



Glossary of IDEA terms

**A reference tool for inclusion, diversity,
equity, and accessibility terminology**

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**Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
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INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive glossary aims to provide a reference for anyone interested in terminology used within inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA).

The language used around IDEA and social justice topics is constantly evolving. Context, connotation, tone, and self-determination all play a role in what terminology is acceptable. For example, language that is offensive may be [reclaimed](#) by the group it was used to harm, the terminology that someone may prefer in reference to themselves may change (e.g., [identity-first language](#) and [person-first language](#)), or the way a word is used may change to be more inclusive (e.g., [gender-neutral language](#) and [pronouns](#)). As terminology evolves, it is always best practice to ask about an individual's preferred way to be addressed.

It is our goal to create a comprehensive and accurate glossary; however, there can be definitions that have evolved or have nuances that are missing. The nature of language is such that the meanings of words are often very subjective and based on context. If you notice something that should be added, updated, or removed while engaging with this glossary, please reach out to us at research@ccdi.ca.

GENERAL IDEA TERMINOLOGY

2SLGBTQI+ and other acronyms

2SLGBTQI+ is an acronym that stands for [Two-Spirit](#), [Lesbian](#), [Gay](#), [Bisexual](#), [Transgender](#), [Queer/Questioning](#), and [Intersex](#).¹ A plus sign or asterisk added to any acronym indicates the inclusion of [sexual orientations](#) and [gender identities](#) not explicitly included in the acronym. There are many acronyms that may be preferred by different individuals. The following is a comprehensive but incomplete list of acronyms:

- LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender.²
- LGBTQIA: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and [Asexual/Ally](#).³
- LGBTQ2S+/2SLGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Two-Spirit. Some individuals and organizations choose to put two-spirit at the beginning of the acronym as a [reconciliation](#) effort to put the [Indigenous](#) expression of [gender](#) and sexual orientation at the forefront.⁴
- LGBTIQAPD: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Ally, [Pansexual](#), and [Demisexual](#).⁵
- LGBT*IQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, [Trans*](#), Intersex, and Queer/Questioning.
- QTPOC: Queer, Trans, and Intersex [People of Colour](#). The term acknowledges the [intersectionality](#) of [race](#), gender, and sexual orientation. Other terms include QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, and Intersex, Black and Indigenous People of Colour), QPOC (Queer People of Colour), and QTPOC (Queer and/or Trans People of Colour).⁶
- QUILTBAG: Queer/Questioning, Unlabelled/Undecided, Intersex, Lesbian, Trans*/Two-Spirit, Bisexual, Asexual, and Gay/[Genderqueer](#).⁷
- AGL: All Gender Loving. This is a term sometimes used by the Black community to express their sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.⁸
- SGL: Same Gender Loving. This is a term sometimes used by the Black community to express their sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.⁹
- SOGI: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. This term is most often used within the United Nations and international [human rights](#) context and is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities.¹⁰
- SOGIESC: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, [Gender Expression](#), and Sex Characteristics. Similar to SOGI, it is an acronym that intends to be inclusive of all forms of the mentioned identities.¹¹
- TGNC/TGNCNB: Transgender and [Gender Non-Conforming](#). “NB” may be added for [non-binary](#) identities.¹²

Acceptance

Approval and embracing of differences beyond simply tolerating them.¹³ Not to be confused with [tolerance](#).

Accessibility/accessible

A building, facility, structure, program, activity, resource, product etc. that is readily usable, or the extent to which it is readily usable by a person with a [disability](#).^{14 15 16 17}

Accommodation

Adjustments made to policies, programs, practices, facilities, or resources to allow for equitable access in the workplace. Accommodations are made in the hopes of improving [accessibility](#) by eliminating existing [barriers](#).^{18 19}

Duty to accommodate

Employers, organizations, service providers, and public institutions' legal obligation to provide accommodations to individuals for equitable access, so long as the accommodation is reasonable.²⁰

Reasonable accommodation

The limit of required accommodations where they are proportionate to what an organization can implement without undue hardship, while supporting the needs of the individual.²¹

Undue hardship

The limit of hardship where an employer can decline a proposed accommodation. Undue hardship can only be claimed in cases of excessive cost, lack of outside sources of funding (e.g., government funding), and risks to health and safety, and the employer must provide sufficient evidence of undue hardship.^{22 23}

Advocacy

Speaking up on behalf of a group either as a group member or as someone outside of the group.²⁴
²⁵

Ally/allyship

Rooted in the term “alliance”, an ally is an individual in a position of [privilege](#) or [power](#) who makes consistent efforts to understand, uplift, empower, and support [equity-deserving groups](#). An ally is not a member of the group but seeks to stand in solidarity with an equity-deserving group to end [oppression](#), [discrimination](#) and/or [prejudice](#).^{26 27}

Anti-oppression

Strategies and actions that actively challenge existing [intersectional](#) inequities and injustices.²⁸

Attitudes

Beliefs that influence behaviour towards and perception of an individual and/or groups.²⁹

Barrier

Obvious or subtle obstacle that prevents or restricts members of society from accessing, using, or doing something that others can readily access, use, or do. Can be physical, economic, financial, informational, and/or organizational policies/practices.³⁰

Employment barriers

The formal or informal policies or practices that result in the restriction or [exclusion](#) of [marginalized group](#) members on factors not related to job requirements.³¹

Systemic barriers

Policies, practices, or behaviours in society that exclude marginalized groups.³²

Being read

Assumptions about [gender identity](#), [sex assigned at birth](#), or [sexual orientation](#) based on an individual's outward appearance and/or behaviour.³³

See also: [passing/to pass or blending](#) and [stealth](#)

Belonging

Feeling secure, supported, accepted, and included.³⁴

Bias

A conscious (explicit) or unconscious (implicit) opinion, preference, [prejudice](#), or inclination, formed without reasonable justification, that prevents a balanced or even-handed judgement.³⁵

Affinity bias

People's tendency to connect with individuals most like themselves.³⁶

Confirmation bias

Only noticing or accepting information that aligns with current beliefs.³⁷

Ingroup bias/ingroup favouritism

People's tendency to favour, prefer, and uplift the group that they are a member of.^{38 39}

Outgroup bias

The tendency to view people from outside of one's group unfavourably.⁴⁰

Bigot/bigotry

Someone who has and upholds a biased attitude or opinion toward an individual or group.⁴¹

See also: [bias](#)

Brave space

A term that emerged out of the critiques of [safe spaces](#). A brave space encourages dialogue. It is conceptualized around recognizing differences and holding each person accountable to do the work of sharing experiences and coming to new understandings - a feat that is often hard, and typically uncomfortable.⁴²

Bullying

Repeated behaviours that are intimidating, threatening, degrading, humiliating, or hostile and that physically or psychologically harm the victim.^{43 44}

Bystander

A person who witnesses an incident but does not intervene or otherwise take part.⁴⁵

Contrast with: [upstander](#)

Classism

[Discriminatory](#) practices and [biases](#), for or against, based on socioeconomic status.⁴⁶

See also: [socioeconomic privilege](#)

Code-switching

Historically, code-switching referred to the process of switching from one language or dialect to another depending on the social context. The term has evolved to refer to the process of changing behaviour, appearance, mannerisms, and/or language to conform to societally appropriate standards for a specific context. Code-switching in its modern form is most often performed by members of [marginalized groups](#) to avoid being stigmatized and associated with negative [stereotypes](#) of their group.^{47 48}

Coded language

The use of seemingly neutral words and phrases to express an opinion – often [racist](#), [sexist](#), or [xenophobic](#) – in an indirect way. Examples include “urban” as code for Black people, or “at-risk youth” as code for [racialized](#) or low-income students.^{49 50}

See also: [dog whistle](#)

Cognitive diversity

Having a variety of ideas, opinions, and perspectives within a group.^{51 52}

Coming out

The process where someone accepts their [gender identity](#) and/or [sexual orientation](#) (coming out to themselves) and starts sharing it with other people (coming out to others). Coming out is not a simple or straightforward process, and individuals may be “out” in some circumstances (with friends and family) but not others (at work or school). Also sometimes referred to as “coming out of the closet”.^{53 54 55}

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Policies and practices where a business is accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public while aiming to positively impact the community and the environment.⁵⁶

Cultural competence

Awareness and understanding of different [cultures](#) and practices, and the ability to accept and bridge differences between cultures for effective communication. Cultural competence has become especially important as globalization increases and individuals must effectively interact with people from other cultures.^{57 58}

Cultural humility

Cultural humility is a commitment to self-reflection, lifelong learning, mitigating [power](#), and institutional accountability by accepting personal limitations and increasing self-awareness of [biases](#) and misperceptions to build relationships.^{59 60}

Cultural intelligence (CQ)

The extent that an individual can adapt to working with different cultures or bridge [cultural](#) understandings with empathy and without [bias](#).^{61 62}

Cultural safety

An outcome based on respectful engagement that creates a physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment without challenge or denial of an individual's identity or needs.⁶³

Dialogue

Communicating with the goal of expressing different perspectives and coming to multiple understandings without necessarily agreeing.⁶⁴

Discrimination

Intentional or unintentional denial of equal treatment, civil liberties and opportunity to individuals or groups with respect to education, housing, health care, employment and access to services, goods, and facilities. Can occur based on [ancestry](#), place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, record of offences, [race](#), colour, [nationality](#), [sex](#), age, religion, [gender identity](#), [gender expression](#), political affiliation, marital or family status, [sexual orientation](#), and [disability](#).^{65 66}

Individual discrimination

The unequal and [prejudiced](#) treatment of individuals based on their identity or membership to a particular group.

Systemic/institutional discrimination

Systemic discrimination is institutionalized. Systemic discrimination is embedded and practiced in social institutions, such as: government, policies, religion, education, and organizations. Results in the [exclusion](#) and [stereotyping](#) of the targeted groups.⁶⁷

Diversity

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess, and the mix that occurs in any group of people.^{68 69} [Race](#), [ethnicity](#), age, [gender](#), [sexual orientation](#), religious beliefs, economic status, physical abilities, life

experiences, and other perspectives can make up individual diversity.^{70 71} Diversity is a fact, and inclusion is a choice.⁷²

Diversity management

Implementing policies and procedures to create a more [inclusive](#) and positive work environment that values the [diversity](#) of the workforce.⁷³

Dog whistle

[Coded language](#) used in political messaging that is intended to be understood only by a small target audience. These messages are often [racist](#), [xenophobic](#), [sexist](#), or [antisemitic](#).⁷⁴

Dominant group

A group with the [power](#) and [privilege](#) in society to influence systems. The dominant group can be but is not necessarily the majority (see [People of the global majority](#)).^{75 76}

Economic justice

Founded on the belief that justice intersects with the economy, economic justice is the idea that economic policies and institutions should have the ultimate goal of providing equal opportunities for individuals to thrive.^{77 78}

Emotional labour

The effort taken to manage emotions to suit a particular context or to be considered socially acceptable. In the context of [diversity](#) and [inclusion](#), [marginalized groups](#) (particularly [racialized people](#)) are often subject to a great deal of emotional labour in the wake of world events or in times of racial tension where discussions of [race](#) are more common at work.⁷⁹

Emotional tax

The mental and physical impacts on members of [marginalized groups](#) due to constant discomfort that comes with protecting themselves against [bias](#) and [discrimination](#).⁸⁰

Employee resource group (ERG)

Employee-led groups that serve many purposes depending on the organization, its focus, structure, sector and/or industry. Their primary purpose is to provide [equity-deserving groups](#) with a formal structure within the organization to support their unique needs.⁸¹

Employment equity/affirmative action

Policies and practices that encourage the establishment of working conditions that are free from [barriers](#), seek to correct conditions of disadvantage in employment, and promote the principle that it requires special measures to accommodate differences for the four designated groups in Canada: women, [Indigenous Peoples](#), persons with [disabilities](#), and [visible minorities](#).⁸²

Environmental justice

The belief that all individuals deserve equal access to healthy living conditions. Environmental justice can be made possible by enforcing environmental regulations that protect vulnerable communities.^{83 84}

Equality

Where everyone is treated the same regardless of individual differences and needs.⁸⁵

Equal pay for equal work

Refers to equal pay provisions in employment standards legislation that addresses situations where men and women are performing the same or comparable jobs. Equal pay for equal work takes skill, effort, responsibilities, and working conditions into consideration when determining comparable jobs.⁸⁶

Contrast with: [pay equity](#)

Equity

Where everyone is treated according to their diverse needs in a way that enables all people to participate, perform, and engage to the same extent.⁸⁷

Equity-seeking groups/equity-deserving groups

Groups of people who have been historically disadvantaged and [under-represented](#). These groups include but are not limited to the four designated groups in Canada – women, [visible minorities](#), [Aboriginal Peoples](#), and people with [disabilities](#) – and people in the [LGTBQ2+](#) community/people with diverse [gender identities](#) and [sexual orientations](#). Equity-seeking groups identify [barriers](#) and unequal access, and actively seek [social justice](#) and reparation.^{88 89}

See also: [marginalized groups](#)

Erasure

The [exclusion](#) of people and [cultures](#) within history, resulting in inaccurate depiction and dismissal of the pain, achievements, and impacts of a group. Erasure can also occur through the denial of an individual or group's identity.⁹⁰

See also: [bi erasure](#)

Essentialism

The belief that an entire group naturally possesses the same characteristics, ignoring individual differences within the group (e.g., the belief that there is a gender gap in certain industries because women are not interested in those jobs). Can lead to [stereotypes](#).⁹¹ Other, more specific terms include gender essentialism and cultural essentialism.

