



# Race Relations, Equity & Inclusion Division

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## ***HUMAN RIGHTS in the WORKPLACE*** **A Glossary of Terms**

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## Preface

Canadian society is multicultural and becoming increasingly diverse. Strategically addressing the inherent challenges in diverse organizations can be an opportunity to develop a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining a wide variety of skills, expertise and talent.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission's mission is to reduce individual and systemic discrimination in support of a society characterized by equity and inclusion.

The goal of this glossary is to explain and contextualize common terms in literature regarding human rights, diversity and inclusion and human resource management in Nova Scotia.

## Acknowledgments

This glossary was prepared by Race Relations, Equity & Inclusion staff with support from Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission staff.

### Please note:

This glossary is meant to be used as a general resource but should not be relied upon as a legal document. The definitions provided are a synthesis of information from a range of sources. It will likely be updated as new terms, situations and areas of consideration arise over time.



Human Rights Commission

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## GLOSSARY of TERMS

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### A

#### AIDS

Acquired Immune deficiency syndrome, a serious and often fatal medical condition that weakens the human immune system, leaving the body defenseless against life-threatening infections. Individuals may be HIV-positive but not have AIDS. Relatively new treatments mean some people are living longer with AIDS. Do not refer to AIDS as a death sentence, unless in a direct quote. Avoid equating gay men with AIDS. The number of AIDS cases is increasing fastest within the heterosexual population; more straight people than gay have AIDS worldwide.

#### AIDS Transmission

Only relevant in a story about how people can get it: unprotected sex, blood products or dirty IV needles; otherwise irrelevant to a story.

#### Aboriginal Peoples

Individuals or groups who are original inhabitants of (or native to) a country

In Canada, they include: Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Métis, Iroquois, etc. The terms "Native" or "First Nations" are also used to refer to Aboriginal people.

#### Absenteeism

Absence from the workplace for genuine illness, poor morale or other (sometimes inappropriate) reasons

#### Ableism

The cultural, institutional and individual set of practices and beliefs which assign different, lower value to people who have developmental, emotional, physical, sensory or health-related disabilities, thereby resulting in their receiving negative treatment.

#### Access (to services or facilities)

Access to service, for instance, health care or educational facilities, is a protected area in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

#### Accommodation

In the context of property (housing, office space, etc.), see Tenancy.

In the context of the workplace or access to services (for example), see Reasonable Accommodation.

#### Acculturation

The process of adopting cultural traits or social patterns of another group

An individual or group from one culture becomes 'acculturated' when they enter into and integrate with a different culture.

##### Organizational Acculturation

This can be observed in an individual's changes in language use and preference (in policies and practice); cultural identity (with or alienation from other organizational cultures); association with members of one's own culture (including ethno-racial, religious, professional, etc.). This occurs over time as the individual settles into a role within the organization.

#### Advocacy

The act of supporting or recommending a course of action upon recognizing a need as expressed by an individual or members of a particular (often underserved or disenfranchised) group

#### Affirmative Action

Action taken by a government, public agency or private organization to make up for past prejudice, exclusion or discrimination that led to unequal access to education, employment or promotion within the workplace on the basis of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, etc. Previous differential treatment is often addressed through affirmative action policies.

#### Affirmative Action Policy

A practical policy to increase the diversity within an organization

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implemented through human resources initiatives which increases attraction, recruitment and retention in the hiring of members of designated groups

Due to a variety of false assumptions and inappropriate application of affirmative action policies (including preferences, quotas and reserved slots not based on merit), there is a shift towards employment equity terminology.

### Afrocentrism

A historical legacy and identity shared by people of African descent all over the world; "to study the world and its people from an African worldview and perspective, and their attendant conceptual frameworks" or "to place Africans and the interest of Africa at the centre of our approach to problem solving."

### Ageism

The institutional, cultural and individual set of practices and beliefs which assign differential value to people according to their age

Age is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The potential for age-based discrimination can be addressed in the development and implementation of hiring and employment equity policies.

In western societies, a fall in the birth rate and increased longevity has led to a shift in the age profile of the population and the workplace.

Soon the Nova Scotian workforce will comprise older people returning to work as well as recent immigrants and people from other provinces, seeking different work and requiring different time commitments and skill sets.

### Ally

A member of an oppressor group who works to end a form of oppression which gives him or her privilege.

An example is a white person who works to end racism, or a man who works to end sexism.

### Ancestry

The line of people from whom one is descended; family descent.

#### Anti-Semitism

Latent or overt hostility or hatred directed towards individual Jews or the Jewish people (not to all Semitic peoples), leading to social, economic, institutional, religious, cultural or political discrimination. Anti-Semitism has also been expressed through individual acts of violence, vandalism, the organized destruction of entire communities (pogroms) and genocide.

#### Asian Indian/Indian

Avoid use of these terms. When distinguishing from First Nations people, use "people from India" or "Indian Canadians" when referring to people from India living in Canada.

#### Assimilation

Usually refers to the loss of the original ethnic identity as a person is absorbed into the dominant culture in an attempt to adjust to what is required by that dominant culture

In an organization, 'cultural assimilation' may propagate systemic discrimination of which individuals may be unaware.

