek to think beneath the surface, to be logical and fair. They apply these skills to their reading and writing as well as to their speaking and listening…”

Critical thinking is an interactive process, one that demands participation on the part of teacher and student alike.

All of these definitions encompass the understanding that critical thinking requires discernment. It is a way of approaching ideas that aims to understand core, underlying truths, not simply that superficial truth that may be most obviously visible. One of the reasons deconstruction became a rage in academic circles is that it urged people to think long, hard and critically, to unpack to move beneath the surface; to work for knowledge.”

**“Critical Reflection** is the process by which:

- adults identify the assumptions governing their actions;
- locate the historical and cultural origins of the assumptions,
- question the meaning of the assumptions, and
- develop alternative ways of acting. (Cranton 1996)

Brookfield (1995) adds that part of the critical reflective process is to challenge the prevailing social, political, cultural, or professional ways of acting.”

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(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
Culture: refers to a learned system of shared meanings, values, beliefs and norms and is expressed in interpersonal interactions, customs, rituals, symbols and art. Culture can apply to any social group with characteristics in common, (e.g. street-involved youth, gays, lesbians, baby boomers, and communities in Northern Ontario such as Aboriginal communities, Anglophone communities, Finnish communities and Francophone communities.

Cultural Competence: is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable the system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross Terry, 1988)

Cultural Diversity: is the unique characteristic that all of us possess that distinguishes us as individuals and identify us as belonging to a group or groups. Diversity transcends concepts of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability and age. Diversity offers strength and richness to the whole. (Hasting Institute as cited in BC Ministry for Children and Family, 2000a) Cultural diversity is fluid and dynamic. Each one of us may possess different sets of these characteristics throughout our life span and the meaning or significance of these characteristics is dependent on the historical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts we live in.

Cultural Safety

“Cultural safety is a term coined in Aboriginal communities. Cultural safety can be examined from an Indigenous perspective. “Cultural safety within an Indigenous context means that the educator/practitioner/professional, whether Indigenous or not, can communicate competently with a [client] in that [client’s] social, political, linguistic, economic, and spiritual realm . . . Cultural safety requires that health care providers be respectful of nationality, culture, age, sex, political and religious beliefs, and sexual orientation . . . Cultural safety involves recognizing the health care provider as bringing his or her own culture and attitudes to the relationship.”

(Our emphasis) This rigorous approach is one that

3 Source Rolina P. van Gaalen, Patricia K. Wiebe, Kathy Langlois and Eric Coste 2009Reflections on Mental Wellness in First Nations and Inuit Communities Canadian Population Health Initiative, Mentally Healthy Communities: Aboriginal Perspectives, p10

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
involves critical thinking, self reflection and action which address “core underlying truths, not simply that superficial truth that may be most obviously visible… and demands participation on the part of [practitioner], [the client] and [the organization] alike,”\textsuperscript{4} thus disrupting and shifting historical hierarchical power relations between client and practitioner; organization and communities; to more equitable relations that take into consideration the multiple pathways and barriers to Aboriginal health.”\textsuperscript{5}

**Discrimination:** is the unequal treatment and unfair allocation of resources to individuals who are members of particular groups. Discrimination can occur either by a person or a group or an institution, which, through the denial of certain rights, results in inequality, subordination and/or deprivation of political, education, social, economic, and cultural rights.

**Diverse/Diversity:** means a variety. The term diversity alone does not necessarily refer to a framework to examine unequal power and its effects such as racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. It is used commonly and inaccurately, as a synonym for people of colour. It should not be used to refer to communities of People of Colour alone.

**Dominant Group:** refers to people whose social identity confers upon them unearned power and privilege. Most of us have one or more dominant identities. In Canada dominant identities are usually, white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, English speaking, etc. (Dancing on Live Embers. Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, 2006)

\url{http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/products/entally_healthy_communities_aboriginal_perspectives_e.pdf}

\textsuperscript{8} From: National Aboriginal Health Organization, Cultural Competency and Safety: A Guide for Health Care Administrators, Providers and Educators (Ottawa, Ont.: NAHO, 2008).