Exclusion

Denying access or leaving someone out either consciously or unconsciously.⁹²

Fairness

Processes and outcomes that are impartial.⁹³

Harassment

Unwelcome comments or behaviours based on [protected grounds](#) that offend or humiliate the victim. Harassment is a form of [discrimination](#).^{94 95}

Hate crimes

Targeted [violence](#) against a marginalized group.⁹⁶

Health equity

Health equity is achieved by providing individuals with fair opportunities to attain their full health potential regardless of social, economic, demographic, geographic, or other factors.⁹⁷

Historical disadvantage

[Underrepresentation](#) and other [barriers](#) faced by [equity-deserving groups](#) due to historic patterns of [systemic and institutional discrimination](#).⁹⁸

Human rights

Basic rights that all people are entitled to. The [Canadian Human Rights Act](#), the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and [provincial human rights legislation](#) outline the rights that Canadians are entitled to.⁹⁹ The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) from the United Nations governs the national and provincial human rights legislation.¹⁰⁰

Impostor syndrome

Feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt despite actual achievements and success. Impostor syndrome is common in members of [underrepresented groups](#) due to awareness of [biases](#), experiences of [microaggressions](#), and a historical lack of representation.^{101 102}

Inclusion

Inclusion is creating a culture that embraces, respects, accepts, and values [diversity](#).¹⁰³ It is a mindful and equitable effort to meet individual needs so everyone feels valued, [respected](#), and able to contribute to their fullest potential.¹⁰⁴ Where diversity occurs naturally, creating the mix in the organization, inclusion is the choice that helps the mix work well together.^{105 106}

Inclusive design

A design methodology that recognizes, considers, and involves the full range of human [diversity](#). Generally used in digital and technology design, inclusive design aims to create flexible products that users can customize to meet individual needs rather than one-size-fits-all approaches. Inclusive design is facilitated through input from people with various perspectives, including a diverse range of people on the design team.^{107 108 109}

See also: [universal design](#)

Intent vs. impact

The distinction between someone's intent (what they meant to do) and their impact (its effect on someone else).¹¹⁰

Intergenerational trauma

The trauma experienced and inherited through generations. Research has found that trauma can be passed down genetically through changes in DNA expression, socially through traumatic events affecting social interactions, or structurally through the continued marginalization of traumatized groups. Intergenerational trauma has been found to affect the families of Holocaust survivors, [residential school](#) survivors, refugees, and other groups who experienced traumatic events.^{111 112}

Internalized dominance

Where individuals unconsciously believe they are superior or inferior to other groups due to systemic inequalities and social conditioning.¹¹³

Intersectionality

A term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how [social identities](#) may overlap to create compounding [barriers](#) for individuals. It is described as a framework for approaching issues from multiple perspectives and understanding how multiple groups, or individuals with multiple identities, may be affected. For example, approaching [feminism](#) with an intersectional lens would involve acknowledging and addressing the unique barriers faced by [women of colour](#), women with [disabilities](#), or [trans women](#).^{114 115 116 117}

Marginalized groups

Members of society that face [exclusion](#) due to societal and [systemic barriers](#).¹¹⁸

See also: [equity-seeking groups/equity-deserving groups](#) and [under-represented minorities \(URM\)/under-represented groups \(URG\)](#)

Mentorship/mentor

A person who guides another, often at a more junior level, to support their professional growth.¹¹⁹

See also: [sponsorship/sponsor](#)

Merit

Assessment made based on a clear definition of someone's knowledge, experience, and ability through formal evaluation of performance and achievement. Merit is often used to evaluate for promotions or hiring.^{120 121} It is important to note that the "clear definition" used to measure merit is often based on criteria that is rooted in systems of [power](#) like [white supremacy](#) and [patriarchy](#), and are often influenced by unconscious [biases](#).

See also: [meritocracy](#)

Meritocracy

A workplace that claims career decisions (e.g., pay, promotions, hiring) are based exclusively on merit, and that [race](#), [gender](#), or other differences do not influence decisions.^{122 123}

See also: [merit](#)

Microaffirmation

Small gesture of [inclusion](#), caring, or kindness by being an [ally](#) and valuing or uplifting contributions by all individuals. Achieved by actively listening and providing comfort and support to [marginalized individuals](#).¹²⁴

Microaggression

Small interactions with people or the environment that expose [bias](#) towards [marginalized groups](#). While microaggressions may be unintentional, they can have cumulative negative effects on an individual's well-being and sense of [belonging](#). Examples include asking a [person of colour](#), “where are you really from?” or a woman in a meeting being repeatedly spoken over or dismissed by her male colleagues.^{125 126 127 128}

Multiplicity

Having multiple [social identities](#) (e.g., being female, Black, and [straight](#)).¹²⁹

Norm

Behaviours or characteristics of a group that are considered societal standards.¹³⁰

Othering

Behaviour or language that makes a person or group feel inferior or like they do not [belong](#).¹³¹

Oppression

The unfair treatment or control of [marginalized groups](#) to maintain status, [privilege](#), or [power](#).¹³²

Internalized oppression

Occurs when [marginalized groups](#) accept negative messages of the [dominant group](#) towards themselves and assume a victim role due to repeated mistreatment – [racism](#), [exclusion](#), or [discrimination](#).¹³³

Outing someone

Revealing someone else's [gender identity](#) or [sexual orientation](#) to others without their permission. This can be done accidentally or intentionally, both of which can be extremely harmful to the person who is “outed”.^{134 135}

See also: [coming out](#)

Passing/to pass or blending

Refers to an [2SLGBTQI+](#) person perceived as [cisgender](#) and/or [heterosexual](#) or being not visibly [2SLGBTQI+](#). Passing or blending is important to some people, but not to others. It may be done

purposefully for safety or other reasons, or inadvertently. The use of “passing” is sometimes disputed as it implies that it is a goal to be achieved. Passing can also refer to someone who could be perceived to be a [race](#) or [ethnicity](#) that they are not based on appearance.¹³⁶

See also: [white passing](#)

Pay equity

Equal pay for work of equal value. The goal of the [Pay Equity Act](#) is to ensure and enforce that jobs traditionally performed by women are paid fairly when compared to jobs of equivalent value that are traditionally performed by men. The value of these jobs is determined by skill, effort, responsibilities, and working conditions.¹³⁷

Contrast with: [equal pay for equal work](#)

Performative allyship

When someone who is not a member of an [equity-deserving group](#) expresses support for a group in a way that is not helpful or could even be harmful. People engaged in performative allyship do not acknowledge personal responsibility in or take meaningful action against the systemic issues faced by the equity-deserving group.¹³⁸

Contrast with: [allyship](#)

Platinum rule

Inspired by the golden rule – treat others the way you want to be treated – the platinum rule is to treat people the way they want to be treated, as everyone has different needs and preferences.¹³⁹

Power

Unequally distributed access to [privileges](#) such as information, opportunity, and resources, and the ability to influence decisions, rules, standards, and policies to benefit oneself or one’s social group. Power, and the level of power possessed by any individual or group, affects their ability to live comfortable, safe lives. Power is relational and it operates between individuals, [cultures](#), institutions, and social groups.^{140 141 142}

Prejudice

Pre-judgement or negative assumptions made about an individual or social group based on [stereotypes](#) rather than experiences. Prejudicial [attitudes](#) prevent equal treatment and lead to [discrimination](#).^{143 144}

Privilege

Unearned access, benefits, and opportunities possessed by members of a social group with a high level of [power](#) (e.g., [white privilege](#), [socioeconomic privilege](#), cisgender privilege). Privilege occurs when structures and institutions have been historically designed for the benefit of or to be accessed by a particular group.^{145 146}

Prohibited grounds/protected grounds

Personal characteristics defined in [human rights](#) legislation that are legally protected from [discrimination](#).¹⁴⁷ Prohibited grounds are defined in the Canadian Human Rights Act as [race](#), [national](#) or [ethnic](#) origin, colour, religion, age, [sex](#), [sexual orientation](#), [gender identity](#) or [expression](#), marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, [disability](#), and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.¹⁴⁸

Psychological safety

The feeling of being safe to express ideas, feelings, and questions or to make mistakes without repercussions.^{149 150}

Questioning

Someone who is in the process of exploring their [gender identity](#) or [sexual orientation](#), but who does not identify with a specific label.^{151 152}

Reclaimed language

Words that were used offensively to describe a community but has been reclaimed by members of that community for their own use. Reclaimed language is generally still harmful and offensive when used outside of the community. Language is reclaimed as a form of empowerment, to take the negative power out of the word, and to claim the community's space. Examples include "[dyke](#)", "[fag](#)", "homo", "queen", and "[queer](#)".¹⁵³

Respect

Treating someone positively through actions and words that show esteem for the individual. Respect in a diversity, equity, and inclusion context involves understanding and valuing differences.¹⁵⁴

Reverse discrimination

The belief that members of [equity-deserving groups](#) receive unfair advantages as a result of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and that these programs create [barriers](#) for members of a [dominant group](#). Discrimination based on a [protected ground](#) can happen to anyone regardless of their [social identities](#) and is prohibited by [human rights](#) legislation, but this term is most often used by opponents of [equity](#) initiatives.^{155 156}

Safe space

A "safe space" is a space where people feel psychologically safe to express honest impressions, thoughts, and [attitudes](#) without fear of ridicule. A safe space is one that doesn't incite judgement based on identity or experience – where the expression of both can exist and be affirmed without fear of repercussion and without the pressure to educate.¹⁵⁷ A safe space can be as small as

between two people or can be expanded to include all members of a larger team, network, department, or organization. It can even be an expectation of the organizational culture overall.¹⁵⁸

See also: [brave space](#)

Silencing

Situations where a [dominant group](#) overpowers, dismisses, or dominates conversations or spaces over minority groups.¹⁵⁹

Sizeism/size discrimination

[Discrimination](#) based on [attitudes](#) and [stereotypes](#) related to a person's body size.¹⁶⁰

Social identity

A person's identity and sense of who they are in relation to the groups to which they belong and how those groups are perceived by themselves and others.^{161 162}

Social justice

The view that all people should have [equitable](#) access to resources, opportunities, and [human rights](#). Social justice is actions taken towards addressing the root cause of inequities and is rooted in the belief that all people have equal value.^{163 164}

Socioeconomic privilege

Benefits available to an individual due to their income, education, and level of financial security as well as perceptions of class and status based on these factors (socioeconomic status).¹⁶⁵

See also: [classism](#)

Sponsorship/sponsor

A person who takes action to advance the career of another by advocating for them, connecting them with leadership, and amplifying their work.¹⁶⁶

See also: [mentorship/mentor](#)

Stereotype

An assumption about a certain group, and the notion that the assumption applies to all members of the group. Stereotypes can be positive but are generally negative and ignore the [diversity](#) that exists within a group.¹⁶⁷

Stereotype threat

A theory that describes the experience of a member of a [stereotyped](#) group when they feel the risk of being negatively evaluated based on their group membership and a desire to avoid confirming a stereotype. The negative feelings and stress caused by stereotype threat can impact how someone performs.^{168 169}

Supplier diversity

Providing [diverse](#) suppliers with equal access. Actively seeking out diversity in the supply chain network of the organization and maintaining relationships with diverse suppliers through inclusive practices.¹⁷⁰

Tokenism

Focusing on limited representation of [under-represented groups](#) for the appearance of being inclusive without any action towards meaningful [inclusion](#).^{171 172 173}

Tolerance

Setting aside differences in [culture](#), beliefs, or values without necessarily embracing or agreeing with them.^{174 175}

Contrast with: [acceptance](#)

Tone policing

A tactic used in discussions or arguments to shift attention from the message's content to the way it was delivered.¹⁷⁶ Example: "Calm down. There's no point in engaging if you can't even have a civil conversation."¹⁷⁷

Trigger

Something that causes a distressing reaction and affects one's emotional and mental state. A trigger can bring up traumatic memories and influence behaviour.¹⁷⁸

Trigger warning

A statement that comes before presenting content that could potentially cause distress.¹⁷⁹

Under-represented minorities (URM)/under-represented groups (URG)

Groups that are not proportionally represented in positions of economic influence and leadership, including on corporate boards and in senior management. These groups include women, [racialized persons](#), those who identify as [2SLGBTQI+](#), [First Nations](#), [Inuit](#) and [Métis](#) Peoples, and people with [disabilities](#).¹⁸⁰

See also: [equity-seeking groups/equity-deserving groups](#) and [marginalized groups](#)

Underserved populations

Groups who face [systemic barriers](#) that prevent them from accessing or receiving the same quality of services as people not facing those [barriers](#).¹⁸¹

Upstander

Someone who takes action in support of another person or cause or who intervenes in situations of [bullying](#) or [violence](#).¹⁸²

Contrast with: [bystander](#)

Violence

Violence is an intentional act, behaviour, or use of [power](#) that results in or has the likelihood to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm.¹⁸³

Institutional violence

A form of violence that uses [power](#) to cause harm and enforces structural [oppression](#).¹⁸⁴

AGE

Adultism

[Discrimination](#) or [exclusion](#) of young people based on the belief that younger people are less valuable or less capable.¹⁸⁵

Ageism

[Discrimination](#) or [exclusion](#) based on age.^{186 187}

Generations

Groups of people born in specific time frames, set based on historical events, historic birth rates, and other factors. Generations are often assumed to have similar shared experiences, ideals, and [attitudes](#), leading to the application of generalizations and [stereotypes](#) based on generation.¹⁸⁸

Note: The exact time frame for the generations varies, particularly with generation x, millennials, generation z, and generation alpha. Contested dates are noted with “~”.

Silent generation

People born between 1925 to ~1945. People of the silent generation were children during the Great Depression and World War II.^{189 190 191}

Baby boomers

People born between ~1946 to 1964 when the birthrate in Canada and other countries grew rapidly after World War II. Baby boomers make up a large portion of the current workforce and are reaching retirement age.^{192 193 194}

Generation X

People born between 1965 to 1980, when Canada’s birthrate slowed after the baby boom. The portion of this generation born between 1966 and 1971 are sometimes referred to as “baby busters”.^{195 196 197}

Millennials

People born between ~1981 to ~1996. Millennials are the children of baby boomers and grew up throughout the rise of technology.^{198 199 200}

Generation Z

People born between ~1997 to ~2011. This generation is most characterized by the existence of social media throughout their lives.^{201 202 203}

Generation alpha

People born between ~2010 to 2025. Generation alpha is the most recent cohort and are the children of millennials.^{204 205}

DISABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND NEURODIVERSITY

Note: It is generally accepted in disability communities that [disabled](#) and [disability](#) are not bad words, and euphemisms for these words should be avoided unless requested. See [Diversability and Differently abled](#). An excellent resource for appropriate use of disability terminology, beyond what is described in this glossary, is the [National Center for Disability and Journalism's Style Guide](#). See our note on using preferred language in the [introduction](#).