#### Attitude

The state of mind which makes us act in certain ways about social events or objects; a consistent pattern of thoughts, beliefs, emotions and reactions.

### B

#### Baby Boomers

Persons born during the unusual spike in birth rates after World War II (between the years 1946 and 1964)

#### Barrier

An overt or covert obstacle, used in employment equity to mean a systemic obstacle to equal employment opportunities or outcomes; an obstacle which must be overcome for equality to be possible.

#### Bias

A subjective opinion, preference or inclination, formed without

communities. Their opinions, experiences, and skills can improve our communities now—if we include them.

### Z

#### Zenith

Highest point or state; the peak; the highest point from which to observe or enjoy the goal attained

formulate family-friendly policies to address work/life balance. Employers who want to attract, recruit and retain highly-skilled people will require flexibility of working hours, rewards packages and broader (more inclusive) organizational policies.

Maternity and parental leaves, benefits such as provision of childcare (or eldercare or caring for persons with disability), subsidies as well as spousal pensions are related issues.

#### Workplace

With respect to human rights law, any location where activities related to the organization occur. If conduct has workplace impact, or began from a workplace relationship, the place the conduct occurred may be considered part of the workplace (e.g., restaurant, conference or park). The workplace is a protected area in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

#### Workplace Harassment

Objectionable conduct or comment directed towards a specific person which serves no legitimate work purpose, and creates an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive work environment.

A form of bullying, harassment and violence in the workplace; often a manifestation of abuse of power

X

#### Xenophobia

Irrational fear and dislike of foreigners or people significantly different from oneself; a fear or contempt of that which is foreign or unknown, especially of strangers or "foreign" people

Y

#### Youth Inclusion

Meaningfully involving youth in the planning, decision making, and program delivery of all the important parts of our society

Although society is not accustomed to giving youth important roles in society, young people have much to contribute to their

reasonable justification, which influences an individual's or group's ability to evaluate a particular situation objectively or accurately; a preference for or against.

Reasonable apprehension of bias exists when there is a belief that an individual or group will prejudge a matter and therefore cannot assess it fairly because of bias (also see prejudice).

#### Bigot

One stubbornly or intolerantly devoted to one's biased opinions and prejudices.

#### Bilingualism

The ability to speak or write two languages with equal fluency; a policy of Canada, with two official languages.

#### Bisexuality

A sexual orientation in which a person is attracted to both men and women.

#### Bicultural

See Multicultural

#### Blended Families

Families in which either or both parents enter a marriage after having either been married before or having children outside the current marital/family unit.

#### Bona Fide Occupational Requirement (BFOR)

A standard, reasonable and necessary requirement for a specific employment position

A BFOR is a defense to a discriminatory practice or policy and is often based on factors such as safety or effectiveness. For instance, courts have found that an airline pilot must have good eyesight. When an employment standard is a BFOR, an employer is not expected to change it to accommodate an employee because doing so would constitute an undue hardship to the employer. However, in order to legally qualify as a BFOR, the rule must be as inclusive as possible.

### Bullying

A form of harassment or violent behaviour that can be contrary to protected characteristics. It can also be a form of psychological or personal harassment not based on any of the protected characteristics. See also Harassment and Workplace Harassment

### Business Acumen

Having keen business judgment or insight

### Business Intelligence

Skills, processes, technologies, applications and practices used to support decision making

Business intelligence (BI) describes concepts and methods used to support and improve business decision-making through fact-based systems. An organization's leaders use business intelligence to make better business decisions.

## C

### Career Progression

Giving staff room to grow and develop their careers within an organization

Lack of career progression is the main reason people decide to change jobs, and is therefore crucial to staff retention. Three types of career progression have been identified in research:

- (i) Education-related career progression - there is a direct connection between education and work
- (ii) Individualized career progression – flexible and dynamic career path , series of challenging jobs, no connection to previous educational experience
- (iii) Re-directed career progression – external life events lead a person to explore a radical shift in careers

### Civil Rights

The rights of citizens to liberty and equality

Civil rights include, but are not limited to, freedom to worship, to express oneself, to vote, to take part in political life and to have access to certain information.

## U

### Underclass

A second-tier, lower-level, segment of society

The underclass is either subject to under-representation within the workplace (see designated groups), or are not able to advance to higher levels into leadership positions in the organization.

### Under-Representation

When designated groups are employed in disproportionately low numbers compared with their qualifications and availability in the workforce

## V

### Values

Principles or moral standards held as important by an individual or group

### Visible Minority (ies)

A political construct that was intended to be used within the specific context of Employment Equity measures; in this context, it is defined as non-white and non-Aboriginal.

The term has negative connotations from those who are part of this 'non-white' group, as it evokes the idea of being 'other' while being 'white' is considered the norm. Preferred terms include racial minority (ies) or racialized group(s).

## W

### Welcoming Community

A community that promotes and supports hospitality to encourage settlement and integration for migrants into that community

### Work/Life Balance

This term is an attempt to address the challenge of fitting the working life into peoples' overall life plan. For many, part of the work/life balance involves spending time with family and pursuing personal interests in addition to following career and work-related activities.