\textsuperscript{4} Hooks Bell, Teaching Critical Thinking, Practical Wisdom, 2010, p 9 and 10, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, New York and London

\textsuperscript{5} Menzies, Peter, Simunovic, Lorrie, Summers Krystal, 2011, Aboriginal Communities, Health Equity and Resilience Factors in Canada, in press, p48)

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
Employment Equity: Employment Equity is a process designed to result in: Fair representation of historically disadvantaged groups throughout all levels of an organization; Elimination of discriminatory barriers to employment; remedying the effects of past discrimination through positive measures

Equality: means that every person enjoys the same status, and thus everyone should be treated the same way so that everyone can realize their full human rights and potential in contributing to social development, and then benefit from the results. (Zine 2004)

Equity: is the process of being fair to everyone, which often needs designing particular measures to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that keep different groups at different levels. Equity acknowledges the fact that equal treatment for everyone does not always yield equal results for everyone. (Zine 2004 Equity refers to the rights of individuals and groups to an equitable share of the resources and influence in society. Equity means equitable access and outcomes. Equity work challenges unfair systems and practices and works towards the creation of equitable outcomes. (Dancing on Live Embers, Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, 2006)

Equity in Health: Health equity addresses the distribution of health opportunities and resources within a community or society (City of Toronto Teaching Health Unit, 1992). It is concerned with conditions that are beyond individual’s control and create unfair differentials in health. (Wallerstein & Freudenberg, 1998)

Ethnicity: refers to a sense of identity based on a shared social history, language, geographical, religious, racial and cultural heritage. Everyone belongs to at least one ethnic group, and Canadian government documents and policies state that “ethnic” refers to the shared characteristics of every group including Francophone, Anglophone and Aboriginal peoples. However, in practice, it usually refers to Canadian communities outside of these three groups.

Ethnocentrism: the racist belief that one’s own ethnicity and race is superior, and the resulting negative judgement of all other racial and ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism is often referred to as “Eurocentrism” –

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
considering knowledge, history, values and experiences of people ancestrally from Europe as the norm against which to judge all other races and ethnicities. (Zine, 2004)

**Eurocentric:** ethno-centrism in which the culture by which others are judged is European.  

Eurocentrism is the practice of viewing the world from a European perspective and with an implied belief, either consciously or subconsciously, in the preeminence of European culture. The term Eurocentrism was coined during the period of decolonization in the late 20th century.

The Eurocentrism prevalent in international affairs in the 19th century had its historical roots in European colonialism and imperialism from the Early Modern period (16th to 18th centuries). Many international standards (such as the Prime Meridian or the worldwide spread of the Common Era and Latin alphabet) have their roots in this period.  

**Faithism:** A form of oppression through which people are judged based on their religious affiliation or belief system. In North America, Christianity is often seen as the normal faith group and others as deviant, wrong and strange. (Zine 2004)

**Fatism:** Negative attitudes and behaviour toward people who are above the weight range thought to be acceptable by mainstream society. This can lead to unfair hiring practices and other forms of social exclusion.

**First Nations:** Reflects a self-naming process of many Aboriginal peoples in Canada. ‘First’ recognizes that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of what is now considered Canada. ‘Nation’ refers to the fact that Aboriginal peoples are political collectivities who had their own forms of government prior to European settlement – and many Aboriginal people still identify with particular nations. (Dancing on Live Embers - Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, 2006)

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
Gay: The generally preferred descriptive term for men who are (emotionally, romantically and sexually) attracted to men. It has been used for both men and women, but increasingly, public use of the term is in reference to men.

Gay/Lesbian: Differs from “homosexual” in its identification with a culture that provides common experience, support and self-affirmation.