Ability

Having the mental and/or physical capacity to do a task or activity, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, job functions, self-care activities, etc.^{206 207}

Able-bodied

Someone who does not have a physical [disability](#). It is important to note that able-bodied is not the opposite of [disabled](#), and the preferred antonym is [non-disabled](#).²⁰⁸

Ableism

[Discrimination](#) or [exclusion](#) based on conscious or unconscious beliefs that people with [disabilities](#) are less valuable, and therefore less able to contribute and participate in society. Ableism may be embedded in institutions and can limit opportunities and inclusion of persons with disabilities in community and corporate life.²⁰⁹

Accessibility/accessible

See [Accessibility/accessible](#)

Accommodation

See [Accommodation](#)

Adaptability

The extent that something (a building, structure, tool, etc.) can be altered to meet the needs of people with different [disabilities](#).²¹⁰

Alt attribute

Alternative text provided along with an image that improves [accessibility](#) of digital information. Alt attributes are useful for people who are [blind](#) or have [low vision](#) who use screen readers, or someone with a slow internet connection where images may fail to load. Also commonly referred to as "alt text".^{211 212}

Assistive technology/adaptive technology (AT)

Devices, equipment, software, and hardware used by people with [disabilities](#) to assist them with tasks and activities. These technologies can be used to adapt or replace existing equipment.

Examples include wheelchairs, walkers, prosthetics, hearing aids, computer-based equipment, closed captioning, braille, screen readers, etc.^{213 214 215 216}

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)

Tools and strategies for people with communication [disabilities](#) or who are [non-speaking](#) to communicate in ways outside of speech. Can be aided (e.g., computer-based systems that read typed words out loud) or unaided (e.g., [sign language](#)).^{217 218}

Blind/blindness

A general term describing vision loss that interferes with daily activities, including the total inability to see. Blindness does not necessarily mean that someone only sees complete darkness.²¹⁹

Braille

A reading and writing system for people who are [blind](#) or have [low vision](#) made up of raised dots that are read through touch.^{220 221}

Captioning/closed captioning

On-screen text that displays all dialogue, music, and sound effects in a video to increase accessibility for people who are [deaf](#) or [hard of hearing](#).^{222 223}

Deaf

Having little to no functional hearing, even with amplified sound. This is the preferred term for people who are deaf, rather than “hearing impaired”.^{224 225}

See also: [hard of hearing](#) and [hearing loss](#)

“Big-D” Deaf

People who are deaf may refer to themselves as “Deaf” with a capital “D” (colloquially referred to as “big-D Deaf”). When capitalized, Deaf is “a sociological term referring to those individuals who are medically deaf or [hard of hearing](#) who identify with and participate in the culture, society, and language of Deaf people, which is based on [Sign language](#).”

See also: [“small-d” deaf](#)

“Small-d” deaf

People who are deaf may refer to themselves as “deaf” with a lower-case D (colloquially referred to as “small-d deaf”). When lower-case, deaf refers to “people who are medically deaf but who do not necessarily identify with the Deaf community.”²²⁶

See also: [“big-D” Deaf](#)

D/deaf

A collective noun that refers to “Deaf” people (see [“Big-D” Deaf](#)) and “deaf” people (see [“small-d” deaf](#)).²²⁷

Deaf blindness/dual sensory impairment/multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

A combined visual and hearing [disability](#).²²⁸

Design equity

The concept that products, technology, buildings, etc. should be designed with all abilities in mind.²²⁹

See also: [universal design](#) and [inclusive design](#)

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)

A psychiatric diagnostic manual containing standardized criteria for the diagnosis of mental illnesses. The manual is currently on version 5.²³⁰

Differently abled

A term coined in the 1990s as an alternative to [disabled](#) and other terms. This term should be avoided as it may be considered offensive and condescending to some individuals.²³¹

Digital divide

Gaps in access to information and communications technology experienced by people, groups, regions, and countries. People with [disabilities](#) are more heavily affected by the digital divide due to physical [barriers](#), inaccessible technology, and inaccessible design.^{232 233}

Disability

Refers to a broad range of medical conditions an individual can have from birth, due to an accident, or developed over time, which impact an individual's ability to function.²³⁴ Disability can also be described as a broad range of functional or social limitations that impact an individual's ability to perform an activity.²³⁵ These two definitions reflect two perspectives on disability: the [medical model](#) and the [social model](#). Disabilities can be visible or [invisible](#), permanent, temporary, or [episodic](#), and can include, but are not limited to:

- Addiction (e.g., alcohol, drugs, gambling)
- Developmental disability (e.g., autism, ADHD, Down syndrome)
- Health disability/chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, cancer, asthma)
- Learning disability (e.g., dyslexia, dysnomia)
- Mental health condition/mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorder)
- Physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, amputation)
- Sensory disability (e.g., hearing or vision loss)

Disability culture

A group identity shared by people with [disabilities](#) who have a history of [discrimination](#).²³⁶

Disability etiquette

Recommendations on physical contact and language/terminology use when [non-disabled](#) people interact or engage with people with [disabilities](#).²³⁷

Disabled

Someone with physical, psychological, or neurological differences that limit their capacity to do a task or activity, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, job functions, self-care activities, etc. Many people with [disabilities](#) will refer to themselves or prefer to be referred to as disabled.²³⁸

See also: [identity-first language](#) and [person-first language](#)

Disclosure of disability

When someone with a [disability](#) shares information about their disability with other people, particularly at work. Someone may disclose their disability to request an [accommodation](#) or in more casual conversation.^{239 240}

See also: [self-identification](#)

Diversability

A term coined by Tiffany Yu, founder of the organization [Diversability](#), to showcase the diversity within [disability](#). The organization [does not suggest](#) that the term “diversability” should replace “disability”, and it is recommended to avoid using the term in such a way.^{241 242}

Environmental barrier

An obstacle that prevents buildings or other locations from being readily accessible to people with [disabilities](#). (e.g., stairs).²⁴³

See also: [barrier](#)

Episodic disability

Lifelong conditions that result in “episodes” of disability, or fluctuating degrees of wellness and disability.^{244 245} For a comprehensive list of episodic disabilities, see [What is Episodic Disability?](#) from Realize Canada.

Handicap

Anything that prevents or limits a person’s success in a task or activity. A [disability](#), or a lack of [accessibility](#), can be the reason for a handicap, but the provision of [accommodations](#), [assistive technology](#), and other supports can reduce or eliminate a handicap for someone with a disability. Handicap (or handicapped, to describe a person) is not frequently used outside of legal contexts as it can be offensive. “Handicapable” should always be avoided.^{246 247 248}

Hard of hearing

When someone has hearing loss where some hearing exists and an [assistive device](#) such as a hearing aid is sufficient for them to understand speech.²⁴⁹

Hearing impaired

Having partial to total inability to hear.²⁵⁰

See also: [deaf](#) and [hard of hearing](#)

Hearing loss

A broad term describing a range of hearing function, from partial to total inability to hear in one or both ears.²⁵¹

Identity-first language

Language use that places the [disability](#) identity first. For example, “[disabled](#) person” instead of “person with a disability”. Identity-first language is preferred by many people with disabilities, particularly those who view their disability as an important part of their identity (see [Social model of disability](#)). However, it is best to only use this type of language if you know that it is what the person prefers.²⁵²

Contrast with: [person-first language](#)

Impairment

An apparent, hidden, inherited, self-inflicted, or acquired physical, sensory, intellectual, learning, or medical condition that limits the functioning ability of an individual. An individual who is impaired requires an [accommodation](#).²⁵³

Inspiration porn

Used as a disparaging term within [disability culture](#) to describe the [tokenization](#) of someone with a [disability](#) as a portrait of success.²⁵⁴

Integration

The full [inclusion](#) and [acceptance](#) of people with [disabilities](#) in society.²⁵⁵

Invisible disability/hidden disability

An umbrella term for disabilities that are not easily seen or noticed. Examples include, but are not limited to, chronic pain or fatigue, mental illness, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, and chronic illnesses. Invisible disabilities tend to be taken less seriously or denied altogether, making it challenging for people with invisible disabilities to get the support or [accommodations](#) they require.^{256 257}

Lip-reading/visual hearing/speechreading

Understanding speech by watching someone’s mouth movements.²⁵⁸

Low vision

Permanent vision loss that cannot be corrected and interferes with activities.²⁵⁹

Mainstreaming disability

Involving the concerns and experiences of people with [disabilities](#) in all aspects of policy and program development.²⁶⁰

Medical model of disability

The medical model suggests that disability is caused by a condition, impairment, or difference. This model sees disability as a deficiency or abnormality and implies that disability is addressed by medical or other treatments. Under the medical model, medical professionals are the experts on disability, and it is the responsibility of the disabled person to “fix” their disability.^{261 262 263 264 265}

Mobility aid

Devices that assist with movement such as walking or that help an individual navigate their surroundings. Examples include crutches, walkers, guide dogs, etc.²⁶⁶

See also: [assistive technology/adaptive technology \(AT\)](#)

Neurodivergence/neurodivergent

Having a style of neurocognitive functioning that is significantly different from what is considered “normal” by societal standards. That is, thinking, behaving, or learning differently than these [norms](#). Examples of cognitive differences that fall under neurodivergence include autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.^{267 268}

See also: [neurotypical](#)

Neurodiversity/neurodiverse

The idea that different brains function differently, that neurological differences are normal variations, and that these variations add value to society and the workplace. Please note, neurodiverse and neurodiversity refer to groups. When referring to individuals, the correct term is [neurodivergent](#). Neurodiversity includes people who are [neurotypical](#).^{269 270}

Neurotypical

Having a style of neurocognitive functioning that falls **within** what is considered “normal” by societal standards. That is, thinking, behaving, or learning in ways that are in line with these [norms](#).^{271 272}

See also: [neurodivergence/neurodivergent](#)

Non-disabled

Someone without a [disability](#).²⁷³

Non-speaking

Individuals who communicate in ways other than speech. This term is increasingly being used instead of “non-verbal” to emphasize that many non-speaking people communicate with words, such as through [AAC](#), even if they cannot speak them.^{274 275}

Participation restrictions

Limitations to an individual’s involvement in a task or activity.²⁷⁶

Person-first language

Language that places emphasis on the person as an individual first and less emphasis on their [disability](#). For example, “person with a disability” instead of “disabled person”. Person-first language should be used unless you know that an individual prefers identity-first language.^{277 278}

Contrast with: [identity-first language](#)

Physical accessibility

How readily usable a physical space is for people with physical [disabilities](#) (e.g., elevator, parking lot, building, etc.).²⁷⁹

Service animal

An animal, most commonly a dog, that is trained to do specific tasks that help a person with a [disability](#) participate safely in activities.²⁸⁰

Self-identification

Someone telling their employer or potential employer that they have a [disability](#) through voluntary forms completed during application, onboarding, or for organizational diversity initiatives.²⁸¹

See also: [disclosure of disability](#)

Sign language/signing

A visual-spatial language with its own distinct grammar, syntax, and vocabulary comprising hand gestures, body movement, and facial expressions. Sign language is commonly used by people who are [deaf](#) and can also be used by people with other [disabilities](#) that affect verbal communication. There are many different sign languages, with American Sign Language (ASL) and la Langue des Signes Quebécoise (LSQ) as the only two languages recognized in Canada. Maritimes Sign Language (MSL) is a regional and endangered dialect used in Atlantic Canada.²⁸²

283 284

Social model of disability

The social model suggests that disability is caused by the design and structure of society and the environment, both physical and social. That is, disability is socially constructed. This model sees disability is an aspect of someone’s identity, just like race or gender, and implies that disability is

addressed by removing societal and environmental [barriers](#). The social model also addresses the diversity of experiences of people with disabilities. Different people, even if they share a diagnosis, experience disability differently and have different needs. Under the social model, people with disabilities are the experts on disability, and it is everyone's responsibility to listen and remove the barriers that cause disability.^{285 286 287 288 289}

Spoon theory/'spoons'

Created by Christine Miserandino, an award-winning writer, blogger, speaker and lupus patient advocate, as a way of describing the impact of her lupus to her friends. The theory aims to explain how someone with a [disability](#) may have a limited amount of energy in a day to perform tasks and activities. The metaphor is having a fistful of spoons, where the spoons represent energy. For each task, a spoon is removed, depleting the person's allotted amount of energy. Spoon theory is embraced by some in the disability community but is seen as patronizing by others.²⁹⁰ To read Christine Miserandino's story, see [The Spoon Theory written by Christine Miserandino](#) on ButYouDontLookSick.com.

Stimming

Stimming, or "self-stimulatory behaviour", describes specific repetitive behaviours, including hand-flapping, finger-flicking, rocking, jumping, repeatedly touching a particular texture, or using an object, such as a sensory tool. Stimming may be done to gain sensory input, reduce sensory input (related to sensory overload), relieve stress and anxiety, for enjoyment, or many other reasons depending on the individual. While stimming is most often associated with autism, it is also connected to other forms of [neurodivergence](#), such as ADHD and obsessive-compulsive disorder. [Neurotypical](#) people also engage in stimming, although to a lesser extent.^{291 292 293}

Suffers

Terms like "suffers from depression" are not preferred, and terms like "living with depression" should be used instead.²⁹⁴

Universal design

Products, technology, buildings, etc. that are designed, as much as possible, to be usable by all people regardless of [disability](#).²⁹⁵

See also: [design equity](#) and [inclusive design](#)

GENDER & GENDER IDENTITY

Note: Some of these terms are offensive, and some have been reclaimed for use within the communities that they belong to. They are included here for informational purposes.

