**Definitions for the Anti-Racism Taskforce, Trent University**

This document defines terms related to the work of the Anti-Racism Taskforce, Trent University.

**Purpose:** The main purpose of this document is to promote common understanding among the members of the taskforce. This is a working document, which will be refined and updated as the work of the Anti-Racism Taskforce progresses.

Source for each term is provided in the bibliography at the end of the document.

**AODA**: stands for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The AODA is a government organization that works to make sure that Ontario obeys standards of accessibility.1

**Ableism:**attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities are assumed to be less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and take part, and of less value than other people. Ableism can be conscious or unconscious and is embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. 2

**Aboriginal identity:** is a government-used term referring to whether the person identified with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the *Constitution Act*, 1982, Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.3

**Accessibility:** 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. 4

**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. 5

**Adverse impact:** having a harmful result. Sometimes treating everyone the same will have a negative effect on some people.6

**Affirmative action:**action designed to address the historic disadvantage that identifiable groups (e.g., women, racialized persons) have experienced by increasing their representation in employment and/or higher education. 7

**Anti-racism/Anti-oppression:**an active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes.8

**Antisemitism:**consists of anti-Jewish attitudes, actions or systemic conditions. It includes negative beliefs and feelings about Jews, hostile behavior ddirected against Jews, and conditions that discriminate against Jews and impede their ability to participate as equals in political, religious, cultural, economic, or social life.9

**Audism:** refers to discrimination against D/deaf or hard of hearing people.10

**Barrier:**anything that prevents a person from fully taking part in all aspects of society, including physical, architectural, information or communications, attitudinal, economic and technological barriers, as well as policies or practices.11

**Bias:**a predisposition, prejudice or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes.12

**Bigotry:** intolerance, negative attitudes or stereotypes related to another person’s creed, race, sexual orientation, etc.13

**Black employees:** employees with African ancestry and who are racialized as Black, regardless of their cultural identity or where they were born (such as, but not limited to, Africa, Canada, Caribbean, South America).14

**Cis/cisgender:** Describes someone whose gender aligns with the one assigned to them at birt**h**.15

**Culture:** the customs, beliefs, behaviours and/or achievements of a particular time and/or people; behaviour within a particular group.16

**Cultural competence:** 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:

1. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
2. Attitude towards cultural differences
3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
4. Cross-cultural skills (developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures.17

**Culturally competent organization:** an organization that displays cultural competence, in both its systems and individual behaviour.18

**D/deaf:** “Deaf” with a capital ‘D’ refers to Deaf identity and culture. “deaf” with a lower-case ‘d’ refers to the experience of not hearing, or being hard-of-hearing.19

**Decolonization**: means working towards restoring freedom and self-determination of Indigenous peoples. It means respecting Indigenous people and their lived experiences, and moving away from ways of thinking that give white people (settlers) unjust rights and privilege over people of colour and Indigenous peoples. 20

**Dimensions of diversity:** the unique personal characteristics that distinguish us as individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to: age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, class, creed, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise.21

**Disability**: is an evolving concept and results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.22

“Disability” according to the Accessibility for Ontario Disability Act means,

(a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

(b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

(c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

(d) a mental disorder, or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”)23

It is recognized that this definition is in need of change. (See https://www.aoda.ca/definition-of-disability/)

**Disaggregated data:** In the context of race-based data, this means breaking down composite ("aggregate") categories such as "visible minority" into component parts, such as Black, Chinese, Arab etc.24

**Discrimination:** an action or a decision that results in the unfair or negative treatment of a person or group, for reasons such as their race, age, gender, religion etc.25

**Sexual Discrimination** - includes discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, sexual orientation, etc.

**Racial Discrimination** - includes discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, etc.

**Discrimination on the basis of Disability** - involves discrimination against a person on the basis of their physical, psychological or mental ability or impairment.26

**Discriminatory practice(s)**: The following are examples of discriminatory practices when they are based on one of the grounds of discrimination:

* Denying someone goods, services, facilities or accommodation.
* Refusing to employ or continue to employ someone or treating them unfairly in the workplace.
* Paying men and women differently when they are doing work of the same value.
* Following policies or practices that deprive people of employment opportunities.
* Harassing someone.
* Retaliating against a person who has filed a discrimination complaint with the Commission, acted as a witness or represented the complainant.27

**Diversity:** the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within an individual, group or organization. Diversity includes such factors as age, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise.28

**Duty to Accommodate**: the duty of an employer to make changes in the workplace to accommodate a person with a disability or for a service provider to adapt the way service is provided.29

**East Asian people:**people who share ancestry, heritage and culture from several countries and regions, such as: Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.30