Gender Identity: refers to a person’s sense of being male/masculine or female/feminine. To many people this sense of identity matches their biological sex. People whose biological sex does not fully correspond to their self-image or belief about being male/masculine or female/feminine are referred to as “transsexual” or “transgender”. Gender identity is not necessarily related to sexual orientation (e.g. identifying as heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual) (Angela et al, Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002)

Gender Roles: are society’s arbitrary rules to define clothing, behaviour, thoughts, feelings, job/professions, leisure activities, relationships, etc., considered appropriate for members of each sex. In many societies, gender roles are usually considered to be masculine for men and feminine for women. (Barbara M. Angela, Gloria Chaim, Doctor Farzana, Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002)

Hate Crime: is a criminal offence that is motivated by prejudice or hate based on race. Ethnicity, religion, language, gender, gender identity, mental or physical ability, sexual orientation or any other aspect of a person’s identity (Silver et al., 2004) An example of a hate crime is attacking a person because of the colour of his or her skin.

Health: A resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is defined as a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities (WHO, 1986). Health can also be defined as the ability of all people within the community to reach full mental, spiritual and physical potential by living in safety with vigour and purpose; meeting personal needs; meeting
community responsibilities; adapting to change; and having trusting
and caring relationships." (Mayor's Task Force on Lincoln General
Sales Proceeds, 1998)

**Health Inequity and Health Equity:** Health disparities/inequalities do
not refer to all differences in health. A health disparity/inequality is a
particular type of difference in health (or in the most important
influences on health that could potentially be shaped by policies); it is
a difference in which disadvantaged social groups—such as the poor,
racially/ethnic minoritized communities, women, or other groups who
have persistently experienced social disadvantage or discrimination—
systematically experience worse health or greater health risks than
more advantaged social groups. ("Social advantage" refers to one's
relative position in a social hierarchy determined by wealth, power,
and/or prestige.) Health disparities/inequalities include differences
between the most advantaged group in a given category—e.g., the
wealthiest, the most powerful racial/ethnic group—and all others, not
only between the best- and worst-off groups. Pursuing health equity
means pursuing the elimination of such health disparities/inequalities.
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**Heterosexual Privilege:** The unrecognized and assumed privileges
that people have if they are heterosexual. Examples of heterosexual
privilege include: holding hands or kissing in public without fearing
threat, not questioning the normalcy of your sexual orientation, raising
children without fears of state intervention or worries that your
children will experience discrimination because of your
heterosexuality. (Barbara M. Angela, Gloria Chaim, Doctor Farzana,
Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002)

**Heterosexism:** is the assumption that all people are or should be
heterosexual, and that identifying as the heterosexual and having
sexual or romantic attractions only to members of the opposite sex is
good and acceptable. If these assumptions are made unconsciously,
they are called default assumptions. An example is to ask a woman if
she has a husband which reinforces the invisibility that lesbian, gay
and bisexual people experience. Like other forms of discrimination,
Heterosexism, Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, are often

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
invisible and unnoticed to those who are not their targets (Barbara M. Angela, Gloria Chaim, Doctor Farzana, Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002)

**Homophobia:** irrational fear, hatred, prejudice or negative attitudes toward homosexuality and people who are gay, or lesbian. Homophobia can take overt and covert, as well as subtle and extreme forms. Homophobia includes behaviours such as jokes, name-calling, exclusion, gay bashing, etc. (Barbara M. Angela, Gloria Chaim, Doctor Farzana, Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002)

**Identity:** - classified as an individual's personal identity, social identity or ethnic identity. (The State of Queensland, Department of Child Safety, 2004-09)

- **Personal identity** is the way in which a person defines themselves in terms of their individuality and difference to others. This might include factors such as age, gender, nationality, culture, spiritual/religious affiliation, physical and mental ability, sexuality, interests, talents, personality traits, and family and friendship networks. The way in which a person sees themselves in relation to those around them, and what makes them unique, are all aspects of personal identity. Part of our personal identity is given to us at birth, such as nationality and genetic history. Other aspects of our personal identity are formed during our early years of development and continue to develop and change during our life as we grow, mature, make choices, forge relationships and build an evolving identity for ourselves. (Adopted from The State of Queensland, Department of Child Safety, 2004-09)

- **Social Identity** is how we function within many different social situations and relate to a range of other people. Social groups may involve family, ethnic communities, cultural connections, nationality, friends and work. They are an important and valued part of our daily life. How we see ourselves in relation to our diverse social groupings contribute to our social identity. (The State of Queensland, Department of Child Safety, 2004-09)