See [reclaimed language](#)

Agender

Someone who does not identify with any [gender](#) or does not see themselves as aligning with all or any masculine or feminine characteristics.^{296 297} Other terms include gender neutrois, gender-neutral, or genderless.²⁹⁸

Androgynous

Someone who identifies outside of the [gender binary](#), whose [gender expression](#) is outside of the gender binary, or who identifies with both feminine and masculine characteristics. This is no longer a frequently used term, as it often refers to [AFAB](#) women who are [masculine-presenting](#).²⁹⁹

Assigned female at birth (AFAB)/assigned male at birth (AMAB)

These terms are used to describe someone's [gender](#) assigned at birth and were created to acknowledge arbitrary assignments of gender.³⁰⁰

Bigender

Someone who identifies with two [genders](#). Someone who is bigender may experience two genders at once, move between the two, or identify with parts of each. They may identify with both [binary](#) genders, or one or more [non-binary](#) genders.^{301 302}

Butch

A term used within the [2SLGBTQI+](#) community to describe masculine [gender expression](#) or behaviour. This term is generally offensive and has been [reclaimed](#) by the community.³⁰³

Ciscentrism/cisnormativity

The assumption by individuals or society that everyone is [cisgender](#), that cisgender is the default, "normal", or superior.^{304 305}

See also: [cisexism](#)

Cisgender

A term that describes someone whose [gender identity](#) aligns with the [sex assigned to them at birth](#). The term is often shortened to "cis".^{306 307 308}

Cissexism

Actions that [discriminate](#) against or [exclude transgender](#) people based on the belief that being [cisgender](#) is what is “normal” or superior.^{309 310}

See also: [ciscentrism/cisnormativity](#)

Cissexual

Someone who identifies with the same [sex assigned to them at birth](#). Not commonly used.³¹¹

See also: [cisgender](#)

Congruence

A feeling of harmony with all dimensions of one’s [gender](#).³¹²

See also: [dimensions of gender](#)

Cross-dresser

Someone who wears clothing associated with a different [gender](#). Some people who cross-dress are [trans](#) while others are not. Cross-dressing is done privately or publicly, and some of the time or all of the time. Cross-dresser has replaced the term “transvestite” but may still be considered offensive.³¹³

Dead name

The name that a person, usually a [trans](#) or [non-binary](#) person, was given when they were born but they no longer use. Some people use the term “birth name”, but the word “dead” is used to emphasize the seriousness of not using the person’s birth name. Use of someone’s dead name is offensive and, in the case of a trans person, generally [misgenders](#) them.³¹⁴

Dimensions of gender

[Gender](#) is shaped by our body, identity, and social gender (how others see our gender). These dimensions are related but separate and can vary.³¹⁵

Demigender

Someone who identifies in part with a specific [gender](#).³¹⁶

Drag performers

People who dress in ways that exaggerate [gender stereotypes](#), typically for performances and entertainment. Drag performers include Drag Queens and Drag Kings.³¹⁷ [AFAB](#) drag queens may be referred to as “bio [biological] queens” or “faux queens”, but some find this terminology offensive.³¹⁸

Female-to-male spectrum (FTM)

Someone who was [assigned female at birth](#) and whose [gender identity](#) or [expression](#) falls somewhere on the broad spectrum of masculinity.³¹⁹

Feminine-presenting/masculine-presenting

Someone who expresses [gender](#) in a feminine or masculine way. Separate from [gender identity](#), this refers to the way gender is expressed.³²⁰

See also: [gender expression](#)

Feminism

An ideology, social movement, or political movement advocating for women's rights and the social, economic, and political equality of all [genders](#).^{321 322} It is important to note that feminism is not "anti-men", and that [patriarchal](#) structures harm everyone.^a

See also: [radical feminism](#)

Femme

Someone who identifies in a feminine way, or who is [feminine-presenting](#), through behaviour, [gender roles](#), relationship roles, appearance, or [social identity](#).^{323 324}

Gender

The socially constructed ideas about the behaviour, actions, and [roles](#) performed by a particular sex. Gender is fundamentally different from [biological sex](#).³²⁵

Gender affirming

A broad description of actions or behaviours that validate someone's [gender](#), such as using someone's correct [pronouns](#) (gender-affirming language).³²⁶

Gender-affirming garments

Clothing items that help someone feel more aligned with their [gender](#). Examples include binders (a garment that restricts the chest), bras and breast forms, wigs, or any clothing associated with the gender with which they identify.³²⁷

Gender attribution/gender perception

Assumptions about [gender](#) based on an individual's outward appearance and/or behaviour.³²⁸

See also: [being read](#) and [passing/to pass or blending](#)

Gender-based violence

[Violence](#) and [oppression](#) based on one's [gender identity](#) or [gender expression](#).³²⁹

Gender bending

Dressing or behaving in a way that counters traditional masculine or feminine characteristics.³³⁰

^a For more information about how patriarchal structures harm everyone, please see [How Patriarchy Hurts Men Too](#) from Next Gen Men and [What Is Patriarchy \(And How Does It Hurt Us All\)?](#) from Everyday Feminism.

Gender binary

The concept that there are only two [genders](#), that those genders are opposite and distinct, and that everyone belongs to one of the two.^{331 332}

Gender confirming surgery/gender affirming surgery

Procedures that help [transgender](#) people or people with [non-normative gender identities](#) affirm their true [gender identity](#). There are multiple surgeries that fall under this term, including facial surgeries, “top surgery”, and “bottom surgery”. The latter two terms are often used to avoid having to go into detail. “Sex reassignment surgery” was previously used in medicine to describe these procedures but is falling out of use.^{333 334}

Gender dysphoria

A medical term in the [DSM-5](#) that replaced gender identity disorder (GID). The term describes internal feelings of conflict in a person whose [gender identity](#) does not align with the [sex](#) or [gender](#) they were assigned at birth. GID is no longer used and is considered offensive due to the implication that a trans person has a disorder. Gender dysphoria is generally less offensive but is still contested.^{335 336}

See also: [gender euphoria](#)

Gender euphoria

Validation, comfort, confidence, certainty, satisfaction, or joy felt by a trans or non-binary person when their mind, body and/or [gender expression](#) are aligned with their [gender identity](#), or when their gender identity is [affirmed](#). Feelings of [gender](#) euphoria result in a certain kind of freedom or liberation, which can be external, internal, and/or social.³³⁷ The concept of gender euphoria emerged from the [transgender](#) community in opposition of the common assumption that transgender people experience only gender dysphoria.³³⁸

See also: [gender dysphoria](#)

Gender expansive

Someone who identifies with a broader and more flexible concept of [gender](#). Can be an umbrella term for those who are exploring their [gender expression](#) and/or [gender identity](#).³³⁹

Gender expression

How someone publicly shows or presents their [gender](#) through their appearance, name, pronouns, speech, and behaviour. Gender expression can align with [gender identity](#) but is a separate concept.^{340 341 342}

Gender gifted

A term that celebrates having a non-normative gender identity by describing it as a gift.^{343 344}

Gender identity

How someone internally, mentally, or psychologically perceives their [gender](#). Someone's gender identity can align with or differ from the gender they were assigned at birth. A person's gender identity can change over time as they learn about themselves and learn more terminology.

Gender identity is distinct from biological [sex](#).^{345 346 347}

See also: [gender expression](#)

Gender-neutral language

Language that does not assume or assign a [gender](#).

For example:

- “Thanks, friends” instead of “thanks, guys”
- “Partner” instead of “husband” or “wife”
- Gender-neutral [pronouns](#) like “they” instead of “he” or “she”³⁴⁸

Gender non-conforming (GNC)

An umbrella term for someone who [identifies](#) or [expresses](#) themselves outside of the [gender binary](#).³⁴⁹ The term may refer to someone who identifies as [trans](#) or it may not.³⁵⁰

Gender norms

Behaviour, appearance, and roles that society considers acceptable for men and women. Gender norms are heavily influenced by the [gender binary](#) and contribute to [power](#) imbalances and gender inequality.

Gender policing

Imposing [cisnormative](#) beliefs on someone who does not express themselves within the [gender binary](#) or who does not fit within prescribed [gender norms](#). Gender policing occurs through [harassment](#) or [violence](#), exclusionary laws, and social messaging.³⁵¹

See also: [cissexism](#)

Gender roles

Social and cultural expectations placed on an individual based on their [sex assigned at birth](#). Gender roles vary greatly within different cultures.^{352 353}

Gender spectrum

The representation of [gender](#) as a continuum rather than a [binary](#) concept, including all [gender identities](#) and [expressions](#).

Genderfluid

Someone who does not have a fixed [gender identity](#). They may move between many [gender identities](#) and [expressions](#).^{354 355}

Genderqueer

An umbrella term for someone who [identifies](#) or [expresses](#) themselves outside of the [gender binary](#) or who does not follow [gender stereotypes](#).^{356 357}

See also: [gender non-conforming \(GNC\)](#), [non-binary \(NB\)](#) and [non-normative gender identities](#)

Indigiqueer

An identity term that may be used by someone who is both [Indigenous](#) and [queer](#) that emphasizes the [intersections](#) of both identities. The term was created by Cree filmmaker Thirza Cuthand in 2004. Joshua Whitehead, a Two-Spirit, Oji-nêhiyaw Indigiqueer scholar who popularized the term, describes it as “a braiding of two bridges”³⁵⁸ - indigeneity and queerness - and “the forward moving momentum for two-spiritness”.³⁵⁹ Someone who identifies as Indigiqueer may or may not also identify as [Two-Spirit](#).^{360 361}

Intersex

Someone who is born with anatomy, hormones, or genetic make-up that differs from the general medical definitions of male and female. Someone who is intersex may have one or more of a variety of differences that are usually of no medical risk. They are generally assigned a [binary gender](#) and [sex](#) at birth by their doctors and family, but this is becoming an outdated approach. Intersex people may identify with the [trans](#) community, but also may not. The term “hermaphrodite” was previously in use but is now outdated and offensive.^{362 363 364}

Male-to-female spectrum (MTF)

Someone who was [assigned male at birth](#) and whose [gender identity](#) or [expression](#) falls somewhere on the broad spectrum of femininity.³⁶⁵

Masc

Someone who identifies in a masculine way, or who is [masculine-presenting](#), through behaviour, [gender roles](#), relationship roles, appearance, or identity.³⁶⁶

Misandry

Misandry is [prejudice](#) or hatred towards men. This term is controversial and is often used in retaliation against [feminism](#) and women who outwardly condemn [patriarchal](#) systems and [toxic masculinity](#).³⁶⁷

See also: [misogyny](#)

Misgender

The act of referring to someone, intentionally or not, with a term that does not align with their [gender identity](#). This includes using the wrong [pronouns](#), using a [transgender](#) person’s [dead name](#), or using an incorrect gendered term (sir or ma’am, husband or wife, etc.).³⁶⁸

Misogynoir

A term coined by [queer](#) Black feminist Moya Bailey that describes [misogyny](#) directed towards Black women. Misogynoir is a unique form of [anti-Black racism](#), and the term highlights the [intersection](#) of [race](#) and [gender](#) and how they both contribute to [bias](#).^{369 370}

Misogyny

Misogyny is [prejudice](#) or hatred towards women. It is based in the belief that masculinity and maleness are more desirable, superior, more powerful, and/or dominant.³⁷¹

See also: [misogynoir](#)

Mx.

A [gender-neutral](#) prefix that replaces Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc. Generally used by those who identify outside of the [gender binary](#). The term is pronounced like “mix”.³⁷²

Neo-pronouns

[Pronouns](#) that are [gender-neutral](#). These pronouns are preferred by some people with [non-normative gender identities](#) and may be used by those who are not comfortable using “they/them” as gender-neutral pronouns. Examples include “ze/zir” and “ey/em”.³⁷³ Pronunciation varies, so it is best to ask the person who is using them.³⁷⁴

Nibling

A [gender-neutral](#) term for niece or nephew.³⁷⁵

Non-binary (NB)

A way of [identifying](#) and/or [expressing](#) oneself outside the [binary gender](#) categories of male/masculine and female/feminine. Non-binary identities exist on and off the [gender spectrum](#), and it can be a specific or umbrella term.³⁷⁶

Non-normative gender identities

Gender identities that fall outside the [gender binary](#) or may conflict with societal cisnormativity.³⁷⁷

See also: [gender non-conforming \(GNC\)](#), [genderqueer](#), and [non-binary \(NB\)](#)

Pangender

A [gender identity](#) term that a person may use if they don't identify with just one [gender](#).³⁷⁸

Patriarchy

Societal structures that exist where men hold the majority of the [power](#) and control, and masculinity and maleness are perceived as superior.³⁷⁹

Preferred gender pronouns (PGPs)

An outdated term that refers to the pronouns that align with someone's [gender identity](#).³⁸⁰

Pronouns are not a preference, but a fact. This term should be replaced by using only the word [pronouns](#).³⁸¹

Pride

In reference to 2SLGBTQI+ pride.

