

# Towards an Understanding of Health Equity: Annotated Glossary

AHS Tri-Project Glossary  
Working Group

Population and Public Health

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## Preamble

Numerous general and specialized health promotion glossaries exist. However, the aim of this Annotated Glossary is to provide a clear and useful set of terms and definitions related to health disparities, health inequalities and health inequities in one accessible document for use within Population and Public Health (PPH). We are confident that the Annotated Glossary will contribute to building knowledge capacity with respect to these concepts.

The Annotated Glossary is the outcome of the combined efforts of two teams within *Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention* (HPDIP) and one team within *Surveillance and Health Status Assessment* (SHSA) in the PPH Division of Alberta Health Services. The three teams, known as the Tri-Project Glossary Working Group (TPGWG), collaborated to produce three deliverables: the Glossary, the Annotated Glossary and the Glossary Methods. The teams' respective work intersects along the lines of research, policy and practice, and these efforts connect the concepts of health disparities, health inequalities and health inequity as they relate to population and public health.

Glossaries aim to provide neutral definitions of a term; however, the meaning of a word ultimately depends on the context in which it is used. For some terms, a *Context* section was added to help illustrate the more complex terms, whereas context information was not provided for terms deemed more straightforward. This Annotated Glossary is a "living document." This implies that an evolution of understanding will occur as the organization and its components learn and develop. The intention is for this document to be revised and updated on a regular basis to better reflect changes in use of the terms contained within it and overall societal change.

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## A

## Aboriginal People(s)

**Definition** Aboriginal peoples is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The *Constitution Act* of 1982 recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples – First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

**Context** Each group has a unique heritage, language, cultural practice and set of spiritual beliefs. The Constitution does not define membership in the three groups.

**Sources** Constitution Act, 1982. [Being schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c.11]. (2010). Retrieved December 31, 2010 from <http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/const/const1982.html>

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC): Communications Branch. (2002). Words first: An evolving terminology relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from: <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/R2-236-2002E.pdf>

**See also** First Nations, Inuit, Métis

## Access

**Definition** Access is the right or privilege to approach, enter or make use of something. In health care access is also defined as the fit between individual or group needs and the health care system's ability to meet those needs.

**Context** Access is also known as accessibility; there are four overlapping components of access and they are as follows non-discrimination, physical accessibility, economic accessibility (affordability) and information accessibility.

**Sources**

- Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Access. Retrieved June 01, 2011 from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/access>
- Goddard, M., & Smith, P. (2001). Equity of access to health care services: Theory and evidence from the UK. *Social Science & Medicine*, 53(9), 1149-1162.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2007). The right to health [Fact sheet 323]. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323/en>

**See also** Disability, Disadvantaged Populations, Health Inequalities, Health Literacy, Downstream

## Advocacy

**Definition** Advocacy represents the strategies devised, the actions taken and the solutions proposed to advise or influence decision making.

**Context**

**Sources** Weiss, H. (2007). From the director's desk. *The Evaluation Exchange*, 13(1), 1. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from:  
<http://www.hfrp.org/var/hfrp/storage/original/application/6bdf92c3d7e970e7270588109e23b678.pdf>

**See also** Collaboration, Healthy Public Policy, Population Health Approach, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health

**C****Collaboration**

**Definition** Collaboration is the active relationship between groups based on shared goals. Collaborations are formed to take action to achieve improvements in population health outcomes.

**Context** Collaborative efforts are more effective, efficient and/or sustainable than actions taken by one sector alone.

**Sources** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2011). *Canadian best practices portal. Key element 6: Collaborate across sectors and levels*. Retrieved April 29, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/population\\_health/key\\_element\\_6-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/population_health/key_element_6-eng.html)

**See also** Advocacy, Intersectoral Action, Population Health Approach, Public Health

**Community**

**Definition** Community is a specific group of people who share a common bond based on place, culture, interests, beliefs, values and/or norms.

**Context** Communities exhibit some awareness of their identity as a group, share common needs and a commitment to meeting those needs.