- **Ethnic identity** refers to a person's sense of belonging to an ethnic group. Ethnic identity is drawn from the realization that a
person's thoughts, perceptions, feelings and behaviours are consistent with those of other members of the ethnic group. (This does not mean that there is “one” unifying identity for any given ethnic group. There is diversity within every ethnic group). Ethnic identity recognizes that a person belongs to a particular group that shares not only ethnicity but common cultural practices. (Adopted from: The State of Queensland, Department of Child Safety, 2004-09)

**Inclusive Practice:** entails the inclusion of diverse communities, values, beliefs, assumptions and practices in delivering health care services, hiring staff, forming partnerships, and leadership. An example of inclusive practice is to make health care information and services available in a variety of languages. (Williams, 2001)

**Immigrants:** A person who leaves their countries of origin to settle in other countries for personal, social or economic reasons.

**Institution:** a large organization in any society that typically has a great deal of power, such as: schools, government, media, banks, big business. (Zine 2004)

**Intersectionality:** (Interlocking Systems of Oppression and Privilege) Each of us has multiple social locations, which interact (intersect) and impact each other. This phrase is an attempt to acknowledge the complexity of social identities (one’s class, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc); an attempt to identify and examine the intersections of oppressed and privileged experiences or identities. The term represents a shift away from overly simple hierarchies of oppression and [gives an opportunity to understand more clearly and challenge and take apart systems of oppression that keep in place social difference and inequality.] (Zine 2004)

**Intersexed:** is the term that has recently replaced “hermaphrodite” Intersexed people possess some blend of male and female physical sex characteristics (Barbara M. Angela, Gloria Chaim, Doctor Farzana, Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002)

**Islamaphobia:** is a fear or mistrust of Islam and Muslims, and considering Muslims as being dangerous, terrorists, extremists, (updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
foreigners and strangers. This translates into individual and group oppression and discrimination. (Zine, 2004)

**Language Barriers:** refers to the difficulties experienced by a person in information processing due to the lack of proficiency or functional level of a specific language. Language barriers differ from low literacy in that a person who is fluent in a language other than English and French experiences language barriers (both oral and text) in Canadian society. This person is not illiterate because he/she can process written information in his/her native language. In addition, while English and/or French speaking persons with low literacy skills can follow verbal instructions in simple English and French, persons with high literacy skills in a language other than English and French may not be able to comprehend simple verbal or written instructions in English or French unless some level of English/French has been acquired. A low-literacy non-English and non-French speaking person will experience language barriers and literacy barriers at the same time.

**Lesbian:** The generally preferred descriptive term for women who are (emotionally, romantically and sexually) attracted to women. It is also used to describe, more broadly, a culture which includes sexuality and other elements of socio-political activity.

**Lesbian/Gay Positive:** A person, independent of her/his sexual orientation, who affirms lesbian and gay identities, and who acknowledges that homophobia and hetero-sexism are systemic barriers to the well-being of lesbians and gays.

**Literacy:** The information processing skills necessary to use the printed materials commonly encountered at work, at home, and in the community. (Statistics Canada as cited in Toronto District Health Council, 1999)

**Prose Literacy:** refers to the knowledge and skills in using information from text such as newspaper, poems and fictions. Document literacy refers to the knowledge and skills in finding information in formats such as job applications, transportation schedules, graphics and maps, etc.

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
**Quantitative literacy:** refers to the knowledge and skills in using arithmetic operations such as balancing a cheque book, calculating a gratuity, sorting out the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement, etc. (ibid.)

**Mainstream:** people or ideas that are part of the mainstream are thought of as “normal” or “conventional.” Individuals who are judged to be part of this normative social category tend to be in positions of power. (Zine 2004)

**Marginalization:** - the social process of becoming or being made marginal (especially as a group within the larger society); "the marginalization of the underclass"; (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/marginalisation). Marginalized groups refer to groups of people who have historically been discriminated against, oppressed, and/or stigmatized. Marginalization is an outcome of oppression.

**Minority:** A convenient, but misleading, word for non-dominant ethnic identities in Canada. While people with non-dominant ethnicities are numerically in the minority in many parts of Canada, they are not numerically a minority in Toronto, for example. Furthermore only 15% of the world’s population is White, of European heritage.