Being comfortable and unashamed about one's [sexual orientation](#) or [gender identity](#).³⁸²

Pronouns

Words that refer to a person when not using their name. Gendered pronouns include she/her and he/him. Gender-neutral pronouns include they/them or [neo-pronouns](#) such as ze/zir and ey/em.³⁸³

See also: [gender-neutral language](#)

Radical feminism

Where [feminism](#) aims for shifts in policy towards social, economic, and political [gender](#) equality, radical feminism aims to completely dismantle [patriarchal](#) structures. Radical feminists believe that societal structures and systems have been built to oppress women and give men more [power](#), and that gender equality cannot be achieved without removing them entirely.^{384 385}

Sex/biological sex

The medical term based on physical characteristics and anatomy used to designate people as male, female, or [intersex](#). Biological sex is distinct from [gender identity](#).^{386 387 388}

See also: [sex assigned at birth](#)

Sexism

The belief that masculinity and maleness are superior to femininity and femaleness.³⁸⁹

Benevolent sexism

A subtle form of sexism where one's actions or [attitudes](#) are positive on the surface, but still perpetuate harmful [gender roles](#) and [stereotypes](#).³⁹⁰

Internalized sexism

Where an individual perpetuates sexism, [gender roles](#), and gender [stereotypes](#) by accepting, believing, and enacting them towards themselves and others of the same [gender](#). For example, women and girls affected by internalized sexism may value themselves less because of sexism they have experienced.^{391 392}

See also: [internalized oppression](#) and [internalized dominance](#)

Oppositional sexism

The concept that masculinity and femininity are opposite and distinct, and that men should only be masculine, and women should only be feminine.³⁹³

Sex assigned at birth (SAAB)

Describes the [sex](#), separate from [gender identity](#), that someone was given at birth based on their external anatomy. Other terms include designated sex at birth (DSAB) and sex coercively assigned at birth (SCAB).^{394 395}

Stealth

Someone who is [transgender](#) but who is not [out](#).³⁹⁶

See also: [passing/to pass or blending](#)

TERF

An acronym for “Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist”. Refers to [radical feminists](#)^b who exclude [trans women](#)’s rights from their advocacy of women’s rights, stemming from the false belief that [transgender](#) women are not women.³⁹⁷

Third gender

Someone who does not identify as a man or a woman, specifically in cultures that recognize the existence of multiple [genders](#) (e.g., Indigenous cultures in regions of Mexico, Samoa, and Madagascar). Each culture has its own word to describe this third gender (e.g., Fa’Afa’ines in Samoa and Hijras in South Asia).^{398 399}

Toxic masculinity

Expectations placed on men to conform to [stereotypes](#) of masculinity or prove their “manliness” through the expression of strength, dominance, assertiveness, and [power](#). Toxic masculinity does not imply that all men are toxic or that masculinity is toxic. Instead, the term describes the harm these expectations can cause to people of all [genders](#).^{400 401}

Trans*

An umbrella term for people who do not identify within the [gender binary](#), that includes [non-binary](#), [gender non-conforming](#), and [transgender](#) individuals. The asterisk is used in written communication to indicate inclusivity.⁴⁰²

Trans man

Someone who was [assigned female at birth](#) and identifies as male. They may be at any point along their [transition](#) or may not be transitioning at all. Some people prefer to be referred to as a trans man, whereas some may prefer to be referred to as a man.⁴⁰³

^b Use of the term should be done with careful consideration, as many radical feminists are not trans-exclusionary and not all trans-exclusionary feminists are radical feminists. For further explanation on the use of this term, see [Why the words we use matter when describing anti-trans activists](#) from The Conversation.

Trans woman

Someone who was [assigned male at birth](#) and identifies as female. They may be at any point along their [transition](#) or may not be transitioning at all. Some people prefer to be referred to as a trans woman, whereas some may prefer to be referred to as a woman.⁴⁰⁴

Transantagonism

Active hatred or [violence](#) towards [trans*](#) people or people who do not fit into the [gender binary](#). This term is used as an alternative to transphobia to more accurately describe the perpetration of violence as more than just feelings of fear or discomfort.⁴⁰⁵

See also: [transphobia](#)

Transfeminine

Someone who is [transgender](#) and identifies or presents as feminine.⁴⁰⁶

Transgender

An umbrella term used to describe a person whose [gender identity](#) is anything other than their [sex assigned at birth](#). The term is also used more narrowly to describe someone who identifies as or is [transitioning](#)/has transitioned to the “opposite” sex. May be shortened to “trans”.^{407 408 409}

Transition

The process of changing one’s [gender expression](#) to align with their [gender identity](#). Transition is not a linear process and is a deeply personal experience. There are four general aspects of transition:

1. Social: name, pronouns, clothing, hair, etc.
2. Medical: hormone therapy
3. Surgical: [gender affirming surgeries](#)
4. Legal: changing legal identification, birth certificate, driver’s license, passport, etc.

It is important to understand that the transition process can vary greatly from person to person, there is no set start or end point, and a person does not need to do all four steps to transition. The term transition can also be misleading as a person is not changing their [gender](#), they are changing their bodies and appearance to align with their already existing [gender identity](#).^{410 411 412}

Transmasculine

Someone who is [transgender](#) and identifies or presents as masculine.⁴¹³

Transmisogyny

[Transphobia](#) that is based in [misogyny](#), or the idea that masculinity and maleness is superior, targeted at [trans women](#) and [transfeminine](#) people.⁴¹⁴

Transphobia

Fear, dislike, or hatred of and [discrimination](#) against [trans*](#) people. Transphobia exists through offensive jokes, [exclusion](#), denial of services, employment discrimination, intentional [misgendering](#), [harassment](#), and [violence](#).^{415 416}

See also: [transantagonism](#)

Transsexual

Used in different ways, transsexual can refer to someone who identifies with a [gender](#) or [sex](#) other than the one assigned at birth. It may refer to someone who wishes to or has [transitioned](#) hormonally and surgically. It is sometimes used inaccurately or offensively, and [transgender](#) or trans are often preferred.^{417 418 419}

Transvestite

An outdated medical term used to associate [cross-dressing](#) with mental illness and sexual perversion. This is generally an offensive term.^{420 421}

Two-Spirit (2-Spirit)

Two-Spirit was a term introduced by [Elder](#) Myra Laramie in 1990 at the third annual Native American and Canadian Aboriginal LGBT people gathering in Winnipeg.⁴²² It is “an English umbrella term to reflect and restore [Indigenous](#) traditions forcefully suppressed by [colonization](#), honouring the fluid and diverse nature of [gender](#) and attraction and its connection to community and spirituality. It is used by some Indigenous people rather than, or in addition to, identifying as [LGBTQI](#).”⁴²³ The teachings, roles, and responsibilities for a Two-Spirit person differ from community to community. Not all [queer](#) Indigenous people use this term, but Two-Spirit is an identity specific to being Indigenous and can only be claimed by Indigenous people.⁴²⁴ For more information, see the [Two Spirit information sheet](#) from OUT Saskatoon.

Using “x”

Terms like “womxn”, “folx”, and “Latinx” are sometimes used by individuals and organizations to signify inclusivity in spaces and practices, or to remove gendered assumptions. The use of x in these ways is contested, as some find it [performative](#) or even [exclusionary](#).⁴²⁵ Further reading is recommended before using these terms. For more information, see [What You Need To Know About the Letter ‘X’ in Words Like Folx, Womxn, and Latinx](#) from Well + Good, and [Is ‘Latinx’ elitist?](#) From NBC News.

Wimmin/womyn

Alternative spellings of the words “woman” and “women”. Both words have roots in early [feminism](#) and were coined to avoid the suffix “man” and “men” in the traditional spellings.

INDIGENOUS TERMINOLOGY

Aboriginal Peoples

An umbrella term used to describe the [First Nations](#), [Inuit](#), and [Métis](#) Peoples of Canada. Collectively recognized in the Constitution Act, 1982. [Indigenous](#) communities often prefer [Indigenous Peoples](#) over Aboriginal Peoples, or more specific terminology like First Nations Inuit, or Métis.⁴²⁶

Band

A self-governed [Indigenous](#) group with common cultural characteristics, traditions, and practices, that had their lands set apart as defined in the [Indian Act](#). Using this term outside of the legislative context should be avoided and [First Nation](#), [Inuit](#), or [Métis](#) should be used instead. There are over 600 recognized bands in Canada.^{427 428}

Band council/First Nation council

The governing body of a band or [First Nation](#), including the Chief, who is elected according to the [Indian Act](#) or through other means determined by the band. This term should only be used to describe leadership operating under the Indian Act.^{429 430}

Bill C-31

The pre-legislation name of the 1985 Act to Amend the [Indian Act](#). The bill aimed to eliminate all [discriminatory](#) provisions against [Indigenous Peoples](#) from the Indian Act and had three goals: address gender inequality, restore [Indian status](#), and pave a path for self-government.⁴³¹

Blood memory

A term used by [Indigenous](#) communities to refer to memories and experiences that are stored in one's body and passed down through generations. Blood memories can be described as an ancestral or genetic connection to language, songs, ceremonies, land, and teachings.⁴³²

Elders

Recognized and respected members of the [First Nations](#) community who pass down traditional teachings.⁴³³ Elder, as a title, should be capitalized to indicate honour.⁴³⁴

Enfranchisement

The process of giving up one's [Indian status](#). This took place in Canada in 1985, prior to the passing of Bill C-31, through various assimilation practices including residential schools.⁴³⁵

First Nation

Introduced in 1970 to identify the [Indigenous Peoples](#) that are not [Inuit](#) or [Métis](#). First Nation replaced the label "[Indian](#)", which is considered offensive. In Canada, there are over 630 First Nation communities and over 50 languages.^{436 437}

Indian

A term that was used to legally identify the [Indigenous Peoples](#) of Canada under the [Indian Act](#). This term should not be used unless required for clarity, in legal discussions around the Indian Act, or when referring to [Indian status](#).⁴³⁸

Indian Act

A federal legislation that was passed in 1876 recognizing “[Indians](#)”, their reserved lands, and the federal government’s obligation to the [Indigenous Peoples](#) of Canada.⁴³⁹

Indian status

The legal status of a person under the [Indian Act](#). Using this term outside of the legislative context should be avoided.^{440 441}

Non-status Indian

[Indigenous](#) individuals who either do not have status under the [Indian Act](#) or who have lost their status either themselves or through their ancestors.⁴⁴²

Status Indian

People registered under the [Indian Act](#).⁴⁴³

Treaty Indian

Individuals to whom a [treaty](#) applies due to their lineage, and who qualify for the benefits of that treaty.⁴⁴⁴

Indigenization

The process of normalizing and merging the [Indigenous](#) knowledge systems (connected to Indigenous land, culture, and community) with Western knowledge.⁴⁴⁵

Indigenous

An umbrella term that encompasses the [First Nations](#), [Inuit](#), and [Métis](#) Peoples of Canada.⁴⁴⁶ Globally, [Indigenous Peoples](#) refers to the people who have occupied specific lands since time immemorial.⁴⁴⁷

Inuit

[Indigenous](#) people that reside primarily in Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland, which is comprised of four regions in Canada: the Inuvialuit Settlement Regions (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). In Inuktitut, the Inuit language, “Inuit” directly translates to “the people”. Inuk refers to one person, and Inukuk to two. The word “Eskimo” was previously used to refer to Inuit but is considered derogatory.⁴⁴⁸

Land claims

The recognition of [territorial](#) ownership to address wrongs made against [Indigenous Peoples](#) by the federal and provincial or territorial governments. Land claim negotiations are ongoing across Canada.⁴⁴⁹

See also: [Modern treaties](#)

Comprehensive claims

A type of land claim that is specific to the traditional use and occupancy of land by [First Nations](#), [Métis](#) and [Inuit](#) whose rights and title have not been addressed through [treaties](#).^{450 451}

Specific claims

A type of land claim where the Government of Canada failed to meet its obligations under [treaties](#), the [Indian Act](#), or other agreements.⁴⁵²

Medicine Wheel

The medicine wheel is a symbol of [Indigenous](#) North American culture and [religion](#) and are used for religious, healing, and teaching purposes. Interpretations and uses vary across communities and cultures.^{c 453 454 455}

Métis

Broadly described as people with European and [Indigenous](#) ancestry, the Métis Peoples are recognized under the [Indian Act](#) as a distinct nation in Canada.^{456 457} Officially, someone who is Métis “self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other [Aboriginal Peoples](#), is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation”.⁴⁵⁸

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

A human rights crisis and call to action regarding the disproportionate rates of [violence](#) towards [Indigenous](#) women and girls and numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.⁴⁵⁹ “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & Gender Diverse People” may also be used to reflect that [Two Spirit](#) and [gender-diverse](#) Indigenous people also experience disproportionate rates of violence.⁴⁶⁰

Native

Refers to and is being replaced by the term [Indigenous](#), as “Native” may be considered offensive. The term may be used by those who self-identify as Native but should be avoided by non-Indigenous people.⁴⁶¹

Oral tradition

The verbal passing down of history and stories from generation to generation.⁴⁶²

^c For more information on the medicine wheel, the following resources provide further reading: [Four Directions Teachings](#), [The seven lessons of the medicine wheel](#), [The Medicine Wheel](#), and [The Seven Teachings](#).

Peoples

Peoples is a term used when referring to more than one [cultural](#), [ethnic](#), or [racial](#) group, as opposed to the term “People”, which refers to a single group. For example, “Indigenous Peoples” refers to the multiple groups that fall under the umbrella term of [Indigenous](#). Similarly, “First Peoples” refers to the many cultural and ethnic groups that were the original inhabitants of [Turtle Island](#).^{463 464}

Powwow

A modern powwow is a social event or celebration where people meet to dance, sing, visit family and friends, and celebrate [Indigenous](#) communities and culture.^{465 466} Use of the word powwow to describe meetings in general, like in business settings, should be avoided.

Reconciliation

In reference to Indigenous reconciliation.