**Equal opportunity:**aims to ensure that all people have equal access, free of barriers, equal participation and equal benefit from whatever an organization has to offer. Note that equal opportunity extends beyond employment.31

**Equal treatment:**treatment that brings about an equality of results and that may, in some instances, require different treatment. For example, to give all students equal treatment in entering a building, it may be necessary to provide a ramp for a student who uses a wheelchair.32

**Equitable:** just or characterized by fairness or equity. Equitable treatment can at times differ from same treatment.33

**Equity:** fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals, and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person’s life.34

**Ethnicity:** sharing a distinctive cultural and historical tradition often associated with race, place of origin, ancestry or creed.35

**Exclusion:** denying access to a place, group, privilege, etc.36

**First Nation(s)/First Nations People:**this term became common use in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian.” Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition exists. The term has also been adopted to replace the word “Band” in the naming of communities. Many people today prefer to be called “First Nations” or “First Nations People” instead of “Indians.” Generally, “First Nations People” is used to describe both Status and Non-Status Indians. The term is rarely used as a synonym for “Aboriginal Peoples” because it usually does not include Inuit or Métis people.37

**Harassment:** engaging in a course of comments or actions that are known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. It can involve words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning or unwelcome. Harassment under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* is based on the prohibited/protected grounds (see definition).38

**Sexual harassment** is a form of harassment involving comment or conduct of a sexual nature that is known, or ought to be known, to be unwelcome where submission to such comment / conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic status, or academic accreditation; or submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment, or for academic performance, status or accreditation decisions affecting such individual; or such conduct interferes with an individual's work or academic performance; or such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

Sexual harassment can include but is not limited to: sexual assault or threats of a sexual nature; unwelcome sexual advances, invitations or requests; demands for sexual favours; innuendos, taunting or degrading words about a person's body, appearance or gender/sexual orientation; leering; sexually derogatory or offensive remarks about an individual; inquiries or comments about a person’s sex life; and displays of degrading or offensive sexual material including sexual jokes.39

**Racial Harassment** - includes harassment on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, etc.

**General Harassment** - includes harassing behaviour not on any of the grounds discussed above (i.e. bullying or personal harassment).40

**Historical disadvantage:** disadvantage resulting from historic patterns of institutionalized and other forms of systemic discrimination, sometimes legalized social, political, cultural, ethnic, religious and economic discrimination, as well as discrimination in employment. This also includes under-representation experienced by disadvantaged groups such as women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, LGBT persons and racialized people.41

**IBPOC:** is a short-form way of saying: “Indigenous, Black and People of Colour.”42

**Inclusion**: appreciating and using our unique differences – strengths, talents, weaknesses and frailties – in a way that shows respect for the individual and ultimately creates a dynamic multi-dimensional organization.43

**Inclusive design**: Taking into account differences among individuals and groups when designing something, to avoid creating barriers. Inclusive design can apply to systems, facilities, programs, policies, services, education, etc.44

**Indigenous People:** the term [Indigenous peoples](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people) refers to [First Nations](https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/first-nations), [Métis](https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis) and [Inuit](https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit) peoples.45

**Indigenization:** involves bringing Indigenous Peoples, including their diverse cultures, traditions, knowledge and ways of knowing into all facets of the university, such as governance structures, strategic planning, academic programming, research activity, and student/faculty recruitment.46

**Interdependence:** Two or more people or things that take care of one another in respectful and reciprocal ways.47

**Intersectionality:** acknowledges the ways in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers or opportunities.48

**Intersex:** a general term that refers to someone whose biological (reproductive, chromosomal and/or genital) make up does not align with traditional medical understandings of male or female.49a

**Islamophobia:** includes racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial proﬁling, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level.49

**LGBTQ+:**short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more. “GLBT” is also used. This is a commonly used acronym to reference the queer and trans community. It may also be written as GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) or LGBTQ2SIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit, Intersex and asexual), however there is immerging voices from Two Spirit and Intersex communities to not be included within the specific acronym. This is due to the inherent cultural components that accompany Two Spirit, as well as the medical nature of intersex.50

**Marginalization:** the process by which individuals and groups are prevented from fully participating in society. Marginalized populations can experience barriers to accessing meaningful employment, adequate housing, education, recreation, clean water, health services and other social determinants of health. Both community and individual health are deeply impacted by marginalization.51

**Marginalized populations**: groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.52

**Members of visible minorities:** means persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.53

**Neurodiverse:** refers to the idea that people experience things in many different ways. Our bodies, our minds, and our nervous systems are varied and include all kinds of different responses to our environments. A person who is neurodiverse may experience different sensations and responses to the world. Autism and autistic ways of thinking are

common examples of neurodiversity, though there are many other ways to be neurodiverse.54