**Minoritization:** is the process by which specific categories of people are viewed as “visible minorities” and marginalized by social, economic, cultural and political forces, even when they may be a demographic majority globally or within a particular country or community. (Zine 2004) Additionally, rather than referring to the term “minority” as a noun, in the context of power, the term is a verb, entire groups of diverse communities are “minoritized” or marginalized by dominant groups in society by being named a “minority”. This term is an attempt to make transparent the power dynamic and to move towards sharing power in a more equitable manner.

**Norms:** are standards that guide or regulate what is considered proper and acceptable behaviour. Norms become invisible because they are integrated in the polities and practices of institutions.

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
**Oppression:** Oppression exists when one social group exploits another for its own benefit. It results in privilege for the dominant group and disenfranchisement for the subordinated group. Oppression is achieved through social control of institutions, cultural ideologies and norms, distribution of resources and force. One characteristic of oppression is that over time it can appear to be ‘normal’ or predetermined state of affairs. For example, historically in Canada women were legally considered property and not ‘persons’ under the law. One landmark case upgrading women’s legal status to ‘persons’ under the law occurred in 1929. (And even later when one examines Aboriginal women’s status and the status of racialized women in Canada).

**Organizational Change:** Change management is a structured approach to shifting/transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It is an organizational process aimed at empowering employees to accept and embrace changes in their current business environment. In project management, change management refers to a project management process where changes to a project are formally introduced and approved.  

**People of Colour:** The term began in the U.S as an attempt by racialized people to name themselves as in a way that reflected common experiences, solidarity and as people with a positive identity. It was an effort to improve upon older terms such as ‘non-whites’, ‘coloured’, ‘visible minorities’, but. It applies to people who are neither White nor Aboriginal. (Dancing On Live Embers, Tina Lopez and Barb Thomas, 2006)

**Persons with Disabilities:** Persons who, because of a long-term or recurring physical or mental condition, experience difficulties in carrying out the activities of daily living.

**Politically Correct:** One of the ways people who seek justice in society is through recommendations about changes to language,
where the language itself reinforces the power of the privileged members of society.

When the relatively less privileged in society begin to assert their rights - especially their right to define themselves - those in power use every means at their disposal to retain their power. One strategy is to try to put down those in the struggle for justice. For example, (mainly white) feminists were called bra-burners, as a way of attempting to trivialize the real issue of male domination.

Similarly, when racialized people point out ways in which the English language reinforces the myth of white superiority and recommend changes to the language to make it more just, the “mainstream” media and so-called liberal writers decry these struggles for justice and label them as censorship and political correctness.

**Power:** is a relational concept; it functions between individuals and groups and depends on one’s subordination for another’s domination and privilege. This is usually referred to as “power over.” “Power over” is visible in the control of or access to institutions sanctioned by the state; it is visible in the power to define reality and rules etc. Access to “power over” is complex and partially defined by white privilege. There are also other types of power that are based less on rank. Power that works on a flat basis of sharing is often found in collective organizing. Power is also evident in an individual’s capacity to act. (Zine, 2004)

**Prejudice:** A frame of mind that tends to pre-judge a person or group in a negative light. This negative judgment is usually made without adequate evidence. These negative attitudes are often not recognized as unsoundly based assumptions because of the frequency with which they are repeated. They become “common sense” notions that are widely accepted, and are used to justify acts of discrimination (http://www.recomnetwork.org/faq.shtml.)

**Privilege:** Unearned, unshared benefits, powers and advantages afforded to dominant groups and not to marginalized groups. It is often invisible and unconscious to those holding the privilege. Privilege takes many forms including: white privilege, class privilege, heterosexual privilege, gender privilege, and ability privilege.

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
**Psychosocial**: is a term that refers to the interaction between the psychological context of a person’s life (thoughts, emotions and behaviour) and the social context (family, community, traditions, culture and environment).

**Queer**: traditionally, a derogatory and offensive term for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersex, and queer) people. Many LGBTQ people have reclaimed this word and use it proudly to describe their identity. Some transsexual and transgendered people identity as queers, others do not. (Barbara M. Angela, Gloria Chaim, Doctor Farzana, Asking the Right Questions, CAMH, 2002).