The effort made by individuals, groups, institutions, and government to acknowledge past and ongoing effects of colonization on [Indigenous Peoples](#) and action to establish and maintain [respectful](#) relationships between [Indigenous](#) and non-Indigenous communities.⁴⁶⁷ Reconciliation in Canada is an ongoing process that involves addressing past harms and giving [power](#) back to [First Nations](#), [Métis](#), and [Inuit](#) communities.⁴⁶⁸

See also: [racial reconciliation](#)

Regalia

Traditional and often sacred clothing, accessories and artifacts worn or carried during ceremonies such as [powwows](#), celebrations, and pan-national gatherings.⁴⁶⁹ Regalia is diverse and reflects the wearer’s life, interests, and family history. Garments may be passed down through generations or crafted by the wearer or their family members.⁴⁷⁰

Reserve

Reserves are land areas governed by the [Indian Act](#) for exclusive use by specific [First Nations](#). While reserves may serve as spiritual and physical homelands for [Indigenous](#) communities, the regulations in place through the Indian Act continue to [oppress](#) those living on reserve.^{471 472}

Residential schools

Government-sponsored and church-run schools established to convert [Indigenous](#) youth and assimilate them into Canadian society. [First Nations](#), [Inuit](#), and [Métis](#) children were forced away from their families, traditions, cultures, and languages, causing long-term harm. An estimated 150,000 Indigenous children were placed in the residential school system, and thousands never returned home.^{d 473 474}

^d The [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Memorial Register](#) is an ongoing project intended to honour and remember the children lost as a result of residential schools.

Smudging

A [First Nations](#) tradition with medicinal and ceremonial purposes. The traditions and meanings behind smudging vary across communities and cultures. Generally, the practice involves burning a bundle of dried herbs, often sweetgrass, sage, or cedar. Smudging may be used as a healing practice for the mind, body, and spirit or to cleanse and protect oneself or one's environment from negative thoughts and actions.^{475 476 477}

Time immemorial

A phrase used by [Indigenous](#) people to describe their connection with [ancestral lands](#) that is not defined by historical dates.^{478 479}

Traditional territory

The geographic area that [Indigenous Peoples](#) or their ancestors traditionally occupied and used prior to [colonization](#).⁴⁸⁰

Ceded territory

Lands that [Indigenous Peoples](#) surrendered or legally signed away to the Crown or to Canada through military or political pressure.^{481 482}

Unceded territory

Lands that [Indigenous Peoples](#) never surrendered or legally signed away to the Crown or to Canada.^{483 484}

Treaty

An agreement between [Indigenous Peoples](#) and the British Crown/Canadian government. Treaties aim to establish peaceful relations and ongoing obligations regarding land, resources, and governance rights. Treaty rights vary greatly between treaties but may include fishing and hunting, land occupation, and the extent of self-governance.⁴⁸⁵ Many of the rights and obligations established in [historic treaties](#) have not been upheld by the Crown and the Canadian government, leading to the creation of [modern treaties](#) and [land claims](#).

Historic treaties

70 treaties signed between 1701 and 1923 between [First Nations](#) and the British Crown and Canadian Government.⁴⁸⁶ The historic treaties include the [Treaties of Peace and Neutrality](#), [Peace and Friendship Treaties](#), [Upper Canada Land Surrenders](#) and the [Williams Treaties](#), [Robinson Treaties](#) and [Douglas Treaties](#), and the [Numbered Treaties](#).⁴⁸⁷

Modern treaties

Treaties negotiated between [Indigenous](#) groups and the Office of Native Claims from 1975 to the present. Modern treaties address government failures to meet treaty obligations and rights that were not addressed by [historic treaties](#).^{488 489}

See also: [land claims](#)

Numbered treaties

11 treaties signed by the Canadian government and [First Nations](#) between 1871 and 1921. These treaties covered a large area of Canada, from northeastern British Columbia,

north into parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, through the prairie provinces, and into parts of northern Ontario. The earlier of these treaties – Treaties 1 to 7 – facilitated existing and future assimilation policies, and the remaining treaties provided access to natural resources.^{490 491 492}

Douglas Treaties

14 land purchases made between 1850 and 1854 by James Douglas, governor of the British colony of Vancouver Island. These treaties have been historically disputed as they were not signed in good faith, and additional clauses were inserted after signing. Also called the Fort Victoria Treaties.^{493 494}

Peace and Friendship Treaties

Treaties signed in the Maritimes between 1725 and 1779 with the intention to end hostilities and encourage cooperation between the British and the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy [First Nations](#).^{495 496} Unlike the treaties signed later in other parts of Canada, the Peace and Friendship Treaties did not involve the surrender of land and resources.⁴⁹⁷

Robinson Treaties

Two treaties signed in 1850 between William Robinson, former fur trader in the Muskokas and member of the colonial legislature, and [Indigenous](#) communities, mainly Ojibwa, in the northern Great Lakes region.⁴⁹⁸

Treaties of Peace and Neutrality

Treaties signed between 1701 and 1760 that formed military alliances between [Indigenous](#) groups and the British and the French. These treaties include the Albany Deed, 1701; the Treaty of Swegatchy (Oswegatchie), 1760; and the Huron-British Treaty, 1760.⁴⁹⁹

Upper Canada Land Surrenders

Over 30 [land cessions](#) in the Great Lakes region, negotiated by agents of the Indian Department and [Indigenous Peoples](#) between 1764 and 1862. These land surrenders consisted of one-time cash payments, little to no reserves, and the surrender of all rights associated with the use of the land.⁵⁰⁰

Williams Treaties

The 1923 Williams Treaties [ceded](#) all lands, including hunting and fishing rights, in the region between Georgian Bay, the Ottawa River, Lake Simcoe and the lands west of the Bay of Quinte to the Crown for a fixed one-time cash payment.⁵⁰¹ These treaties addressed discrepancies and issues with documentation found in the previous [Upper Canada Land Surrenders](#).⁵⁰²

Tribe

A term that was used to refer to [Indigenous](#) communities or nations. While this term is still commonly used in the United States, it has become outdated in Canada and replaced by the term

“nation”.⁵⁰³ Use of the word tribe to describe groups of people in general (e.g., a group of friends or a group of colleagues) should be avoided.

See also: [band](#) and [first nation](#)

The White Paper

Also known as the Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, the White Paper is a 1969 policy that aimed to abolish the [Indian Act](#) and eliminate the recognition of [Indigenous Peoples](#). The goal of the proposal, according to the federal government, was to make [Aboriginal Peoples](#) equal to Canadian citizens.⁵⁰⁴

Turtle Island

Turtle Island is the name used by some [Indigenous](#) people to refer to the continent of North America. This name is based on creation stories, passed down through [oral tradition](#), that describe the role of a turtle in the formation of the land. Many versions of this story exist, and not all include a turtle.^{505 506}

RACE & ETHNICITY

Afro-Latino

People of African descent in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, as well as people of African descent in the United States whose origins are in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁵⁰⁷ This term originated in the 1970's when Black activists in Brazil were fighting for Black citizens to be recognized on the country's census. The Afro-Latino identity is complex and can be subjective.^{508 509} Other terms that individuals may use to describe themselves include Afro-[Hispanic](#), Black Hispanic, or Black [Latino](#).⁵¹⁰

Ancestry

Lineage; family or ethnic origins.⁵¹¹

Anti-Arab racism

The ongoing [prejudice](#) and [discrimination](#) directed at people of Arabic descent. Anti-Arab racism became more prominent and interlinked with [Islamophobia](#) following the 9/11 attack.^{512 513}

See also: [racism](#)

Anti-Asian racism

The ongoing [prejudice](#) and [discrimination](#) directed at people of [Asian](#) descent. Asian-Canadians were historically subject to systemic and institutional racism. However, instances of anti-Asian racism became more prominent during the global COVID-19 pandemic.⁵¹⁴

See also: [racism](#)

Anti-Black racism

The ongoing [prejudice](#) and [discrimination](#) directed at Black people or people of African descent. Anti-Black racism is embedded in our systems and institutions, impacting educational outcomes, career progression, health outcomes, and racial profiling in law enforcement.^{515 516 517}

See also: [racism](#)

Anti-Indigenous racism

The ongoing [prejudice](#) and [discrimination](#) directed at [Indigenous Peoples](#). Anti-[Indigenous](#) racism is systemic and institutional, existing in federal policies such as the [Indian Act](#) and the residential school system.⁵¹⁸

See also: [racism](#)

Anti-racism

An active effort to eliminate all forms of racism.⁵¹⁹

See also: [racism](#)

Apartheid

An Afrikaans word that describes a social system and/or policy that enforced the [discrimination](#) of non-whites and the segregation of Black and white people in South Africa during white minority rule.⁵²⁰

Asian

People whose origin, ancestry, or ethnic identity is tied to any of the Asian regions: Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, or West Asia.⁵²¹

Biracial

A person who has two racial ancestry groups.⁵²²

See also: [multiracial/multiethnic](#)

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

An ideological and political movement founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate [white supremacy](#) and incidents of racially motivated [violence](#) against Black people. By combating and countering acts of violence, the movement intends to create space for Black imagination and innovation.⁵²³ BLM gained global prominence in 2020 following George Floyd's murder, and to this day BLM continues to advocate for Black Lives.^{524 525}

Canadian Multiculturalism Act

A federal policy that acknowledges, promotes, and protects [cultural pluralism](#).^{526 527}

Caucasian

An outdated racial classification term that originally referred to the peoples of the Caucasus region that spans between Europe and Asia. The term evolved in meaning to describe people who are white. This term should be avoided and can generally be replaced with "white".^{528 529}

Colonialism/Colonization

The practice of domination where one nation occupies land for the purpose of subjugating, conquering, and exploiting the colonized territory and its people.^{530 531 532 533}

Anti-colonialism

Action to dismantle systemic [power](#) structures with the goal of justice for people [oppressed](#) by colonialism.⁵³⁴

Decolonization

An ongoing process that aims to deconstruct settler colonial ideologies such as [white supremacy](#), give value to [Indigenous](#) knowledge, and dismantle [power](#) imbalances. Decolonization is the active work to give back the colonized territory's independence and undo the effects of colonialism on the social, political, and economic aspects of a people's life.⁵³⁵

Settler colonialism

The long-term forced physical occupation of lands by a non-[Indigenous](#) population. Settler colonialism involves the imposition of the colonizer's identity including their language, culture, and religion while erasing the identity of the colonized people.^{e 536}

Colourism/shadism

The [discriminatory](#) practice of preferring people with fair or lighter skin over dark skin. Colourism/shadism is based on European beauty standards and is rooted in [racism](#). Also practiced within racial and ethnic groups.^{537 538}

Covert racism

Racist [attitudes](#) or actions that are subtle or indirect in nature. Covert [racism](#) can occur through implicit [biases](#), [microaggressions](#), [racial colourblindness](#), racially [coded language](#), and more.^{f 539}
540

Critical race theory (CRT)

An intellectual movement and framework used to analyze policies, practices, institutions, and systems to uncover the ways that they create and maintain racial inequality. CRT asserts that [racism](#) is an everyday experience for [people of colour](#), [race](#) is socially constructed for the purpose of [oppression](#), institutions are inherently [racist](#), and society is largely uninterested in remedying [institutional racism](#).^{541 542 543}

Cultural appropriation

The theft of cultural elements or objects from [equity-seeking groups](#) for use, commodification, or profit without understanding the cultural significance and historical context.^{544 545}

Cultural assimilation

Giving up or being forced to give up one's culture, values, and behaviors, to adapt to or blend into the dominant culture's social and cultural practices.⁵⁴⁶

Cultural pluralism

The ability of minority groups to maintain their cultural uniqueness and within a larger society.⁵⁴⁷

^e Note: There are many types of colonialism that impact people all over the world. For more detail on other forms of colonialism, see [What Is Colonialism? Definition and Examples](#) from Thought Co.

^f For a more comprehensive list of covert racism examples, see [Overt and Covert Racism](#) from R-Squared.

Cultural racism

The portrayal and association of minority cultures with negative [stereotypes](#) that perpetuate the belief that the dominant culture is superior.⁵⁴⁸

Culture

Shared norms, values, and behaviours developed consciously and unconsciously within a group of people. Culture can be observed through language, traditions, food, religion, arts, and more.⁵⁴⁹

Diaspora

Community members of the past or current generation that voluntarily or forcibly left their ancestral homelands and are living in a host country.⁵⁵⁰

Environmental racism

The intentional disposal of toxic waste into or near marginalized communities. This toxic waste further impacts marginalized communities and their inhabitants by making them more susceptible to chronic illnesses.^{551 552}

Ethnicity

A socially defined category describing a group of people that share a common culture, tradition, language, history, geography, religion, and racial identity.^{553 554}

Ethnocentrism

The view that your own cultural group is superior and to judge other cultures based on that standard.⁵⁵⁵

Eurocentrism

A cultural phenomenon that considers European or Western nations as being more civilized and superior. Eurocentrism evaluates non-Western societies from a Western perspective.⁵⁵⁶

Global majority/people of the global majority (PGM)

A term used to refer to [racialized](#) and [Indigenous](#) communities in place of “[visible minority](#)”. This term is seen by many as more empowering and accurate, as racialized and Indigenous people represent over 80% of the global population.^{557 558}

Hispanic

A term used to identify a person from a Spanish-speaking country, primarily in Latin America, irrespective of other racial or ethnic factors. Some former Spanish colonies, such as Equatorial Guinea, are also Spanish-speaking and considered Hispanic.^{559 560}

See also: [Latino/Latina](#) and [Afro-Latino](#)

Internalized racism

Where an equity-seeking group perpetuates [racism](#) by believing and supporting racist ideas and beliefs towards their own community or themselves. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards marginalized communities for supporting systemic inequities and punishes those who do not.^{561 562}

Jim Crow Laws

First passed in the Southern USA after the American Civil War to legally discriminate against and segregate Black people. Jim Crow laws systemically separated Black and white people in schools, transportation, and other public places.^{563 564}

Latino/Latina

People whose origin, ancestry, or ethnic identity is tied to Latin America.⁵⁶⁵

Model minority

A term based on [stereotypes](#) of people of Asian descent that portray them as polite, law-abiding, intelligent, and upwardly mobile. The model minority myth ignores differences within and between Asian communities, is used against other minority groups, and erases the [discrimination](#) experienced by Asian people.^{566 567 568}

Multiculturalism

A theory and practice that encourages people to coexist in a culturally diverse environment by acknowledging and respecting differences.⁵⁶⁹

Multiracial/multiethnic

An individual with two or more racial/ethnic identities.⁵⁷⁰

See also: [biracial](#)

