Glossary of Terms

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to create a glossary of terms used at Abilities Centre to date. Establishing standardized Abilities Centre-specific definitions across the organization allows for a common language to be used and ensures that the meanings behind specific terms are universally understood by all staff.

The definitions were pulled from consultation with the literature, other organizations, and the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion glossary. Further, all definitions were reviewed by various Abilities Centre departments to ensure accuracy, applicability, and relevance of terms. This Abilities Centre-specific glossary will continue to be updated as terms evolve or change.

Abilities Centre's Values were identified and created by Staff members of Abilities Centre. Through a fulsome and collaborative process, Staff identified the values that they believed were upheld by Abilities Centre. These new values reflect our new direction and align with our purpose to *unlock potential through accessibility*, our vision to *create a better, barrier-free life for all Canadians* and our mission to *reimagine accessibility and redefine the way Canadians live, work, and play*. All our work at Abilities Centre is done through the lens of Accessibility and Inclusion and our new values demonstrate how we get there.

The terms in this glossary are categorized by usage and include Abilities Centre's Values, Impact Terms, related Terms, IDEA Terms, and Demographic Terms.

Abilities Centre's Values

Person-centred

Prioritizing the needs and well-being of individuals in decision-making and actions, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Genuine

Committing to communicating information and behaving in a way that is authentic, honest, and aligned with stated priorities and principles.

Flexible

Adapting and adjusting to changing circumstances, environments, and situations to consider new approaches and ideas that are accessible and inclusive.

Innovative

Challenging the norm and thinking of new and creative ways to achieve goals and best practices, while taking calculated risks and embracing change.

Collaborative

Seeking out and valuing the input of others and those with lived experience to work together and build an inclusive community.

Impact Terms

Economic Participation

An individual's meaningful involvement in the development of skills and abilities to provide access to adequate income, benefits, and personal resources.

Health and Wellbeing

An individual's current state or their satisfaction with their physical and mental health, psychological and emotional wellbeing, and personal development.

Impact

The outcome of an organization's work on the individuals they serve, the greater community, and their ability to create change at a local or global level.

Quality of Life

An individual's overall physical, social, and emotional wellbeing related to their personal set of values and determined by objective and subjective evaluations of their experiences.

Research

A collection of evidence-informed knowledge and experience to address unmet needs and create novel and meaningful contributions to better support the community.

Social Inclusion

An individual's meaningful participation, to the extent they choose, in an environment with others that fosters a sense of belonging, autonomy, and shared support.

General Terms

Autonomy
An individual's ability to have independence, choice, control.

Belongingness
An individual's ability to experience a sense of belonging to a group; acceptance/respect from others; included at interpersonal or societal levels.

Challenge
An individual's ability to feel like the tasks posed sufficiently test their skills.

Co-design
A participatory, iterative, and reflective process involving diverse parties including professional experts and experts in lived experience. All parties participate equally and reciprocally from the very beginning of the process (during the design phase) and continuously throughout the process (during the implementation and feedback stage). Co-design leverages everyone's collective expertise and experience to support a common goal.

Co-development
A voluntary partnership that involves ongoing discussion and collaboration to deliver on agreed-upon outcomes and is grounded in establishing shared power, equality, and exchange between all invested parties/stakeholders.

Co-facilitation
A process that enables two or more individuals to collaborate in designing, delivering, and leading a workshop, program, or event to a target audience.

Competence
An individual's belief in their capability to perform a task or action.

Engagement
An individual's participation in the activity; motivated; focused, involved; experiencing flow.

Invested Parties/Stakeholder
Any individual involved in a program or project with a vested interest in the outcome.

Knowledge Translation

A dynamic and iterative process meant to take knowledge generated from research spaces and share knowledge with external audiences. The knowledge translation process includes synthesis, dissemination, and exchange of knowledge.

Mastery

An individual's ability to experience achievement, competence, and sense of accomplishment, in a specific skill or with a task/action.

Meaning

An individual's ability to contribute toward obtaining a personal or socially meaningful goal.

Objective

The specific and measurable activities that a program or project will accomplish and be held accountable towards.

Participation

An individual's engagement in the fabric of life around them, which includes how, when, where, and how often they engage in different kinds of activities.

Quality of Participation

An individual's perception that their involvement in an activity, program, event, or role has been positive, satisfying, and produces personally meaningful outcomes.

Shift in skills

An individual's quantifiable and/or qualifiable improvement within a specific skill or task/action.

Social Isolation

An individual's lack of social connections, relationships, and interpersonal interactions, on a personal and societal level.

Social Participation

An individual's meaningful involvement in a life situation or activities that provides interaction with others in the community, including interpersonal interactions outside the home and one's satisfaction with their participation in these interactions.