An organization committed to equity and inclusion can review or



biological sex, which is one's body (genitals, chromosomes), and social gender, which refers to levels of masculinity and femininity. Often, society views sex and gender as the same thing, but they are not.

#### Transphobia

Fear or hatred of transgender people; transphobia is manifested in a number of ways, including violence, harassment and discrimination.

#### Transsexual

Transsexual refers to a person who experiences a mismatch of the sex they were born as and the sex they identify as. He or she may undergoes medical treatment to change their physical sex to match their sex identity through hormone treatments and/or surgically.

#### Transvestite

An individual, not necessary gay, who dresses in garb usually associated with the opposite sex. Not synonymous with drag queen, transgender or transsexual.

#### Treaty

Binding agreement between states; also referred to as covenant or convention; formal agreement between states which defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations

Unlike declarations, treaties (covenants or conventions) are legally binding for governments which have signed them.

#### Two-Spirited

Term adopted by contemporary North American Aboriginal peoples to refer to those who embody both the male and female spirit. The term is inclusive and can refer to both sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression. Therefore, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and heterosexual trans-people may all refer to themselves as two-spirited. Terms such as "berdache" have a colonial origin, and "gay" and "lesbian" are, to many, Eurocentric and culturally irrelevant to Aboriginal two-spirited people

#### Classism

Discrimination or prejudice based on social or economic class

Classism, in which one group has power and privilege over another group based on income or access to resources, can lead to systemic oppression.

#### Collective Rights

The right of groups to protect their interests and identity

For example: The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and associated case law recognize that the "existing treaty and Aboriginal rights" of Aboriginal peoples of Canada include certain rights of a collective nature. Although these collective rights have yet to be fully defined, they do include matters such as the inherent right to self-government; hunting, fishing and gathering rights; collective land rights; and the right to the preservation of traditional languages, cultures and traditions.

#### Colour

Pigmentation of a person's skin (also see race and ethnicity)

Colour is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

#### Come From Away (CFA)

Phrase used to describe people from outside Nova Scotia or other Maritime provinces (often derogatorily), whether migrants from other parts of Canada or outside the country.

#### Complainant

Person who initiates a complaint which is then handled through a complaint process either established within the organization or undertaken by a neutral third party

#### Complaint process

A process through which individuals or groups have their concerns investigated and/or determined on their merits by a third party.

#### Conflict

A disagreement between opposing groups or individuals  
A state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility of ideas

Convention  
See Treaty

Covenant  
See Treaty

Creed  
A set of principles (spiritual or other) or a philosophy of life (usually spiritually-based)  
A professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs, observances and worship. A belief in a god or gods or a single supreme being is not a requisite.  
Creed is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

#### Cross-cultural Management

This is an important element of organizational life in a diverse workplace. It involves interactions with staff from cultural backgrounds other than one's own in a manner that is respectful, and acknowledges the similarities and strengths inherent in differences.

#### Cultural Competence

An ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures  
Cultural competence is a "set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals which enables effective work in cross-cultural situations." 'Culture' refers to integrated patterns of human behaviour that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious or social groups. 'Competence' implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviours and needs presented by consumers and their communities."

#### Status Indian

An Aboriginal person who is designated an "Indian" by the Indian Act, determining who can or cannot receive various rights or benefits conferred by the Act

#### Stereotype

A widely held but fixed generalization and (over)simplified image of a particular type of person, group of people or quality, allowing for little or no individuality or critical judgment; often, a negative belief which regards all members of a group as being the same in relation to a particular attitude or attribute

#### Succession Planning

The process of ensuring that skills and training are provided for people to take on positions that will be left vacant by retiring staff (usually mid-level and senior leadership)

#### T

#### Tenant

An individual who pays rent to use or occupy property which is owned by another  
Discrimination in the landlord-tenant relationship is prohibited by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

#### Tolerance

Usually meant as a liberal attitude toward those whose race, nationality, etc., is different from one's own  
Since "tolerance" has the connotation of "putting up with," today the term "acceptance" is preferred; that is, through anti-racism and equity work we aim to counter intolerance and achieve acceptance for all.

#### Transgender

A term used for a variety of individuals, behaviors, and groups centered on the partial or full reversal of gender roles  
Transgendered people may have a partial or completely opposing gender identity from that which they were assigned at birth. To understand this, one must understand the difference between

- ◆ actual reprisal (or an expressed, or implied threat of reprisal) for refusal to comply with a request of a sexual nature;
- ◆ actual denial (or an expressed, or implied threat of denial) of opportunity for refusal to comply with such a request;
- ◆ the conduct or comment intended to, or which has the effect of, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

#### Sexual Orientation

Used to describe sexual interests and lifestyles, including homosexuality, bisexuality, heterosexuality and celibacy

Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

#### Social Exclusion

When people who are deprived of good-quality housing, suffer unemployment, low incomes, poor health or live in areas of high-level crime.

#### Social Inclusion

When all members of a community have equal access to health, social care and educational opportunities others take for granted.

#### Social Justice

A concept premised upon the belief that each individual and group within society is to be given equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties and participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the society.