Nationality

The state of belonging to a particular country or being a citizen of a particular nation.⁵⁷¹

Nationalism

An ideology that places an individual's loyalty to and identification with a nation or country above other interests.⁵⁷²

Nativism

An ideology that prioritizes the interests of "native" inhabitants. This concept is almost exclusively discussed within USA politics, and primarily refers to an opposition to immigration and support for immigrants.^{573 574}

Person of colour/people of colour (POC)

An alternative term for visible minority used to identify non-white racial and ethnic groups. In Canada, [First Nations](#), [Inuit](#), and [Métis](#) Peoples are generally not classified by this term as they are distinct under the constitution.⁵⁷⁵

Race

A method of categorizing individuals based on physical characteristics such as skin tone, hair texture, and facial features. Race is a social construct, rather than an intrinsic biological fact, created to establish meaning and social hierarchies.^{576 577}

Race relations

The quality and pattern of interactions between diverse racial groups. There are two components of race relations: the elimination of racial intolerance and the removal of systemic racial disadvantages.⁵⁷⁸

Racial colourblindness

A racial ideology where a person chooses to not see race and/or skin colour. Colourblindness leads to a dismissal of the lived experiences of people of colour, inequities, history of [violence](#) and current perpetuated trauma in our society.^{579 580}

Racial identity/ethnic identity

Awareness of one's racial and ethnic group based on biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.⁵⁸¹

Racial inequity

When different racial groups have different levels of [power](#) and privilege in a society.⁵⁸²

Racial justice

Reinforcement of equitable policies and practices with an aim to create a fair and equal system for all races.⁵⁸³

Racial profiling

Differential treatment of a member of a racialized group based on [stereotypes](#) and assumptions rather than behaviour. For example, a police officer stopping a [visible minority](#) on stereotypical assumptions based on their [race](#), colour, or [ethnicity](#).^{584 585}

Racial reconciliation

Rebuilding relationships between minority groups and the institutions that harmed them. Reconciliation can be achieved through three key steps: recognizing systemic and institutional [racism](#) and their effects, engaging in dialogue, and working towards restorative justice.^{586 587}

Racialization

The social categorization of people as part of a particular [race](#) and the unequal treatment of that racial group. Racialization relies on social markers such as a person's skin colour, language, cultural habits, religion, etc. to label and [stereotype](#) them.^{588 589}

Racialized persons/racialized group

An alternative term for [visible minority](#) used to identify non-white racial groups. This term is preferred over visible minority as a racialized group is not necessarily in the minority, the term does not place “whiteness” as the default, and it acknowledges [race](#) as a social construct with negative effects.^{590 591}

Racism

A systemic form of [oppression](#) based on the social construct of race.⁵⁹²

Individual racism

Racial [discrimination](#) that stems from conscious or unconscious individual beliefs, [attitudes](#), and actions that perpetuate the ideology that one racial or ethnic group is inherently superior. Individual racism is learned from and influenced by systemic racism and is rooted in the unequal distribution of [power](#) between white and [racialized people](#).^{593 594}

Institutional racism

Policies, practices, and dynamics embedded in established institutions (government, religion, education, organizations, etc.) that result in disadvantage or advancement of specific groups of people. These systemic practices normalize racism and may not be obvious.^{595 596}

Structural racism/systemic racism

Structural or systemic racism points to the bigger picture of history, society, culture, institutions, and the economy. [Racialized people](#) have been historically left out of the development of society and its systems, resulting in deeply entrenched disadvantages, [barriers](#), and [biases](#).^{597 598} Systemic racism is at the root of large-scale discrepancies between white and racialized people in many areas including income and wealth,⁵⁹⁹ health outcomes,⁶⁰⁰ homelessness,⁶⁰¹ unemployment,⁶⁰² and involvement with the justice system.^{603 604}

Racist

An individual, institution, or organization that supports [racism](#) through policies, practices and actions that perpetuate [discrimination](#) towards people based on the membership of a racial group.⁶⁰⁵

Redlining

Shorthand for race-based exclusionary real estate practices. The term originated from the use of red markings on maps to indicate mixed-race or primarily Black neighbourhoods, and now refers to a number of systemic [discriminatory](#) practices that primarily target racialized people, including the denial of real estate financial services based on location and unfair and abusive loan terms.

The most notable Canadian example of redlining is the [history of Africville](#), but the practice still occurs today. Historically and in the present, redlining has lasting impacts on wealth inequality between racial groups.^{606 607 608}

Reverse racism

[Discrimination](#), [prejudice](#) or intolerance directed towards members of dominant racial groups. Reverse racism is a myth. Members of the dominant groups can experience individual racism; however, they cannot be systemically [oppressed](#) due to the lack of social or institutional [power](#) needed by minority groups to oppress the dominant.⁶⁰⁹

See also: [racism](#)

Scientific racism

Scientific techniques or theories used to justify and perpetuate racial inequality.⁶¹⁰

Segregation

The institutional act or practice of separating people along [protected grounds](#): ethnic, racial, or religious identity. This practice results in economic, social, and political inequality between the segregated and non-segregated people.⁶¹¹

Visible minorities

A term used to identify non-white [racial](#) and [ethnic](#) groups in the federal [Employment Equity Act](#). [First Nations](#), [Inuit](#), and [Métis](#) Peoples are not classified by this term as they are distinct under the constitution. [People of colour](#) and [racialized groups](#) are preferred terms.⁶¹²

White fragility

A state in which white people are unable to tolerate racial stress. White fragility presents in defensiveness or “defensive moves” such as arguing, silence, or leaving the situation. White fragility functions and is supported by [white privilege](#).⁶¹³

White passing

When a non-white person lacks certain physical characteristics tied to their [racial](#) or [ethnic](#) group in a way that makes them appear to be white. People who are white passing may experience privileges in society that someone with darker skin or other features would not experience. Being “white passing” may also cause someone to struggle with their identity.⁶¹⁴

See also: [White privilege](#)

White privilege

Unearned access, benefits, and opportunities white people are given in society due to the historical imbalance of [power](#) between white and [racialized people](#).^{615 616}

White supremacy

The ideology that white people and their beliefs are superior to other [races](#). Although not exclusively, white supremacy has been associated with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis.^{617 618}

Xenophobia

The fear or dislike of things that are perceived to be “foreign”, including people from other countries.⁶¹⁹

RELATIONSHIP & FAMILY STATUS

Note: This section contains a noncomprehensive selection of some common terms related to [non-monogamous](#) or [polyamorous](#) relationships. There is a great deal of diversity within non-monogamous or polyamorous relationships, as each relationship has unique boundaries and characteristics agreed upon within the relationship. To learn more, see [Learning the Lingo](#) from More than Two or the [Polyamory Glossary](#) from Ready for Polyamory.

Adoption

Where a family takes over [custody](#) and care of a child in a formal way and become the new legal family of the child. There are four types in Canada: International, private, public, and relative/kinship. Adoption can also be open or closed.⁶²⁰

Closed adoption

Adoption where there is no contact between the child and their birth parents or other biological family members.⁶²¹

International adoptions

Adoption of a child from another country, whether through an agency or the adoption of a family member.⁶²²

Open adoption

Adoption where the child maintains contact with their birth parents or other biological family members. Open adoptions can involve various levels of contact and do not necessarily involve visitation. Both private and public adoptions can be open adoptions.⁶²³
⁶²⁴

Private adoptions

Adoption of a child through a private agency.⁶²⁵

Public adoptions

Adoption of a child who is in the care of a government children's aid agency (foster care).⁶²⁶

Relative or kinship adoption

Adoption of a child who is a family member or stepchild.

Arranged marriage

A marriage where both partners are chosen by family or religious or cultural leaders.⁶²⁷ There are diverse ways in which families may approach arranged marriages.

Cooperative traditional arranged marriage

Potential partners are selected by the person getting married and other involved parties, and a selection is made together.⁶²⁸

Forced marriage

An arranged marriage without the consent of the bride and groom. Illegal in many countries.⁶²⁹

Modified traditional arranged marriage

Potential partners are selected by others, but the person getting married has the final say in who they marry.⁶³⁰

Traditional arranged marriage

The bride and groom consent to the marriage but have no say in the final selection of a partner.⁶³¹

Bigamy

A relationship where one person is married to two people. This term is generally used when referring to illegal marriage fraud where one or both spouses are unaware.^{632 633}

See also: [polygamy](#)

Blended family

A family where both partners have children from previous relationships.⁶³⁴

Caregiver

Someone who provides care to family or friends with health conditions, disabilities, or age-related challenges.^{635 636}

Closed relationship

A [monogamous](#) or [polyamorous](#) relationship where the people involved have agreed to not seek out any additional partners.⁶³⁷

Common-law partners

A couple who is unmarried and living together and who qualifies for some of the same legal benefits as legally married couples, depending on province of residence. Criteria for the legal recognition of common-law status varies across provinces but is defined federally as living together for 12 continuous months, having a child together through birth or adoption, or having shared custody of a child. Other terms include domestic partner (Nova Scotia), adult interdependent partners (Alberta), and de facto unions (Québec).^{638 639 640}

Daddy track

A term referring to the [stereotype](#) that men who are committed to their children are less committed to their careers, resulting in these men being overlooked for promotions or raises.⁶⁴¹

See also: [mommy track](#) and [daddy track](#)

Ethical non-monogamy/consensual non-monogamy

Any type of relationship where the people involved consent to some level of non-exclusivity. The central idea of ethical [non-monogamy](#) is that specific boundaries for the relationship are set within the relationship, everyone involved is aware, and consent is freely given.^{642 643}

Hierarchical relationships

[Polyamorous](#) relationships where partnerships are categorized in terms of priority and may have different “rules” or boundaries.^{644 645}

Primary partner

Generally used in a hierarchical [polyamorous](#) relationship, the primary partner is the person who is considered the most important. This can be decided due to the existence of a relationship before entering polyamory, living situation, family situation, or any other reason. Some people have multiple primary partners, but it is most often just one.^{646 647}

Secondary partner

Generally used in a hierarchical [polyamorous](#) relationship, a secondary partner is the person or people second in priority to the primary partner. The secondary partner is usually given less time or energy in the relationship, which is an agreement made between all parties in the relationship.^{648 649}

Tertiary partner

Generally used in a hierarchical [polyamorous](#) relationship, a tertiary partner someone who may be a casual member of a polyamorous relationship. A tertiary partner given a limited amount of time or energy, which is an agreement made between all parties in the relationship.⁶⁵⁰

Intended parents

Intended Parents are people who cannot conceive on their own and choose to build their family using third-party reproduction, which can include egg, sperm or embryo donation and [surrogacy](#) arrangements. The intended parents become the child’s legal parents once the child is born.⁶⁵¹

Mommy/caring tax

A term that refers to lost wages for people, most commonly women, who must take time off to care for their children or other people in their care.⁶⁵²

Mommy track

A term referring to the [stereotype](#) that women who are committed to their children are less committed to their careers, resulting in these women, or working women in general, being overlooked for promotions or raises.⁶⁵³

See also: [daddy track](#) and [parent track](#)

Monogamy

Having one romantic and/or sexual relationship at any given time.⁶⁵⁴

Nesting partner/anchor partner

A term for the partner within a [polyamorous](#) relationship with which someone shares a home. Can be used without the connotation of hierarchy within the relationship(s).^{655 656}

Non-monogamy

An umbrella term that describes having more than one romantic and/or sexual relationship at the same time.⁶⁵⁷

Open relationship

A relationship where the people involved are seeking or open to romantic or sexual activity outside of the relationship. The term can apply to a couple (two people) or an already [polyamorous](#) relationship with more than two people. People in an open relationship may or may not consider themselves polyamorous, particularly if the relationship is only open in terms of sexual activity.^{658 659 660}

Parent track

A term referring to the [stereotype](#) that parents who are committed to their children are less committed to their careers, resulting in these parents being overlooked for promotions or raises.⁶⁶¹

See also: [mommy track](#) and [daddy track](#)

Parenting arrangements

Decisions around where children live, who they spend time with, and who makes parenting decisions in the case of divorce, separation, or parents who are otherwise not in a relationship. Parenting arrangements can be made with or without legal interference.⁶⁶²

Child access/contact/parenting time

Access (spouse), now referred to as “parenting time” in new legislation passed in 2021, is the amount of time each parent is responsible for the child. Access (non-spouse), now referred to as “contact”, is legal orders on who is allowed to have contact with the child during parenting time.

Custody

Custody refers to rights to decision making and responsibility for the child/children. New legislation passed in 2021 has changed the language for this term to “decision making responsibility” and “parenting time”, referring to legal orders on who is to make decisions around the child and the amount of time each parent is responsible for the child.