IDEA Terms

Accessibility
The design of products, communications, services, and/or environments to be usable by people with diverse abilities without barriers. Offering equal opportunities for everyone to have autonomy and self-direction in their participation in all aspects of life.

Ally/allyship
An individual in a position of privilege or power who consistently tries to understand, uplift, empower, and support equity-seeking groups. An ally is not a member of the group but seeks to stand in solidarity with an equity-seeking group to end oppression, discrimination and/or prejudice. Allyship is the provision of support from an ally.

Anti-oppression
Strategies and actions that intentionally disrupt the unjust treatment of individuals or groups by challenging beliefs about status, privilege, and power that are embedded in our culture and institutions.

Barriers
Factors in an individual's environment, whether physical, social, attitudinal, political, or communicative, that limit function through either their absence or presence.

Diversity
An individual's range of identities, characteristics, qualities, and experiences that shape who we are and lead to the varied perspectives and approaches we bring to our interactions with others.

Equality
An approach or process within which each individual receives the same supports and has the same value as others, regardless of their unique needs.

Equity
An approach or process that recognizes the existence of systemic social inequalities and acts to proactively reduce or remove barriers to opportunities and inclusion. This process involves giving more to those who need it, in proportion to their circumstances, to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities. Everyone is given the support they need to succeed.

Equity-seeking groups
Groups of people who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented. These groups include but are not limited to the four designated groups in Canada –

women, visible minorities, Aboriginal Peoples, and people with disabilities. Additionally, persons in the 2S/LGBTQIA+ community or people with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations can be part of these groups. Equity-seeking groups identify barriers and unequal access, and actively seek social justice and reparation.

Inclusion

A culture or environment in which individuals with disabilities and diverse identities feel they belong and can participate meaningfully as part of the whole, while retaining authenticity, uniqueness, and autonomy.

Lived Experience

An individuals' perspective gained through first-hand experiences of or within a phenomenon, as well as the knowledge gained through these experiences. A person with lived experience of disability is an individual who has a disability. It is not the person who associates, lives or works with a person with a disability.

Micro-aggression

Small interactions with people or the environment that expose bias towards marginalized groups. While microaggressions may be unintentional, they can have cumulative negative effects on an individual's well-being and sense of belonging. Examples include asking a person of colour, *"where are you really from*?" or a woman in a meeting being repeatedly spoken over or dismissed by her male colleagues.

Oppression

The unjust treatment or control of individuals or groups to maintain the status, privilege, or power of the dominant group. This treatment can be based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, religion, mental health status, age, and/or ability. The beliefs that form the basis of oppression are often embedded in culture and institutions making them normalized and often invisible. Individuals can feel multiple oppressions based on the intersecting elements of their identities, which can result in increased experiences of injustice.

Safe space

A space where people feel psychologically safe and can express honest impressions, thoughts, and attitudes without fear of judgement or ridicule. A safe space is somewhere that individuals' expression, identity, and experience can exist and be affirmed without fear of repercussion and without the pressure to educate. It can be as small as between two people or can be expanded to include all members of a larger team, network, department, or organization.

Social Model of Disability

A model for thinking in which disability is a socially created problem rather than an attribute of an individual. Within this model, the onus is on society to dismantle barriers that, in fact, disable people from their full and equal participation in society.

Unconscious bias

Attitudes or assumptions that can occur without one's knowledge, control, or intent and can affect behavior, interactions, and decision-making. These can include affinity bias, confirmation bias, attribution bias, conformity bias, halo effect, horns affect, contrast effect, gender bias, ageism, name bias, beauty bias, height bias, anchor bias, nonverbal bias, authority bias, and overconfidence bias.

Universal Design

A way of designing an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.

Demographic Terms

2S
An acronym that stands for Two Spirit, an English umbrella term that reflects complex understandings of cultural, spiritual, sexual, and gender identities that have a long history in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures.

Ethno-cultural identity
A broad concept that looks at how people belong to different groups. These groups share similar characteristics. Some examples are a shared language, religion, traditions, nationality, and more.

Gender
The socially constructed ideas about the behavior, actions, and performed by a particular sex. Gender is fundamentally different from sex assigned at birth.

Invisible Disability
An umbrella term for disabilities that are not easily seen or noticed.

LGBTQIA+
An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual. A plus sign or asterisk added to any acronym indicates the inclusion of identities not explicitly included in the acronym. There are other acronyms that may be preferred by different individuals.

Marginalized groups
Members of society that face exclusion due to societal and systemic barriers.

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

Race
A social, not biological, construct that involves the categorization of people based on shared physical traits. When social constructs lead us to attribute meanings to people's identities, this can lead to unconscious bias, stereotypes, racism, and racial discrimination. Racism is a systemic form of oppression based on social constructs.

Sex/biological sex

A medical term based on physical characteristics and anatomy used to designate people as male, female, or intersex.

Visible Disability

A disability that is immediately noticeable.