#### Special Rights

See Collective Rights

#### Staff Retention

The ability of an organization to keep staff working for an indefinite period

Staff retention strategies include: good benefits, and a healthy and respectful work environment.

#### Cultural Groups

Members of a group having the same beliefs, behavioural norms, values, language, ways of thinking about and viewing the world.

#### Cultural Identity

Seeing and addressing oneself in relation to one's own cultural group

#### Cultural Transparency

A matter of seeing the cultural significance through what is made visible

The capacity to see the cultural significance of artifacts, symbols, language, gestures, that make up the practices of communities of which one is not a part.

#### Culture

Shared attitudes, behavior and interactions that characterize the functioning of a group or organization

Culture can also be considered as socially-transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought considered as the expression of a particular community or population. For instance: Japanese culture, corporate culture, culture of health professions, etc.

#### D

#### Declaration

A document stating agreed-upon standards by which an agency, government or organization addresses issues. Unlike treaties, covenants and conventions, declarations are not legally binding.

#### Designated Groups

Comprised of individuals who have been denied equal access to employment, education, social services, housing, etc., because of their membership in such groups

The designated groups in Nova Scotia are: Aboriginal peoples, racially visible people, women and people with disabilities.

#### Disability

A physical or mental limitation or incapacity to perform certain actions

Physical and mental disabilities are protected characteristics in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Disabilities include visible or invisible conditions resulting from an injury or trauma or present from birth, as well as physical, mental and learning disabilities. For example, persons with mental disorders, sensory disabilities (such as hearing or vision limitations) and epilepsy are protected under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

Addictions can also be considered as disabilities under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (Also see Mental Health and Episodic Disabilities.)

Disabled Person

A person with a disability

Disadvantaged Group

See Designated Groups

Discrimination

Treating an individual or members of a particular group differently (by intention or otherwise) based on one or more of the protected characteristics (perceived or actual) in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, which results in a disadvantage to that person or individuals

Discrimination in an organization often occurs when policies and practices represent the perspective of the dominant cultural group. Discrimination can result in inaccessibility of opportunities to jobs and career advancement, rights and privileges (such as benefits and ergonomic workplaces), as well as lower wages.

Direct discrimination - discrimination against a particular group which is explicit, purposeful and intentional, e.g., "No blacks allowed."

Indirect/Adverse Effect Discrimination – a policy which is neutral on its face can impact individuals in a differential fashion. Such policies provide for "equal treatment in equal circumstances," but under unequal social conditions. For instance, when one

## S

Segregation

The social, physical, political and economic separation of diverse groups of people, particularly referring to ideological and structural barriers to civil liberties, equal opportunity and participation by minorities within a majority racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic or social group. Segregation may be a mutually voluntary arrangement but more frequently is enforced by the majority group and its institutions

Sex

The biological and physiological characteristics by which men and women are defined

Sexism

Institutional, cultural or individual set of practices and beliefs which assign differential value to people according to their sex and/or gender

Sexism stems from a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon a belief of inherent superiority of one gender over another, and may be evident within organizational or institutional structures or programs, as well as within individual thought or behaviour patterns. Sexism is any act or institutional practice, backed by institutional power which subordinates people because of gender. While, in principle, sexism may be practiced by either gender, most of our societal institutions are still the domain of men and usually the impact of sexism is experienced by women.

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted or unwelcome conduct or course of comment of a sexual nature made by a person who knows, or ought reasonably to know, that such conduct or comment is unacceptable. Sexual harassment is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and includes, but is not limited to:

- ◆ expressed (or implied) promise (or reward) for complying with a request of a sexual nature;

nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

#### Religion

A system of belief regarding the meaning of life, and the expression of this religious faith in worship; a belief in a superhuman controlling power (especially in a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship)

Religion is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

#### Religious Faith

A particular system of worship

In a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace, people in leadership positions will need to take into account that there are multiple religious holy days (regardless of the religion) and make decisions about what, when and how celebration(s) will be acknowledged.

#### Representative Workforce

A workforce that reflects the proportion of designated groups in the working age population, at all organizational levels and in all occupational classifications

#### Reservation/Reserve

Term for lands designated as belonging to First Nations people.

#### Respondent

The accused party in a complaint

#### Responsible

The state of being capable of good conduct or morally accountable for one's actions, or conferred with the authority to make decisions independently and conscientiously

The ability to act independently and make rational decisions

#### Rights

(See civil rights, legal rights, moral rights)

group is the norm for whom institutional rules policies and practices are formulated, these are then applied to "everybody else," including groups which have other (cultural, religious, etc.) norms.

For example: The Supreme Court of Canada found that an extremely high aerobic standard for firefighters in British Columbia was unrelated to the actual physical requirements necessary to carry out the duties of the job. The Court found that this aerobic requirement negatively impacted upon female firefighters who were generally physiologically unable to meet that standard.

Systemic Discrimination –A pattern of discrimination throughout a place of employment, service or program which is a result of pervasive and interrelated actions, policies or procedures

#### Disenfranchise

To deprive an individual of rights to full participation in civil society (usually voting rights)

In an organizational context, disenfranchisement is defined as being deprived of the ability to participate in, and to influence, agenda setting and decision making.

