

## **Glossary of DEI+A definitions**

**Ableism** is system of superiority and discrimination that provides or denies resources, agency, and dignity based on one's abilities (mental/intellectual, emotional, and/or physical.) Ableism depends on a binary and benefits able-bodied people at the expense of disabled people. Like other forms of oppression, ableism operates on individual, institutional and cultural levels.

**Accessibility** is a general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population, by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

**Accessible** does not have obstacles for people with disabilities – something that can be easily reached or obtained; facility that can be easily entered; information that is easy to access. Adaptive Technologies are products that help people (primarily people with vision, hearing, mobility or other disabilities) who cannot use regular versions of products.

**Ageism** is discrimination based on age.

**Ally** is a member of the dominant group who acts against oppression.

**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.

**Assistive Devices** are devices to help people – primarily people with disabilities – to perform a task. Examples are a wheelchair, personal oxygen tank, assistive listening device, electronic device with adaptive technology, or visible emergency alarm.

**Bias** is a predisposition, prejudice or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes.

**Bigotry** is intolerance, negative attitudes or stereotypes related to another person's creed, race, sexual orientation, etc.

**BIPOC** an acronym stands for "black, Indigenous and *people of color*."

**Cisgender or cis** is someone who identifies with the gender that they were assigned at birth. Typically, cis men are men who were assigned male at birth and feel that the words "man" and "male" accurately describe their gender. Likewise, cis women are typically women who were

assigned female at birth and feel that the words “woman” and “female” accurately describe their gender.

**Classism** is a hierarchical system that provides or denies resources, agency, and dignity based on one’s, or one’s perceived, socioeconomic class (poor/working class, middle/upper class, upper class, etc.).

**Consent** is a mutual, emotional, physical and psychological understanding between people(s) without force of any kind. When engaging intimately with other individuals, consent is necessary to ensure that everybody involved is aware and interested in what is happening. Consent is based on communication, not assumptions.

**Cultural Competence** is an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures, particularly in human resources, non-profit organizations, and government agencies whose employees work with persons from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds. Cultural competence has four components:

- Awareness of one’s own cultural worldview
- Attitude towards cultural differences
- Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
- Cross-cultural skills (developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures.

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy** is a culturally responsive pedagogy that facilitates and supports the achievement of all students. In a culturally responsive classroom, reflective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centered context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured and utilized to promote student achievement.

**De-colonize** is the active unlearning of values, beliefs and behaviors that have caused physical, emotional, spiritual or mental harm to the people or the land through colonization. These values and behaviors emerged out of the Colonial Process in Canada and became normalized through settler society. In western culture people are targeted for gender-based violence based on intersections of vulnerabilities and identities. Some of these ideas include: the absence of the sacred, perfectionism, power hoarding, either/or thinking, the scarcity model — all ideas that emerged out of the colonial process.

**DEI+A** is an acronym that stands for diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

**Disability** 1) To see a disability as a medical condition that a person has. From this perspective, disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. There are physical, mental, cognitive and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities and other conditions. 2) A newer way of looking at disability is that it is not something a person has.

A person with a medical condition is not necessarily prevented (or disabled) from fully taking part in society. If society is designed to be accessible and include everyone, then people with medical conditions often don't have a problem taking part. From this point of view, disability is a problem that occurs when a person's environment is not designed to suit their abilities.

**Discrimination** 1) Occurs when an adverse employment or educational action is based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services. 2) Refers to the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person based on the group, class, or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit. Manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred.

**Diversity** refers to the variety of personal experiences, values and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. It is the variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning, which generally flow from the influence of different cultural, ethnic and religious heritages, from the differences in how we socialize women and men, and from the differences that emerge from class, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and other socially constructed characteristics.

**Equity** is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all students, faculty and staff, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

**Ethnicity** is a social construct that divides people according to the culture of people in a given geographic region, including their language, heritage, religion and customs. Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White).

**Gender Binary** is the most common classification system used in our society to categorize sex and gender. The model asserts a binary in that there are two distinct and opposite labels (female/male), qualifiers (vagina/penis), and behavioral expectations (e.g., caretaker/provider, emotional/rational).

**Gender Identity** is the sense of “being” male, female, genderqueer, agender, etc. For some people, gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are separate and that you cannot assume how someone identifies in one category based on how they identify in another category.