**Race**: A socially constructed concept used to divide humans into categories according to a set of common visible traits (skin colour, shapes of eyes, nose or face); it is not based on genetics, biology or science. This category was developed based on 18th and 19th century Eurocentric ideology of superiority and was used to exert European dominance through enslavement, colonialism and imperialism. Recent scientific evidence in genetic analysis shows that there is greater genetic variation within a racial group than across racial groups, thus refuting race as a biological category (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000; McDade, 2001). While race does not produce racism, racism continues to reinforce the concept of race.

**Racialized**: Racialization is “the process by which societies construct race as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life” (Report of the commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System, 1995). The term ‘racialized group or person’ is recently being used instead of terms such as ‘people of colour’. “The term racialized person or group is preferred over ‘racial minority’, ‘visible minority’, ‘person of colour’, on ‘non-white’ as it expresses race as a social construct rather than as a description of perceived biological traits.” (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2005) (Dancing On Live Embers, Tina Lopez and Barb Thomas, 2006)

**Racism**: the use of institutional power to deny or grant people and groups of people rights, respect, representation and resources based (updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
on their skin colour. Racism in action makes Whiteness a preferred way of being human. By whiteness I am referring to the civilization, language, culture and the skin colour associated most often with European-ness. Racism is reflected in a hierarchy in which beauty, intelligence, worth and things associated with Whiteness are at the top. (Lee, 1998)

**Individual racism:** is commonly referred to as individual expressions of negative attitudes or behaviours such as racial slurs, harassment, racial graffiti or aggressive acts. Most people recognize this form of racism but perceive it to be overt racial hatred acted out by bigoted social deviants. It is important for us to recognize that individual racism is deeply rooted in the individual's system of beliefs, values and his/her ideology of racial superiority and can manifest in very subtle and unconscious ways. (Henry & Tator, 2000)

**Systemic Racism:** is implicit and mostly invisible; it is embedded in the policies and practices of institutions and organizations. Systemic racism operates directly or indirectly to sustain the power structure and advantages enjoyed by the dominant groups. It results in the unequal distribution of economic, social and political resources and reward among different “racial” groups. It also denies racialized people access to fully participate in society and creates barriers to education, employment, housing, and other services available to the dominant group (ibid.).

**Cultural Racism:** is a system of values and ideologies that are based on racial differences, cultural superiority and inferiority. These values are produced, maintained and reproduced through powerful institutions like the media and popular culture such that the dominant ideologies become the “taken-for-grant” and norm for society. This form of racism is entrenched in society and it supports, allows and perpetuates individual and systemic racism.

**Rankism** - is a term coined by physicist, educationalist and citizen diplomat Robert W. Fuller. Fuller has defined rankism as: "abusive, discriminatory, or exploitative behavior towards people who have less power because of their lower rank in a particular hierarchy"[1]. Fuller’s [position is] that rankism also describes the abuse of the power inherent in superior rank, with the view that rank-based abuse

(updated by Lorrie Simunovic & Ishwar Persad, 2012)
underlies many other phenomena such as bullying, racism, sexism, and homophobia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rankism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rankism)

**Refugees:** People who flee their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. A refugee either cannot return home, or is afraid to do so. (UNHCR)

**Sexism:** cultural and social norms and practices that give more power to men than to women. Men tend to fare better in society than women, leaving many women struggling for fairness economically, politically and socially (Zine, 2004).

**Sexual Orientation:** A person’s primary emotional, social and sexual attraction. This can be heterosexual (towards opposite sex), bisexual (towards males and females), lesbian (woman to woman), gay (man to man). Some people’s orientation may not fit neatly within these broad categories.

**Social Class:** The hierarchical order of a society based on such indicators of social rank as income; occupation; education; ownership of property; family; religious and political relationships; etc.

**Social Determinants of Health:**

**A Holistic View of Health**

Understanding the links between diversity, health outcomes and access to culturally competent care requires working with a broad definition of health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948).