**Sources**

- Nutbeam, D. (1998). Health promotion glossary. *Health Promotion International*, 13(4), 349-364.
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2008). *Canadian best practices portal glossary*. Retrieved December 29, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all\\_terms-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all_terms-eng.html)
- World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)

**See also** Community Capacity Building, Community Development, Community Engagement,

## Healthy Communities

**Community Capacity Building**

- Definition** Community capacity building is any activity that builds on strengths among individuals, organizations and communities. The aim of community capacity building is to achieve and sustain optimal health outcomes, social environments, well-being and/or quality of life for all.
- Context** Community capacity building is one type of community development strategy. Examples of activities include training, identifying community assets (i.e., strengths), sharing talents and strengthening partnerships.
- Sources**
- Frankish, J. (2003). *Conceptualization and measurement of community capacity*. Retrieved April 29, 2011 from the Health Canada website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/hpr-rpms/2003-capacit-conceptual-eng.php>
  - Pluye, P., Potvin, L., & Denis, J.L. (2004). Making public health programs last: Conceptualizing sustainability. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 27(2), 121-133.
  - Rabin, B.A., Brownson, R.C., Haire-Joshu, D., Kreuter, M.W., & Weaver, N.L. (2008). A glossary for dissemination and implementation research in health. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 14(2), 117-123.
- See also** Collaboration, Community, Community Development, Community Engagement, Healthy Communities, Population Health Approach, Well-Being

**Community Development**

- Definition** Community development is a process whereby community members come together to take action on common problems and generate solutions to benefit the community.
- Context** Community development problems include various aspects of community well-being such as economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. Central to the philosophy of community development is engagement and collaboration with community members which may take many forms. Ultimately, partners expand the knowledge or skills of community members for the benefit of the whole community.
- Sources** Frank, F., & Smith, A. (1999). *The community development handbook: A tool to build community capacity*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/comm\\_deve/cdhbooke.pdf](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/comm_deve/cdhbooke.pdf)
- See also** Collaboration, Community, Community Capacity Building, Community Engagement, Culture, Healthy Communities, Well-Being

**Community Engagement**

- Definition** Community engagement is a broad practice of two-way interaction guided by a set of

principles, processes and activities that provide an opportunity for interested parties (known as stakeholders) to be involved in meaningful interactions.

**Context**

**Sources** Alberta Health Services (AHS). (2011). *Community engagement*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Alberta Health Services website:  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/communityengagement.asp>

**See also** Collaboration, Community, Community Capacity Building, Community Development, Healthy Communities

**Context**

**Definition** Context is a broad set of social, economic, political and cultural aspects of a society.

**Context** Key aspects of context include governance, socio-economic policy, societal values and populations demographics. Context influences patterns of social stratification and thus individual and population health outcomes.

**Sources** Solar, O., & Irwin, A. (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website:  
[http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)

**See also** Culture, Determinants of Health, Healthy Public Policy, Population Health Approach, Social Determinants of Health, Social Stratification

**Culture**

**Definition** Culture is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization or group. Culture is transmitted and reinforced through tradition, art, language and ritual.

**Context**

**Sources** DePoy, E. & Gitlin, L. (1994). *Introduction to research: Multiple strategies for health and human services*. St. Louis: Mosby-Year –Year Book, Inc.

Last, J. (2001). *A dictionary of epidemiology, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.

**See also** Aboriginal People(s), Community, Determinants of Health, Diversity, Ethnicity, Immigrant, Minority Populations, Refugee, Social Determinants of Health

**D**

**Deprivation**

**Definition** Deprivation is a state of observable and demonstrable social and/or material

disadvantage. Deprivation is relative to the local context, wider society and/or nation to which a group belongs.

- Context** Material deprivation involves deprivation of the goods and conveniences that are part of modern life, such as adequate housing, food, transportation and recreation.
- Sources**
- Krieger, N. (2001). A glossary for social epidemiology. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(10), 693-700.
  - Pampalon, R., Hamel, D., Gamache, P., & Raymond, G. (2009). A deprivation index for health planning in Canada. *Chronic Diseases in Canada*, 29(4), 178-191.
- See also** Context, Disadvantaged Populations, Employment, Food Insecurity/Security, Living Wage, Marginalized Populations, Poverty, Social Exclusion, Socio-economic Status, Vulnerable Populations

## Determinants of Health

**Definition** Determinants of health are the range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that influence the health of individuals and populations.

**Context** Determinants of health do not exist in isolation from each other. At every stage of life, health is influenced by complex interactions between the various health determinants. There are many lists of health determinants, the number and type of determinant is dependent on the list of chosen factors and may include the following.