#### Diversity

The presence of a wide range (different kinds) of a particular quality, attribute or group in a specified area. In human rights, diversity implies a wide range of people who may exhibit protected characteristics in protected areas

A healthy workplace is diverse. Fostering workplace diversity often requires a commitment from organizational leadership to create policies and programs (such as employment equity).

#### E

#### Economic Intelligence

The use of innovative approaches to identify sources of information, then analyzing and manipulating the information to assist in decision making.

Economic intelligence (EI) is closely linked to other information management approaches such as knowledge management - knowledge gathered within an organization – or business intelligence – using software tools to gather quantitative information.

#### Emotional Intelligence

The ability, capacity or skill - or a self-perceived ability - to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, others and groups

Emotional intelligence is the awareness of and ability to manage one's emotions in a healthy and productive manner.

#### Employment Equity

Provision of jobs and job conditions in a fair and unbiased manner  
This requires policies and strategies which create and foster equal access to opportunities for all members of the organization. In the context of the workplace, commitment to equity is evidenced by fair hiring policies and the provision of opportunities for professional development in recognition of the implications of diverse backgrounds and pre-existing knowledge (or lack thereof).

#### Employment Equity Measures

Processes to create equal access to people who face barriers in access to employment, education, social services, housing, etc., because of their membership in one of the designated groups

Also see Preferential Measures

#### Environmental Racism

Intentional or unintentional racial discrimination in the provision and enforcement of environmental rules and regulations

Environmental racism can include the intentional or unintentional targeting of racial minority communities as locations for polluting industries, waste treatment plants or resource use. Racially visible people, indigenous peoples, working class and poor people suffer disproportionately from the location of hazardous goods and

In the workplace, racialization can limit career advancement for members of racial groups incorrectly perceived to be less professional, less rational/objective/driven/ambitious, etc.

#### Racialized Group

A term that underlines the social construct of race which ranks individuals and people groups based on race. The term racialized group more accurately reflects the economic, social, political and cultural power relationship that is implicit in racism and racial discrimination. Also see visible minority.

#### Racism

Differential treatment of individuals through institutional, cultural and individual practices and beliefs which assign differential value to people according to their race (also see environmental racism)

Racist behavior humiliates, intimidates, isolates and excludes an individual or group by focusing on a person's or group's race, ethnicity, and place of origin or skin color.

Examples of racist behavior in the workplace can include unwelcome verbal, written, or physical actions, or limiting opportunities for persons of a certain race.

#### Rainbow Flag

A symbol of the gay and lesbian movement.

The now-familiar red/orange/yellow/green/blue/violet-banded triangle was designed in 1978 and is recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers.

#### Reasonable Accommodation

The responsibility of employers, unions, service providers, etc., to adapt or adjust facilities, services or employment requirements to the needs of an individual or group protected by human rights legislation up to the point of undue hardship.

#### Refugee

A person admitted to Canada from abroad due to that person's well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion,

desires. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer.

## R

### Race

Race is a construct to describe each of the major divisions of humankind, loosely summarizing ancestry, place of origin, skin colour and/or ethnicity.

Race and racial difference has been matched to divisions and inequalities in society, including access to employment, accommodation and services. Race is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

### Race Relations

Interactions between diverse racial groups within one society

### Racial Group

A broad and non-technical term used to refer to groups of people, usually with a shared biological heritage, which are distinguished by their skin color and/or physical characteristics  
Racial groups are determined by socially selected physical traits (see ethnic group).

### Racial Minority (ies)

See racialized group and visible minority (ies)

### Racial Slur

Words or terms used to insult individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity or nationality

### Racialization

The social process by which (racial) groups are singled out for unequal treatment on the basis of real or imagined physical (race-related) characteristics; a set of powerful beliefs and ideas about race that directs decisions resulting in social hierarchy with differential status and access to civic society for groups perceived as 'racially different'

introduction of water pollutants in their communities.

### Ephebiphobia

The irrational fear of adolescents and a prejudice against teenagers

### Equality

The quality, fact or state of being the "same"

Equality is an ideal in regard to providing the same opportunity to all - BUT treating everyone equally (the same) does not create equality. The bases are unequal because society consists of levels (class, advantage, privilege, exclusion, etc.).

### Episodic Disability

A physical or mental illness which is unpredictably recurrent

This can include recurrence during recovery from chemotherapy, arthritis flare-ups, episodes of bipolar depression, etc.

### Ethnic Group

A population sharing a genealogical or ancestral heritage or historical background linked by a common cultural practice, language, and sometimes, religion, belief or tradition

### Ethnicity

An ethnic group is socially defined on the basis of cultural characteristics of diverse types such as language, religion, kinship, organization, dress and mannerisms, or any other set of cultural criteria deemed relevant to the persons concerned.

Use of "ethnicity" rather than or in addition to "race" is preferable in written text as it has fewer negative connotations.

### Ethnocentrism

The tendency to view others using one's own group and customs as the standard for judgment, and the tendency to see one's group and customs as superior.

