

# GLOSSARY in Plain Language

## Disability

**Disability** is a physical (your body), mental (your mind) or intellectual (the way you process information) condition that limits your movements, senses or activities. Disability includes:

**Chronic illness** is a disease or health condition that lasts for a long time (e.g. asthma, cancer, diabetes and HIV/AIDS).

**Developmental disability** (also known as intellectual disability) affects your ability to reason, plan, think, communicate, and do everyday social and practical activities/tasks.

**Drug or alcohol dependence** is the feeling that you need drugs or alcohol or are not able to control when you drink alcohol or take a drug.

**Learning disability** affects the way your brain understands, remembers, organizes or uses information. It can create difficulty in the way you listen, speak, read, write and/or do math.

**Mental illness** is a condition that affects the way you feel, behave or think (e.g. depression, bipolar disorder).

**Physical disability** is a condition that affects physical movement.

**Sensory disability** is a condition that affects what you can hear or see (e.g. hearing or vision loss).

## Gender and Gender Identity

**Gender identity** is your sense of self, specifically your sense of being male, female, both, or neither. It may be different from your biological sex (i.e. anatomy, physical body) and includes:

**Intersex** describes people whose bodies, reproductive systems, chromosomes and/or hormones are not easily grouped as male or female.

**Trans Female to Male** is a person who identifies as male but was born as a biological female.

**Trans Male to Female** is a person who identifies as female but was but was born as a biological male.

**Two-Spirit** refers to Aboriginal lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. It means having both female and male spirits within one person.

## Racial/Ethnic Group

**Race** is a term used to separate people into groups based on skin colour and other physical traits. 'Race' is not based on biology but on differences that society has decided are important. These differences can be used to treat people differently.

## Sexual Orientation

**Sexual orientation** is who you are attracted to romantically. People define their sexual orientation in various ways including:

**Bisexual** is a person who is attracted to both men and women.

**Gay** is a person who is attracted to people of the same gender; for example, a man who is attracted to men or a woman who is attracted to women. This term is used by both men and women although many women prefer to be referred to as 'lesbian'.

**Heterosexual ("straight")** is a person who is attracted to the opposite gender; for example, a man who is attracted to women or a woman who is attracted to men.

**Lesbian** is a woman who is attracted to other women.

**Queer** is a positive term used by some non-heterosexual people.

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