**Gender non-binary/Gender non-conforming** is gender that does not adhere to gender expectations within the binary model.

**Harassment** is un-welcomed behavior that demeans, threatens or offends another person or group of people and results in a hostile environment for the targeted person/group.

**Hate Crime** is any criminal act or attempted criminal act directed against a person(s), public agency or private institution based on the actual or perceived race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender or because of associations with person(s) or groups identified with one of these protected categories. A hate crime includes an act that results in injury, however slight; a verbal threat of violence that apparently can be carried out; an act that results in property damage; and property damage or other criminal act(s) directed against a public or private agency. Examples of a hate crime could include verbal or written threats of violence directed at someone because of their perceived sexual orientation, Anti-Semitic or Islamophobic graffiti spray painted on an office door, or a physical assault based on the race or national origin of the individual targeted.

**Hate or Bias Incident** includes non-criminal conduct that is motivated by hatred or bigotry and directed at any individual, residence, house of worship, institution, or business expressly because of the target’s real or perceived race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services. Such incidents also include conduct directed against an individual or group because of their association with or advocacy on behalf of a member or members of a legally protected class. Examples include hate speech, treating someone differently in the work or learning environment because of that person’s legally protected characteristic, displaying offensive materials on one’s property, distributing hate materials in public places and posting hate materials even if there is no resulting property damage.

**Homoantagonism** is the active hostility or opposition towards people whose sexuality is not heteronormative. This is often based on the assumption that monogamous relationships between one man and one woman is the traditional, superior, and only legitimate form of sexuality. The language has shifted from the use of “phobia” (as in homophobia) to the use of antagonism to better encompass the violence that is perpetrated.

**Impairment** is a physical, sensory, intellectual, learning or medical condition, including mental illness, that limits functioning and/or requires accommodation. Impairment may be apparent to others or hidden, inherited, self-inflicted or acquired, and may exist alone or in combination with

other impairments. Impairment can affect anyone (whatever their gender, sex, race, culture, age, religion, creed, etc.).

**Implicit Bias** is the subconscious attitudes or stereotypes, both favorable and not, that affect our understanding, actions and decisions.

**Inclusion** is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. Inclusion integrates the fact of diversity and embeds it into the core academic mission and institutional functioning.

**Institutional Racism** refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

**Intersectionality** is the concept used to describe the ways in which different kinds of oppression (racism, sexism, homoantagonism, transantagonism, ableism, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

**LGBTQIA** is an inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual.

**Marginalized** is an excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

**Microaggression** is the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment. Microaggressions are rooted in ideologies such as racism, classism, sexism, cissexism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, colonialism, as well as other discriminatory belief systems.

**Misogyny** is the hatred or dislike of women, girls, or femininity; the denigration of women and characteristics deemed feminine. Misogyny functions as an ideology or belief system that has accompanied patriarchal, or male-dominated societies for thousands of years and continues to place women and people who identify and express themselves in feminine ways in subordinate positions with limited access to power and decision making. Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including sexual discrimination, violence, and the sexual objectification of women. Though commonly associated with men, misogyny also exists in and is practiced by women against other women or even themselves.

**Oppression** is Institutionalized power that is historically formed and perpetuated over time that allows certain 'groups' of people to assume a dominant position over other groups and this dominance is maintained and continued at an institutional level. This means oppression is built into institutions like government and education systems. It gives power and positions of dominance to some groups of people over other groups of people.

- Other intersections such as race, gender, citizenship, and many others directly affect these relationships and understandings of oppression.

**Patriarchy** is one of the most influential systems of power in our society that centers, privileges, and prioritizes masculinity. Patriarchy is practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society (jobs and positions of power given to men in government, policy, criminal justice, etc.) while also influencing how we interact with one another interpersonally (gender expectations, sexual dynamics, space taking, etc.).

**People of Color** is often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term "people of color" (not to be confused with the pejorative "colored people") since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While "people of color" can be a politically useful term and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., "non-White"), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

**Privilege** is an unearned, special advantage or right that a person is born into or acquires during their lifetime. It is supported by the formal and informal institutions of society and conferred to all members of a dominant group, by virtue of their group membership. Privilege implies that wherever there is a system of oppression (such as capitalism, patriarchy, or white supremacy) there is an oppressed group and also a privileged group, who benefit from the oppressions that this system puts in place. Privilege and power are closely related: privilege often gives a person or group power over others.

