
CWL - Glossary of Terms

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.

African Canadian: a Canadian of African origin or descent.

Aboriginal Peoples: a collective name for the original people of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution (the *Constitution Act*, 1982) recognizes three groups of Aboriginal Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – as separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Band: the *Indian Act* defines band as a body of First Nations people for whose common use and benefit lands have been set aside or monies held by the Government of Canada or declared by the Governor in Council to be a band. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one Chief and several Councillors. Community members elect the Chief and Councillors, or sometimes choose them through traditional custom. Band members generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations.

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

Black: a social construct referring to people who have dark skin colour and/or other related racialized characteristics. The term has become less of an indicator of skin colour and more of racialized characteristics. Diverse societies apply different criteria to determine who is Black.

Colonialism: a process by which a foreign power dominates and exploits indigenous groups by taking their land and resources, extracting their wealth, and using them as cheap labour. The term also refers to a specific era of European expansion into the Americas and countries of the South, between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. Colonialism was explained by racial doctrines which tried to justify these practices. These ideas about race, superiority and inferiority are still widespread. Uncovering and challenging both the ideas and ongoing practices of colonialism is an important part of racial equity work

Colonization: The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

The action of appropriating a place or domain for one's own use

Disability: There are two common ways of looking at what disability is.

One way is 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.

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.

Eurocentric: Focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world; implicitly regarding European culture as pre-eminent.

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.

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.

Indian: this term is used to identify people the Government of Canada recognizes as having Indian status – people who have an identifiable band, who live or were born on a reserve, and/or who are recognized under a complex set of rules under the *Indian Act* (1985). The term does not include Inuit or Métis peoples. There are three categories of

Indians in Canada: Status Indians; Non-Status Indians; and Treaty Indians. Note: The term “Indian” is considered outdated by many people, and “First Nation(s)” is typically used instead.

Indian Act: Canadian legislation first passed in 1876 and amended several times since, most recently in 1985. It sets out certain federal government obligations and regulates the management of reserve lands, Indian monies and other resources.

Indigenous peoples: The OHRC uses the term “Indigenous peoples,” which is based on the Statistics Canada term “Aboriginal identity.” “Aboriginal identity” refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian (registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band.

Inuit: the Aboriginal Peoples of Arctic Canada who live primarily in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and northern parts of Labrador and Québec. The word Inuit means “people” in the Inuit language – Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk. Their traditional languages, customs and cultures are distinctly different from those of the First Nations and Métis.

Métis: French term meaning “mixed blood.” The Canadian Constitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three Aboriginal Peoples. The term is used broadly to describe people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people.

Patriarchy: A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

Person/people of colour: an inclusive term that encompasses a wide range of social identity groups, including Asians, Aboriginal Peoples, Latinas/Latinos and Blacks.

Status Indian: a person recognized by the federal government as being registered under the *Indian Act* is referred to as a Registered Indian (commonly referred to as a Status Indian).

Systemic discrimination: 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 groups identified under the *Human Rights Code*.

Transgender or Trans: a person whose biological sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity.

Turtle Island – used by some Indigenous people to describe what is now referred to as North America. There are some women born on this land who do not identify as ‘Canadian’. There are other women included in this resource, who were born on traditional territory long before colonizers drew boundaries we see on maps today.

It is our intention to record and celebrate stories about First Nations, Metis and Inuit women respectfully and sensitively. As non-Indigenous writers of this resource, we look to scholars like: Thomas King, (2010), Margaret Kovach, (2009), Shawn Wilson, (2008), who emphasize that this work must be done in ‘A Good Way’. We use the words Turtle Island in order to recognize and respect the relationships and identities of these incredible women.