### Ethno-cultural

Concerning, about, or with reference to a particular ethnic group

## Equity

An application of fairness which incorporates justice in providing opportunities to all and which enables the disadvantaged to eventually attain equality

Equity takes into account the unequal access experienced by disadvantaged groups (see Employment Equity).

## Eurocentrism

Presupposes the supremacy and superiority of Europe and Europeans in world culture, and relates history according to a European perception and experience.

## F

### Family Status

The grouping of individual(s) in a family through blood relation, marital, sexual, economic or other close association

Family status is a protected characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and has been defined as being in a "parent and child relationship."

The definition of family status includes the presence or absence of children, the belonging to a consistent unit of affiliation.

In addressing the need for a work/life balance, a number of organizations have developed family-friendly policies.

### Family-Friendly Policies

Policies in an organization which provide flexible working arrangements to accommodate the family obligations of staff

While in the past these policies were mainly focused on childcare, there is a shift to include eldercare as well as care for relatives who don't fit into either category (elderly or children).

Inclusive organizations need to consider and account for various family types (including single parent families, blended families and same-gender partnerships) when formulating family-friendly policies.

### First Nations People Native Canadians

- ◆ physical disability
- ◆ source of income
- ◆ race
- ◆ marital status
- ◆ mental disability
- ◆ sexual orientation
- ◆ color
- ◆ sex (gender)
- ◆ sex (harassment)
- ◆ political affiliation
- ◆ creed
- ◆ religion
- ◆ ethnic, national or aboriginal origin
- ◆ association with individuals with any of the above characteristics and
- ◆ irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease

## Q

### Quality Assessment

Evaluating the organization's quality assurance goals

### Quality Assurance

A declaration, solemn promise or guarantee about the standard of general excellence in organization's performance or role as manifest in programs and practices

In the workplace quality assurance can be applied to service provision and organizational policies, both internal and external

### Queer

Once a negative term to describe those who did not meet societal norms of sexual behaviour, queer is now used by many LGBTIQ people to describe themselves.

An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTIQ people. Can also be a political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as fluid. A simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and



### Prejudice

A set of negative personal beliefs about a social group that leads individuals to prejudge people from that group, or the group in general, regardless of individual differences among members of that group

Prejudice can come from anyone, and can even exist between people who may be perceived by others to be the same. All that is required is some way for a prejudiced individual to see or think of another as different.

### Pride

Short for lesbian/gay pride, commonly used to indicate the commemoration of New York's Stonewall Inn riots, e.g., the annual Pride Parade.

### Privilege

A right or advantage available only to a particular group of people

### Protected Areas

These are public spaces in which discrimination of individuals takes place. The following are protected areas identified in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act:

- ◆ Accommodation
- ◆ Access to services or facilities
- ◆ Employment
- ◆ Volunteer public service
- ◆ Service provision
- ◆ Purchase or sale of property
- ◆ Media (publication, broadcast or advertisement) and
- ◆ Membership in an association or organization (including professional, business, trade, employers or employees)

### Protected Characteristics

These are the features for which discrimination is prohibited. The following are protected characteristics identified in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act:

- ◆ age
- ◆ family status

This term came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which many people thought offensive or inaccurate, referring as it does to people from the country of India. Although the term First Nations is widely used, no legal definition exists. Many First Nations people have adopted the term First Nation to replace the word "band" in the name of their communities. The term does not refer to Inuit or Métis, considered separate groups.

### Frontline

The members of an organization's staff closest to the public; that is, the service-user interface (see Frontline Staff)

### Frontline Challenge

Improved quality of service may require providing for and trusting the judgment capability of the organization's frontline

### Frontline Staff

Staff which work directly with customers, clients or beneficiaries of public services, often as part of wider service delivery of operational groups of staff

In the workplace frontline staffs often have more operational expertise than understanding of policy and program development. Early involvement of frontline staff in the planning process ensures effective implementation of policy and programs and addresses the frontline challenge.

## G

### Gay

Refers to the sexual orientation of homosexuality.

Openly gay/lesbian: preferred over "self-avowed," "self-admitted," "self-confessed" or "practicing" where the sexual orientation of the individual is germane to the story, "Acknowledged" is acceptable if the context calls for it.

### Gay Relationships

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people use various terms to describe their commitments. If possible, ask the individual what term he or she prefers. If not possible, partner is generally acceptable.

### Gender

Socially-constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes considered appropriate for men and women

Gender is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

### Gender Equality

The envisaged equality between the sexes in all areas, including employment, education and social rights.

### Gender Expression

Also known as Gender Presentation

The external behaviours and characteristics (i.e., dress, mannerisms, social interactions, speech patterns, etc.) that a person displays in order to indicate their gender identity through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and emphasizing, de-emphasizing or changing physical characteristics.

### Gender Identity

An internal sense of being male or female which can be partially or fully opposed to physical anatomy and gender roles assigned at birth (see Transgender)

### Gender Inequality

Unfair overt (obvious) or covert (hidden) differential treatment of individuals based on gender

The workplace often mirrors and may exacerbate gender inequalities and discrimination in society; for instance, income disparity, in situations where women with the same qualifications as men are paid less for doing the same job.