Partner

A [gender-neutral](#) term for someone with whom a person is in a relationship with.⁶⁶³

See also: [significant other \(SO\)](#) and [spouse](#)

Polyamory/polyamorous

Having or maintaining more than one romantic and/or sexual relationship at the same time. Everyone involved in the relationship(s) is aware of and consents to the arrangements. The term is often shortened to “poly” or “polyam”.^{664 665}

Polycule

A network of interconnected [non-monogamous](#) relationships; named as such because when these relationships are drawn as a diagram, they often resemble drawings of molecules.^{666 667}

Polygamy

Not to be confused with [polyamory](#), polygamy is the practice of being married to multiple people at the same time. Polygyny refers to having multiple wives, and is the most common, and polyandry refers to having multiple husbands. The legality of polygamy varies around the world, but the practice is illegal in Canada.^{668 669 670}

See also: [bigamy](#)

Relationship orientation

A term used to describe the type of relationships that someone engages in (e.g., [monogamous](#), [non-monogamous](#), [polyamorous](#), etc.).⁶⁷¹

Significant other (SO)

A [gender-neutral](#) term for someone with whom a person is in a relationship.⁶⁷²

See also: [partner](#) and [spouse](#)

Social marriage

A marriage that is not legally recognized, but the couple considers themselves married and exchanges vows or gifts.⁶⁷³

Spouse

A [gender-neutral](#) term for someone with whom a person is in a relationship with. Usually refers specifically to a legally married partner.⁶⁷⁴

See also: [partner](#) and [significant other \(SO\)](#)

Surrogacy

Where a person with a uterus (the “surrogate”) agrees to carry and deliver a child for another family. There are different arrangements for surrogacy, where the surrogate may or may not be biologically related to the child. In Canada, surrogacy is legal if done altruistically, meaning that the only payment that is permitted is the reimbursement of expenses.⁶⁷⁵

Triad

A term to describe a three-person relationship where all parties are romantically involved. This type of relationship is the most common [polyamorous](#) relationship depicted in the media.⁶⁷⁶

RELIGION & FAITH

Agnosticism

Based on “not knowing”, agnosticism is the belief that the existence of any God, higher power, etc. is unknown and will never be known.⁶⁷⁷

Antisemitism

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”⁶⁷⁸ Some other resources to explore include: [Government of Canada: News Release](#) and [The Stain of Antisemitism in Canada](#) from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

See also: [Judaism](#)

Atheism

The absence of belief in any God.⁶⁷⁹

The Bahá'í Faith

A spiritual ideology based on the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh – two Divine Messengers sent by God. The central tenant of Bahá'í is to “inspire individuals and communities as they work to improve their own lives and contribute to the advancement of civilization”.⁶⁸⁰

Buddhism

A non-theistic philosophy and religion developed from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), known as the “Awakened One”. There are many branches of Buddhism, and followers of Buddhism are called Buddhists.⁶⁸¹

Christianity

A monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Messiah and son of God. There are over 45,000 Christian denominations, with the main branches being Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestantism. Christianity is the most practiced religion in the world.⁶⁸²

Confucianism

A non-theistic ideology emerged from the teachings of a Chinese philosopher, Kong Qiu (Confucius). Confucianism's main teaching is doing the right thing in one's life and focuses on values such as learning from the past, humanness, respect for parents and ancestors, honesty, reciprocity, righteousness, and loyalty.⁶⁸³

Creed

Someone's religion or spiritual beliefs.⁶⁸⁴

Druze

A small monotheistic religion based on Shi'a Islam that incorporates other beliefs and philosophies. The Druze follow seven commandments: a truthful tongue, cultivation and protection of the brethren, excision of fallacies and falsehoods, rejection of the villain and aggressor, adoration of the lord in every era and at all times, cheerful acceptance of whatever comes from Him (God), and spontaneous submission to His Will (God's will). The Druze have a long history of persecution that has resulted in the practice of hiding their religious beliefs.⁶⁸⁵

Faithism

[Discrimination](#) or [exclusion](#) based on religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs.⁶⁸⁶

Hinduism

A religion that encompasses a broad range of philosophies, influences, texts, and beliefs. There are many forms of Hinduism, with some recognizing a single major deity (Brahman) and multiple gods and goddesses. Hinduism is the third most practiced religion in the world and is considered the world's oldest organized religion.^{687 688}

Indigenous religions

Various religions practiced by [Indigenous Peoples](#) in North America. Common beliefs of these religions include creation stories, supernatural beings, sacred organizations, and shamans. [Indigenous](#) religions, like Indigenous communities, are diverse in their ideologies and beliefs. Many Indigenous religions were lost in the effects of colonization and are being reclaimed by the affected communities.⁶⁸⁹ For more information on Indigenous religions in Canada, see [Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#) from The Canadian Encyclopedia.

Islam

A monotheistic faith where Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah (God). Followers of Islam are referred to as Muslims. There are two dominant Islamic sects: Sunnis and Shi'ah. Islam is the second most practiced religion in the world.^{690 691}

See also: [islamophobia](#)

Islamophobia

The fear, hatred, and [prejudice](#) directed towards individuals practicing the Islamic faith or who identify as Muslim.⁶⁹²

See also: [Islam](#)

Jainism

A religion rooted in ancient and traditional Indian teachings, Jainism centres on the values of harmlessness, renunciation, and limited use of the world's resources. Jains take five vows: non-violence, non-attachment to possessions, not lying, not stealing, and sexual restraint. Jainism is described by its followers as an eternal belief system.⁶⁹³

Judaism

A monotheistic religion that began with Abraham, the first prophet of Judaism. There are several forms of practice including Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist. Many Jews see Judaism as a way of life and a community beyond a religion. Central values of the religion include repairing the world, charity, peace, family, community, justice, and living a holy life.⁶⁹⁴

See also: [antisemitism](#)

Non-religiousness

A person that is not involved or affiliated with any religion or religious activity.⁶⁹⁵

Rastafarianism/Rastafari

A religion and political movement that draws from selected readings of the Christian Bible. Rastafarianism emerged in resistance to British occupation and [oppression](#) in Jamaica. One principle of Rastafari is referred to as “levity”, or balanced lifestyle, and includes wearing hair in natural dreadlocks, wearing red, green, gold, and black (representing blood, herbs, royalty, and Africanness), and a natural, vegetarian diet.⁶⁹⁶

Religion

A set of spiritual belief systems involving rituals and philosophy of life, that are generally within a formal, organized institution.⁶⁹⁷

Secularism

Someone with a strong belief in the separation of church and state. Secularists are usually atheists, but not always.⁶⁹⁸

Shinto

A Japanese religion that believes in kami (spirits) that reside in places, natural processes, objects, and shrines. There are many forms of Shinto, and it is often seen more as a Japanese way of life than an organized religion.⁶⁹⁹

Sikhism

A monotheistic faith based on the teachings of Guru Nanak and nine other gurus. The focus of Sikhism is on the continual learning of God through meditation and rightful living. Some Sikhs choose to commit to the practice of Amrit, which includes donning the “five articles of faith”: leaving hair uncut, a comb in the hair, a steel sword, an iron bracelet, and a specific undergarment. Many Sikh men and women wear turbans.⁷⁰⁰

Taoism

A non-theistic tradition founded by Lao Zi in China. Taoism is focused on harmony with the Tao (the “path” or the “way”), the rightful way of living one’s life, and the idea that everything is made up of opposing forces (“yin and yang”).⁷⁰¹

Theism/theistic

Belief in one or multiple god(s) or a religion that follows this belief. Religions that believe in one god are “monotheistic”, and religions that believe in multiple gods are “polytheistic”.⁷⁰²

Zoroastrianism

An ancient religion and philosophy that considers the spirit of Ahura Mazda to be the Creator based on the teachings of the prophet Zoroaster. The main concepts of the religion include the dualism of good and evil, the struggle between truth/order and falsehood/chaos, and how humans can eliminate chaos and evil through living a good life of good thoughts, words, and actions. Conversion to the religion is prohibited, and followers of the religion have been historically persecuted, making Zoroastrianism one of the smallest religions in the world.⁷⁰³

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Note: Some of these terms are offensive, and some have been reclaimed for use within the communities that they belong to. They are included here for informational purposes. See [Reclaimed language](#)

Aromantic

Someone who experiences little to no romantic attraction to others and has little to no interest in romantic relationships. Aromanticism exists on a spectrum and can fluctuate. It is sometimes shortened to Aro.^{704 705}

See also: [romantic orientation](#)

Asexual

Someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction to others and has little to no interest in sexual activity or sexual relationships. Asexuality exists on a spectrum and can fluctuate. It is sometimes shortened to Ace.^{706 707}

Bi erasure

[Biases](#) or [attitudes](#) that include denying entirely that [bisexuality](#) exists, calling it a phase, or the insinuation that people who identify as bisexual are questioning their sexuality or not ready to [come out](#) as [gay](#) or [lesbian](#).⁷⁰⁸

Biphobia

Fear, dislike, or hatred of and [discrimination](#) against [bisexual](#) people. Biphobia presents through offensive jokes, [exclusion](#), [bi erasure](#), [harassment](#), and [violence](#). Biphobia exists both within and outside of the [2SLGBTQI+](#) community.^{709 710}

Bisexual

A term describing people who are emotionally, [romantically](#), and/or physically attracted to both men and women. It can also more broadly describe people who are attracted to more than one [sex](#), [gender](#), or [gender identity](#), in any capacity, and not necessarily in the same way. Sometimes shortened to “bi”.⁷¹¹

Cross orientation

A term coined by the [asexual](#) community to describe when an individual’s [romantic orientation](#) is different than their [sexual orientation](#). For example, a woman who is sexually attracted to men and romantically attracted to women is both [heterosexual](#) and [homoromantic](#).⁷¹²

Demiromantic

Someone who has little to no romantic attraction to others unless a strong emotional connection is formed, while sexual attraction may form more easily.⁷¹³

See also: [romantic orientation](#)

Demisexual

Someone who has little to no sexual attraction to others unless a strong emotional connection is formed, while romantic attraction may form more easily.^{714 715}

Dyke

Someone who is [lesbian](#) and generally [masculine-presenting](#). This is a [reclaimed term](#) within the community but is still used offensively.^{716 717}

Faggot/fag

A [gay](#) man. This is a [reclaimed term](#) by some within the community but is still used offensively towards gay men or men who are perceived to be [2SLGBTQI+](#).^{718 719}

Gay

Someone whose emotional, [romantic](#), and/or physical attraction is to people of the same [sex](#) or [gender](#). More commonly used to describe male attraction to other males, but men, women, and [non-binary](#) people may also use the term.⁷²⁰

Heteroflexible/homoflexible

Someone who is primarily attracted to a specific [gender identity](#) but who is open to attraction or relationships with people with other [gender](#) identities.⁷²¹

Heteronormative/heteronormativity

The assumption by individuals or society that everyone is [heterosexual](#), that heterosexuality is the default, “normal”, or superior.⁷²²

See also: [heterosexism](#)

Heterosexism

Actions that discriminate against or exclude people who are not [heterosexual](#) based on the belief that heterosexuality is what is “normal” or superior.⁷²³

See also: [heteronormativity](#)

Heterosexual/heteroromantic/straight

Someone whose emotional, [romantic](#) and/or physical attraction is to people of the [sex](#) or [gender](#) “opposite” of their own. People of any [gender identity](#) may refer to themselves as heterosexual or straight.^{724 725}

Homoantagonism

Active hatred or [violence](#) towards those with sexuality that is not [heteronormative](#). This term is used as an alternative to homophobia to describe the perpetration of violence more accurately as more than just feelings of fear or discomfort.⁷²⁶

Contrast with: [homophobia](#)

Homophobia

Fear, dislike, or hatred of and [discrimination](#) against [2SLGBTQI+](#) people. Homophobia presents in many forms, and can be structural/systemic, interpersonal, or internalized.^{727 728}

Contrast with: [homoantagonism](#)

Internalized homophobia

Shame, guilt, or self-hatred someone feels towards themselves based on their [sexual orientation](#).⁷²⁹

See also: [internalized oppression](#) and [internalized dominance](#)

Homosexual/homoromantic

Someone who is primarily or only attracted to people of the same [gender](#). It is generally not a preferred term, and other terms such as [lesbian](#), [gay](#), [queer](#), and others are more commonly used.⁷³⁰

Indigiqueer

See [Indigiqueer](#)

Lesbian

A woman whose emotional, [romantic](#), and/or physical attraction is to women. [Non-binary](#) people may also use the term.⁷³¹

Lesbophobia

Fear, dislike, or hatred of and [discrimination](#) against [lesbians](#). Lesbophobia often stems from [stereotypes](#) or [misogyny](#).⁷³²

Panphobia

In reference to [pansexuality](#).

Fear, dislike, or hatred of and [discrimination](#) against pansexuals. Panphobia presents through offensive jokes, [exclusion](#), the denial of pansexuality as a [sexual orientation](#), [harassment](#), and [violence](#). Panphobia exists both within and outside of the [2SLGBTQI+](#) community.⁷³³

Pansexual/panromantic

Someone who is attracted to more than one [sex](#), [gender](#), or [gender identity](#), in any capacity, and not necessarily in the same way. Can be shortened to “pan”.^{734 735}

See also: [romantic orientation](#)

Pride

See [Pride](#)

Queer

An umbrella term used by some who identify as neither [heterosexual](#) nor [cisgender](#). It is becoming more widely used within the community because of its inclusiveness and is sometimes used for convenience in place of [acronyms](#), but should not entirely replace the acronyms. This term has been used offensively as a slur and has been [reclaimed](#) for use within the community. [Transgender](#) people may or may not use the term queer as the communities have diverse histories.^{736 737}

Queerbaiting

A marketing tactic used in entertainment and media where content hints at [2SLGBTQI+](#) representation but does not outwardly depict it. This tactic is used in an attempt to appeal to an [2SLGBTQI+](#) audience without the risk of losing non-[2SLGBTQI+](#) viewers who may object to actual representation.^{738 739}

Queerphobia

An umbrella term that includes [homophobia](#), [lesbophobia](#), [panphobia](#), [biphobia](#), and [transphobia](#).⁷⁴⁰

Romantic orientation

Describes an individual's romantic attraction or lack of romantic attraction to others (e.g., [aromantic](#)). Romantic attraction is often aligned with sexual attraction, but not always (see [Cross orientation](#)).^{741 742}

See also: [sexual orientation](#)

Sexual orientation

Describes an individual's sexual attraction or lack of sexual attraction to others (e.g., [asexual](#)). Sexual attraction is often aligned with romantic attraction, but not always (see [Cross orientation](#)).⁷⁴³

See also: [romantic orientation](#)

Sexual preference

Separate from [sexual orientation](#), sexual preference is the type of sexual activity that a person **likes** to participate in. This term can be disrespectful if used interchangeably with sexual orientation as it falsely implies that sexual orientation is a choice.⁷⁴⁴

Sexual prejudice

A broad term referring to all negative [attitudes](#) that are based on [sexual orientation](#).⁷⁴⁵

Two-spirit (2-spirit)

See [Two-Spirit \(2-Spirit\)](#)

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