Systemic Discrimination: Key Terms and Definitions

Systemic Discrimination: refers to policies or practices that appear to be neutral on their surface but may have discriminatory effects on individuals based on their identity or background e.g. age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, immigration status and other intersecting factors.¹

Anti-oppression: Strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others.²

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.³

Health Equity: Health equity allows people to reach their full health potential and receive high-quality care that is fair and appropriate to them and their needs, no matter where they live, what they have or who they are.⁴

Discrimination: Treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.⁵

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.⁶

Racism: Racism is any individual action, or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination.⁷

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.⁸

¹ http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iii-principles-and-concepts/2-what-discrimination

² https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1

³ https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1

⁴ https://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/health-quality/Health_Equity_Plan_Report_En.pdf

⁵ https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html#a8

⁶ https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html#a8

⁷ https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html#a8

⁸ https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html#a8