### Gender Mainstreaming

The process of creating the knowledge, awareness of and responsibility for gender equity in the workplace, incorporating such policies into the workplace culture, and ensuring that gender difference is treated as inconsequential within the workplace culture

A term which applies to all people who are not seen as white by the dominant group, generally used by racialized groups as an alternative to the term "visible minority." It emphasizes that skin colour is a key consideration in the everyday experiences of their lives. The term is an attempt to describe people with a more positive term than "non-white" or "minority," which frames them in the context of the dominant group

### Perceptive Discrimination

Also known as discrimination by perception, this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic, even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### Political Belief, Affiliation or Activity

One's connection with or support for a particular political party or group.

Political affiliation is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Lack of political affiliation can also be grounds for a discrimination complaint under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

### Power

Possessing control, influence or authority

It is a state of relationship between individuals and/or groups, implied or overt, whereby one has the ability to exercise influence or control over another.

In the workplace, power can be manifest in organizational authority by professional status, social status, cultural group, religious affiliation, physical size and so on.

### Preferential Measures

Usually used in the context of employment equity, and referred to as Employment Equity measures. These are targeted measures directed towards specific groups in order to overcome the specific identified barriers to participation in a representative workforce.

A racial slur; a derogatory term often used to address or refer to dark-skinned persons (of Black African ancestry)

#### Negative Impact

A harmful effect or impression that is a result of a negative event  
For instance, the feeling of humiliation is a negative impact of an event.

#### Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

This is the statute that governs human rights law in Nova Scotia.

O

#### Occupational Assignment

The types of tasks staff are asked to perform in accordance with their job description. Ideally, occupational assignment should be based solely on qualification and ability; however, certain tasks may be perceived to be assigned differentially within the workplace in instances of discrimination based on gender, assumptions about abilities (for persons with disability), or race and ethnicity.

#### Official Language

In Canada, English and French are the national official languages. In the provinces and territories, one or the other of the languages is official, except in New Brunswick where both languages have official status.

#### Oppressed

The state of being in the minority or underclass due to harsh or unjust treatment

#### Oppression

The act of dominating others by treating them harshly or with injustice

Prolonged harsh or cruel treatment based on one or a combination of factors by which 'difference' or 'otherness' is determined, including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, class, etc.

P

#### People of Colour

This requires a change in attitudes and organizational cultures which may impede successful mainstreaming.

#### Gender Neutral

Gender-inclusive pronouns are pronouns that neither reveal nor imply the gender or the sex of a person; androgynous pronouns can refer to neither or both genders

Gender neutral implies having equal impact on both men and women, giving them equal access to resources and benefits of a development initiative. In publications, writers use phrasing that can be applicable to either gender. In languages other than English, when only a gender-specific word happens to be available, a gender-inclusive expression may be coined to replace it.

#### Generation X, Y and Z

Generation X (Gen-Xer) is a term used in many countries around the world to describe persons born from 1965 to around 1982

Generation Y (see Millennials)

Generation Z describes persons born after 1997

#### Generational Diversity

Currently, four generations working side-by-side in the workforce.

This includes traditionalists, baby boomers, Gen-Xers and Gen-Yers (or millenials). While each worker is an individual, each generation has its own culture, motivations and priorities. By better understanding the four generations that make up today's workforce employers can target or broaden their recruitment and retention strategies.

When only a gender-specific word happens to be available, a gender-inclusive neologism may be coined to replace it.

#### HIV

Human immunodeficiency virus

Generally accepted as the cause of AIDS. HIV-positive means testing

positive for the antibodies to HIV, which implies carrying HIV. Note: HIV virus is redundant

#### Harassment

Harassment is a course of comment or conduct which is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment on or related to any of the protected characteristics in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act is prohibited.

Workplace harassment can occur as objectionable or unprofessional conduct or comment directed towards a specific individual(s), serves no legitimate purpose and has the effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive work environment.

#### Hate Group

Group promoting highly offensive attitudes towards or committing acts of violence against people of a particular racial, religious or social group.

#### Heritage Language

The first language or original language of an ethnic group, other than French and English (Canada's official languages)

When there are multiple languages and cultures represented in the workplace, it should be understood that communication problems will arise, and employers should develop a system of dealing with the challenge.

Language used in advertising material should be adapted to reflect, and meet the needs of, the local community an organization serves. It would be useful to translate print materials (brochures, fact sheets, etc.) for service users at the local level into the various languages present. For instance: Mandarin, Chinese, Arabic, Tagalog, and so on.

#### Heterosexism

The institutional, cultural and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their sexual orientation, and the negative attitude, personal prejudice and discriminatory behavior against people who are gay, lesbian or

These are the children of the baby boomers, born between the years 1980 to 1997. They are also referred to as Generation Y and are successors to Generation X.

#### Minority Group

A group that is numerically small in comparison to the general population AND lacks power or has restricted access to social, economic, political and educational structures due to such characteristics as ethnicity, language, race, sex (gender), sexual orientation, disability and religion

#### Moral Rights

These rights are based on general principles of fairness and justice and are not necessarily legally binding (see legal rights)

#### Multicultural

The ability of an individual to participate actively in several cultures without having to negate one's ethnic identity

People often bring their multi-dimensional identities into the workplace (including ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, gender, abilities, age and sexual orientation), resulting in practices influenced by several layers of values, beliefs and attitudes .