The WHO also declares that "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. . ." (WHO, 2008)

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6 Simunovic, Lorrie; Persad Ishwar, 2009, Mental and Addiction 101 Online Diversity Tutorial, 2009,

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A holistic view of health addresses the many factors that affect people's health. These factors are sometimes called the "social determinants of health," and include:

- Health care
- Social support networks
- Early childhood care
- Education and literacy
- Job security
- Housing
- Nutritious food
- Physical environments (e.g., safe water, clean air, adequate transportation systems)
- Gender
- Culture
- Racism
- Classism

(PHAC, 2004; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003)

**Social Location:** Refers to one’s own location within society, based on socio-cultural differences that are socially constructed and reinforced. Social categories are predetermined but may change with social movements (for example shift from ‘sexual deviant’ to lesbian, or property/slave to citizen/racialized person). Our individual life stories and choices can change our social location somewhat, in some cases, e.g. from adult to older adult.

**Social Justice:** a basic value and desired goal in democratic societies and includes equitable and fair access to societal institutions, laws, resources, opportunities, without arbitrary limitations based on observed, or interpretations of, differences in age, colour, culture, physical or mental disability, education, gender, income, language, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

(Dr. King Davis as cited in Martel & Rice, 1996)

**Stereotyping:** A stereotype is a fixed general image or set of characteristics that are considered representative of a particular type of person or group. Stereotypes can lead to false conclusions and perceptions. They exaggerate the sameness of a group and the differences between groups. Stereotypes are not just about

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individual ignorance but are also part of a system that keeps relations of power unequal. (Zine 2004)

**Systemic Discrimination:** Discrimination resulting from systemic policies, practices and procedures which have an exclusionary impact on different groups of people with shared identities, such as race, age, sexual orientation, gender, and/or disability.

**Transgender:** Refers to individuals whose self-concept and/or social presentation is inconsistent with social norms based on their biological sex. It is not necessarily related to sexual orientation.

**Transsexual:** A person whose psychological/sociological way of living is opposite to the person’s biological sex. This term is also used to apply to a person whose biological sex has been altered surgically to that of the opposite sex.

**Two-Spirit:** In the belief system of some First Nations, there are more than two genders. Some have seven genders, some nine. Each of these genders involves a different combination of the characteristics Western society defines as “masculine” or “feminine.” In the middle of this range of genders come people who are equally “male and “female” These are the “two-spirited” people, In many [Aboriginal] cultures, two-spirited people were held in high esteem. In some they were thought to have particular spiritual gifts and were trained to be spiritual leaders and healers. Many two-spirited people are what the mainstream culture would describe as lesbian, gay, bisexual, [transgender, transsexual, intersex, and queer], but not all. A two-spirited nature encompasses much more than just sexual orientation. It is a complete gender identity. (This information was given by Tuma Young, a man who identified as a Two-Spirited Mi’kmaq Gay man, at a workshop on two-spirited people, Atlantic Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Conference, Halifax Nova Scotia 1993)7

**White:** A social colour. The term is used to refer to people belonging to the dominant group in Canada. It is recognized that there are many different people who are “White” but who face discrimination

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because of their class, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, language, and geographic origin. Grouping all these people as “White” is not to deny the very real forms of discrimination many groups have experienced. Some examples of people who have experiences of systemic discrimination include people identified as Italian, Portuguese, Irish, Argentinean, Greek, etc. Nevertheless, in terms of physical appearance they may appear “White” in this society where this is the dominant social colour, and may, therefore, get admitted to the “White” race.

**White Privilege:** “An invisible knapsack of unearned assets which white people can count on cashing in each day, but about which they are meant to remain oblivious” (Peggy MacIntosh, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack). These are the benefits white people receive in a racist society at the expense of racialized people. Examples include the ability to be unaware of race; the assurance that police will not stop them because of their race; the expectation that they speak for themselves and not their ‘race’; the assumption that getting hired or promoted was due to their competence and not because of their ‘race’. (Dancing On Live Embers, Tina Lopez and Barb Thomas, 2006)

**World Majority People:** People of colour continually are described - even by themselves, sometimes - as minorities. Relative to the world’s population, people of colour are a huge majority.

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