- Income and income distribution
- Education
- Employment and job security
- Early childhood development
- Ethnicity/Aboriginal status
- Social exclusion
- Gender
- Social safety network
- Food insecurity
- Housing
- Human biology and genetics
- Health behaviours
- Health care system

- Sources**
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2010). *What determines health?* Retrieved February 13, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/determinants/index-eng.php>
  - Raphael, D. (2009). *Social determinants of health: Canadian perspectives*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
  - Solar, O., & Irwin, A. (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social*

*determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website:

[http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)

- World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)

**See also** Aboriginal People(s), Education level, Employment, Gender, Health Inequalities, Housing Continuum, Income, Population Health Approach, Social Determinants of Health, Social Exclusion, Social Gradient, Social Stratification, Socio-economic Status

## Disability

**Definition** Disability is having an impairment, activity limitation or participation restriction that substantially affects one or more life activities.

**Context** Disabilities may include restrictions to mobility, agility, visual, speech, hearing, learning, cognition and other challenges. Individuals with disabilities may experience discrimination and may or may not be disadvantaged and/or marginalized.

**Sources** Alberta Health Services (AHS): Healthy Diverse Populations. (2009). *Diversity definitions*. Retrieved February 11, 2011 from the Alberta Health Services website: [http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity\\_resources/definitions/definitions\\_main.htm](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity_resources/definitions/definitions_main.htm)

**See also** Access, Disadvantaged Populations, Discrimination, Health Inequalities, Human Rights, Marginalized Populations, Prejudice, Vulnerable Populations

## Disadvantaged Populations

**Definition** Disadvantaged populations are groups of people who do not have the same access to social and material resources compared to more advantaged social groups.

**Context** The term disadvantaged populations is sometimes correctly used interchangeably with the terms marginalized populations and vulnerable populations.

**Sources** World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)

**See also** Access, Deprivation, Disability, Health Inequalities, Marginalized Populations, Minority Populations, Social Determinants of Health, Social Exclusion, Social Gradient, Social Stratification, Socio-economic Status, Vulnerable Populations



## Discrimination

- Definition** Discrimination is the process of making distinctions among groups of people, usually with the implication that some prejudice has been applied in making these decisions.
- Context** Discrimination relates to the practice of dominant groups attempting to maintain privileges and status through intentional or unintentional subordination of other groups.
- Sources** Krieger, N. (2000). Discrimination and health. In L. Berkan & I. Kawachi (Eds.), *Social epidemiology* (pp. 36-75). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Last, J. (2007). *A dictionary of public health*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- See also** Prejudice, Social Exclusion, Social Stratification

## Diversity

- Definition** Diversity includes all the ways people are unique and different from others.
- Context** Dimensions of diversity may include the following: ethnicity, religion and spiritual beliefs, culture, colour, physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, ability, education, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, socio-economic status, profession, language, health status, geographic location, group history, upbringing and life experience.
- Sources** Calgary Health Region (CHR): Regional Diversity Advisory Committee. (2008). *Regional diversity directional document 2008-2012*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from [http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity\\_resources/research\\_publications/directional\\_document.pdf](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity_resources/research_publications/directional_document.pdf)
- See also** Ethnicity, Diversity Competency, Socio-economic Status

## Diversity Competency

- Definition** Diversity competency is the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to individuals, families and communities of all diverse backgrounds.
- Context** Diversity competency includes a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, programs and policies that enables an individual or an organization to respond effectively to the needs of diverse and vulnerable populations.
- Sources**
- Calgary Health Region (CHR): Regional Diversity Advisory Committee. (2008). *Regional diversity directional document 2008-2012*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from [http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity\\_resources/research\\_publications/directional\\_document.pdf](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity_resources/research_publications/directional_document.pdf)
  - National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC). (n.d.) *Definitions of cultural competence*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the National Center for Cultural Competence website: <http://www.ncccricula.info/culturalcompetence.html>

**See also** Diversity, Organizational Capacity, Public Policy, Vulnerable Populations

## Downstream

**Definition** Downstream refers to factors and interventions that directly influence individual and population health outcomes.

**Context** Commonly associated with interventions to address individual risk behaviours (e.g., diet, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol use) and access to health care services. A synonym is *proximal*.

**Sources**

- Bryan, H. (2006). *A social-determinants approach to reporting on the health status of the Interior Health population*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Interior Health website:  
[http://www.interiorhealth.ca/uploadedFiles/Choose\\_Health/Pop\\_Health/PopHealthReport2006.pdf](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/uploadedFiles/Choose_Health/Pop_Health/PopHealthReport2006.pdf)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2001). *Chapter 8 case study: The Vancouver agreement for the Downtown Eastside*. Retrieved December 31, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/case\\_studies-etudes\\_cas/cs\\_bc\\_yk-ec\\_cb\\_yk/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/case_studies-etudes_cas/cs_bc_yk-ec_cb_yk/index-eng.php)

**See also** Access, Health Behaviours, Health Indicators, Lifestyle, Upstream

## E

### Education Level

**Definition** Education level is the highest level of schooling attained by an individual or group.

**Context** Statistics Canada employs the following categories of educational attainment: 0-8 years; some high school; high school graduate; some post-secondary; post-secondary certificate or diploma; some post-secondary; trades certificate or diploma from vocational college or apprenticeship training; non-university certificate or diploma from community college, CEGEP or school of nursing; university certificate below bachelor's degrees; bachelors degree; university degree or certificate above bachelors degree.