**Non-binary:** an umbrella term used by some to reference a gender that is not within the traditional binaries of gender (i.e. someone who is not a man or woman).55

**Person/people of colour:**an inclusive term that encompasses a wide range of social identity groups, including Indigenous, Black, East Asian, South Asian, Latina/Latino persons.56

**Power:** access to privileges such as information/knowledge, connections, experience and expertise, resources and decision-making that enhance a person’s chances of getting what they need to live a comfortable, safe, productive and profitable life.57

**Prejudice:** negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics.58

**Privilege:** is a word that describes the benefits and advantages that a person receives because their position in society is understood as more important, valuable, or desirable than others. One example of having privilege is being thin. Thin people live in the world without encountering discrimination or exclusion based on their size that fat people experience, and with the feeling that public space was built with them in mind.59

**Prohibited/protected grounds:** the Ontario *Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination or harassment based on these personal characteristics. The specific protected grounds include: age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity and gender expression (recently added to the *Code*), marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, receipt of public assistance (in housing) and record of offences (in employment).60

**Pronouns:** refers to ways that people use in reference of others in place of a name, including but not limited to he/him/his, she/her/hers and they/them/theirs. Pronouns are always mandatory, should not be assumed based on expression (i.e. appearance, mannerism, name, etc.) and do not inherently have gender. 61

**Questioning:** exploring one’s own sexual and/or gender.62

**Race:**  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. See Racialization.63

**Racial profiling:** any action that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin, or a combination of these, rather than on a reasonable suspicion to single out a person for greater scrutiny or different treatment.64

**Racialization:** the process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics. 65

**Racialized employees:** refer to employees who can have racial meanings attributed to them as a group in ways that negatively impact their work and social life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as “visible minority” under the Canadian census and may include employees impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.66

**Racism:** any individual action, or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination.67

**Sanism:** refers to discrimination against people with lived experience in mental healthcare systems or institutions.68

**Stereotype:** incorrect assumption based on things like race, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, religion, etc. Stereotyping typically involves attributing the same characteristics to all members of a group regardless of their individual differences. It is often based on misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations.69

**Settler/Settler privilege:** settler is a word used by some people to acknowledge their relation to their ancestors who colonized Indigenous land. The phrase “settler privilege” is used to describe the ways that settlers (non-Indigenous people) today benefit from colonialism.70

**South Asian:** a native or inhabitant of the Indian subcontinent including countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.71

**Spoonie/spoons:** terms that come from a story created by Christine Miserandino. This story describes one’s capacity for day-to-day tasks based on how much pain and/or energy a person has. The amount of spoons a person has refers to the capacity they have on any given day, and depends on how they feel. Some of us who experience pain, fatigue, and/or chronic illness may call ourselves a spoonie as a way of telling others that we have to be careful to not use up all of our limited energy, or “spoons”.72

**Systemic barrier:** a barrier embedded in the social or administrative structures of an organization, including the physical accessibility of an organization, organizational policies, practices and decision-making processes, or the culture of an organization. These may appear neutral on the surface but exclude members of groups protected by the *Human Rights Code*73

**Systemic Discrimination**: occurs when patterns of behaviour, policies or practices which are part of an organization’s structure unintentionally create or perpetuate disadvantage for a group of persons who are identified by a prohibited ground of discrimination. Complaints of systemic discrimination are handled differently than individual complaints.74

**Systemic or institutional racism:** consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized persons. These appear neutral on the surface but, nevertheless, have an exclusionary impact on racialized persons.75

**Trans/transgender:** refers to someone whose gender does not align with the one assigned to them at birth.76

**Treaty:** is a formal agreement between nations or countries. Historically and today, First Nations and Inuit leaders understand treaties as living agreements between nations that ensure the well-being of all people, beings, and the land. Colonial leaders have, historically and today, used treaties as agreements that ensure their continued access to power and

control over land, animals, and people.77

**Turtle Island:** is the original, pre-colonial name of the land that today we call North America. Turtle Island was and is still the name for the land used by Indigenous people and non-Indigenous allies who are working towards decolonization.78

**Two-spirit:** is a word used by some Indigenous people to describe their gender, sexual, and spiritual identity that is different from colonial understandings of gender and sexuality.79

**Undue hardship**: circumstances involving cost, health or safety issues that would make it impossible or very difficult for an employer or service provider to meet the duty to accommodate.80

**White:** people belonging to any of various peoples with light coloured skin, usually of European origin. The term has become an indicator less of skin colour and more of racialized characteristics.81

**White supremacy:** the idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Drawing from critical race theory, the term "white supremacy" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level. 82

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