#### Multiculturalism

A societal policy that endorses cultural pluralism where all cultures have equal status

Multiculturalism implies that the many cultural groups have equal status; no cultural group has more power than another.

#### Multigenerational Workforce

See Generational Diversity

#### Muslim

An adherent of the Islamic faith.

#### N

(The) N-word

Commitment to equity and inclusion will require clear policies at the highest level of the organization as well as the formulation of consistent procedures for dealing with people and conflicts between people (see complaint process).

It is useful to keep in mind that effective learning takes place when people are motivated both by the learning process itself and the purpose of the learning.

#### Legal Rights

Rights enforceable by law

Legal rights can be defended or enforced before courts, tribunals or other administrative bodies.

### M

#### Marginalization

The process through which people are prevented from finding work, attaining enhanced levels of education, gaining access to social services and therefore cannot become fully participating members of society (also see disenfranchised )

#### Marital Status

Descriptions of an individual's state of relationship including: common-law, divorced, engaged, married, separated, single, spousal (including same-sex) and widowed

Marital status is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

#### Mediation

A negotiation to resolve differences between two parties conducted by an impartial (neutral) third party (the mediator)

Mediation is a useful way to resolve conflicts which arise within the work environment.

#### Mental Health

A term used to describe a level of cognitive or emotional wellbeing

#### Millennials

bisexual or transgendered.

#### Homophobia

The irrational fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and hatred or intolerance brought about by this fear, and the negative attitude toward women or men who are homosexual

However, not all discrimination against homosexual persons is based on phobia (see heterosexism).

#### Human Rights

The universal recognition of the right of all persons to fairness and freedom by moral and/or legal entitlement

Human rights are protected and become enforceable when they are codified as statutes, conventions, covenants or treaties (see Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, Treaty).

### I

#### Immigrant

One who moves from his/her native country to another with the intention of settling for the purpose of forging a better life or for better opportunities for personal, political, religious, social or economic reasons.

The word is sometimes used incorrectly to refer, implicitly or explicitly, to people of colour or with non-dominant ethnicities.

#### Impact

A strong effect or impression; in human rights, impact refers to a significant outcome as a result of a negative event (see negative impact)

Impact is the key element in deciding if discrimination or harassment has occurred during a complaints process.

#### Income

Source of income (where an individual obtains her/his income) is a protected characteristic in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

#### Indian Act

Introduced shortly after Confederation.

The Indian Act was an amalgamation of pre-Confederation colonial legislation updated to meet the needs of the emerging Canadian state to expand and allow European settlement. This legislation governs the federal government's legal and political relationship with Aboriginal peoples across Canada, has been amended many times, and actually became more repressive to further Canada's early goals of assimilation. Since 1945 more draconian elements have been removed to comply with international human rights law.

#### Islam

The monotheistic religion followed by Muslims, whose beliefs are articulated by their scriptural text, the Qur'an. "Islam" means "submission to God." There are three large and several smaller denominations within the Islamic faith, and 1.5 billion adherents worldwide,

#### Islamophobia

An irrational fear or prejudice towards Islam or Muslims, which has significantly increased in the Western world since the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11, 2001.

J

#### Jeunism

A preference for younger people purely on the basis of their age. Often linked to employment, some sectors favour younger candidates to project a certain image.

#### Jurisdiction

In law, the authority granted to a legal body or to a political leader to deal with legal matters, and to pronounce or enforce legal matters

Issues of jurisdiction can be legally complex. For example: The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has jurisdiction to deal with allegations of discrimination on the basis of race by a landlord against a tenant within the province.

However, it does not have jurisdiction to deal with allegations of discrimination on the basis of race by an employer in the field of interprovincial transportation. (This would fall within the jurisdiction of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.)

#### Jurisdiction (Aboriginal Perspective)

Legislation governing First Nations jurisdiction is a complex segment of Canadian law. Existing laws and treaties governing First Nations jurisdiction may be subject to clarification, amendment and/or reinterpretation in the courts.

Although the federal government has been assigned jurisdiction to most affairs related to First Nations people and First Nations communities, it is advisable to consult with the Office of Aboriginal affairs to determine whether or not a particular issue is assigned to the federal or provincial government

K

#### Knowledge Management

Identifying, creating, presenting and distributing knowledge tied to organizational objectives such as improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation, developmental processes

Focuses on the management of knowledge in an organization as an asset and the development and cultivation of channels through which knowledge and information flow

L

#### LGBTIQ

An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (Transsexual) and Intersexed people.

#### Language

In Canada, the official languages are English and French. However, census statistics show that there are areas in the country where people don't use either of these languages in the workplace (see Heritage Language).

Misunderstandings in a multilingual and culturally diverse workplace can occur from small nuances in the language used (spoken or written).

#### Learning Organization

An organization which continually creates desired results because people at all organizational levels are individually and collectively increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about