**Queer** has many meanings and definitions for all kinds of people. It is commonly used as an umbrella term by folks who feel that they personally don't fit into dominant norms due to their own gender identity/expression, their sexual practices, their relationship style, their politics, etc. It is a term that has been reclaimed by many folks, as it was one time considered a derogatory slur towards the gay and lesbian community. For this reason, some folks do not wish to identify with it and it should be recognized as one option for folks to identify with if they find it fitting.

**Race** there is no such thing as race – instead, it is a "social construct." This means that society forms ideas of race based on geographic, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, as well as physical traits, even though none of these can legitimately be used to classify groups of people.

**Racism** is a white supremacist ideology backed by systemic power and reinforced through violence. It is a system of power that privileges those people who are defined and socially constructed as “White”. Racism treats all races as inferior to white people, and also subordinates each race to each other. Racism is often understood as an individual state of being, as in someone is or isn’t racist. Racism, however, is not merely a personal attitude, it is a racialized system of power maintained by violence. An individual can be perpetuating this system without even being conscious of their actions.

**Rape Culture** is the culture in which live that normalizes and glorifies sexualized violence, creating a sense of entitlement to other people’s physical, emotional, and sexual well beings without consent.

**Safe Space** refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule or denial of experience.

**Sexual Assault** is any unwanted sexual contact. This is a range of things that includes touching or rubbing any parts of another’s body in a way that feels sexualized (always up to the person who was assaulted to decide this).

**Sexual Harassment** is a variety of unwanted sexualized acts that create an intimidating, humiliating, or hostile environment. These acts threaten a person or group’s personal boundaries, physical choices, and/or emotional well-being. Sexual harassment is many things and can include cat calling, sexually suggestive noises or motions, jokes about sex, stalking, spreading rumours, etc.

**Sexual Orientation** is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people. Sexual orientation is fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their sexual orientation. Please visit the UC Davis LGBTQIA Resource Center for more information and definitions.

**Sexualized Violence** is anything that disrespects your sexuality (including disrespect of asexuality) or is violence in a sexualized context. This is many things and can look like comments, leering, intimidation, coercion, expectations, discrimination, non-consensual touching, sexual assault, sexual harassment, etc.

**Social Justice** is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.

**Stereotype** is blanket beliefs, unconscious associations and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information and are highly generalized.

**Structural Racism** is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics, and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

**Systems of Oppression** are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies. A norm signifies what is “normal,” acceptable, and desirable. “The norm” is something that is valued and supported in a society. It is also given a position of dominance, privilege and power over what is defined as non-dominant, abnormal and therefore invaluable or marginal. Norms are also considered to be stable or unchanging over time.

**Tokenism** is the presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for participation without ongoing dialogue and support, handpicked representatives who are expected to speak for the whole (socially oppressed) group (e.g. “tell us how women experience this issue”). Tokenism is often used as a band-aid solution to help the group improve its image (e.g. “we’re not racist, look there’s a person of colour on the panel.”).

**Transantagonism** is active hostility, opposition, aggression and/or violence towards trans people. Transantagonism reflects a hatred of those who do not fit easily into the gender binary. The language has shifted from the use of “phobia” (as in transphobia), to the use of antagonism to better encompass the violence that is perpetrated.

**Transgender** has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. Some transgender people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders.

**Underrepresented Minority (URM)** refers to groups who have been denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination. This is revealed by an imbalance in the representation of different groups in common pursuits such as education, jobs and housing, resulting in marginalization for some groups and individuals and not for others, relative to the number of individuals who are members of the population involved. Other groups in the United States that have been marginalized and are currently underrepresented may include but are not limited to other ethnicities, adult learners, veterans, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, different religious groups and different economic backgrounds.

**White Supremacy** is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of colour by white peoples and nations of the



European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

The terms contained in this glossary have been reproduced from the following resources:

- Anti-Violence Project. [Glossary](#). University of Victoria.
- Colors of Resistance. [Definitions for the Revolution](#).
- Potapchuk, M., Leiderman, S., et al. (2009). [Glossary](#). Center for Assessment and Policy Development.
- Center for Diversity & Inclusion. [Glossary of Bias Terms](#). Washington University in St. Louis.
- Ontario Human Rights Commission. [Glossary of human rights terms](#).
- EDI Resources. [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Glossary of Terms](#). Pacific University in Oregon.