**Sources** Statistics Canada. (2011). *Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by educational attainment, sex and age group, annual (persons unless otherwise noted)*. [CANSIM table 282-0004]. Retrieved February 11, 2011 from the Statistics Canada website:  
[http://cansim2.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&RootDir=CII/&ResultTemplate=CII/CII\\_\\_&Array Pick=1&Array d=2820004](http://cansim2.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&RootDir=CII/&ResultTemplate=CII/CII__&Array Pick=1&Array d=2820004)

**See also** Determinants of Health, Social Determinants of Health, Social Gradient, Social Stratification, Socio-economic Status

## Employment

- Definition** Employment is a formal arrangement to exchange labour (work) for pay, goods or services and shaped by the relationship between workers and employers. Worker-employer relations vary depending on the social, economic and political context.
- Context** There are three inter-related components of employment: employment relations, employment conditions and working conditions.
- i. Employment relations* refers to the formal or informal relationship between an employer that hires workers who perform labour to sell a profitable good or service, and an employee who contributes labour to that enterprise, in exchange for payment of wages and/or other benefits. Employment relations vary greatly within and between countries. The most common indicator used to represent employment is income;
- ii. Employment conditions* may include: unemployment, precarious employment, informal employment and jobs, child labour, and slavery/bonded labour; and
- iii. Working conditions* are related to the tasks performed by workers, the way the work is organized, the environment (physical, chemical, social, psychological) ergonomics, and technology being used.
- Sources** Benach, J., Muntaner, C., & Santana, V. (Chairs). (2007). *Employment conditions and health inequalities. Final report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH), Employment Conditions Knowledge Network (EMCONET)*. Retrieved May 17, 2011 from the World Health Organization website:  
[http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/articles/emconet\\_who\\_report.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/articles/emconet_who_report.pdf)
- See also** Context, Income, Living Wage, Social Determinants of Health, Social Gradient, Social Stratification, Socio-economic Status

## Empowerment

- Definition** Empowerment is a process through which individuals, groups or communities gain greater control over decisions and actions affecting their health and well-being.
- Context** Empowerment may involve social, cultural, psychological or political processes. Empowerment enables individuals and groups to express their needs and concerns; devise strategies for decision-making; and political, social and cultural action.
- Sources**
- Nutbeam, D. (1998). Health promotion glossary. *Health Promotion International*, 13(4), 349-364.
  - World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website:  
[http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)
- See also** Community, Community Capacity Building, Community Development, Culture, Health Literacy, Public Health, Resilience, Well-being

## Ethnicity

- Definition** Ethnicity includes multi-faceted characteristics of a group sharing certain traits in common. Ethnicity is associated with ancestry, cultural traditions and languages. Ethnicity is based on self-identification, whereas race is imposed on a population by society.
- Context** The term ethnicity and race are sometimes incorrectly interchanged. While the term ethnicity refers to elements associated with many facets of a group's traits, race is based on an arbitrary classification of individuals and is imposed by society. Ethnicity and race are not synonymous terms.
- Sources** Bhopal, R. (2004). Glossary of terms relating to ethnicity and race: For reflection and debate. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 58(6), 441-445.
- See also** Aboriginal People(s), Community, Culture, Discrimination, Diversity, Race

## F

### First Nations

- Definition** *First Nations Peoples* generally refers to the original Peoples of Canada. Though the term First Nations is widely used no legal definition exists.
- Context** The term First Nations became commonly used in the early 1970s to replace the less acceptable term *Indian*; and is preferred by many Aboriginal peoples. There are over 600 First Nations groups across Canada.
- Sources** Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC): Communications Branch. (2002). *Words first: An evolving terminology relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from: <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/R2-236-2002E.pdf>
- See also** Aboriginal People(s), Inuit, Métis

### Food Insecurity/Security

- Definition** *Food insecurity* is the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so consistently.  
*Food Security* is the condition in which all people can at all times acquire safe, nutritionally adequate, and personally acceptable foods in a manner that maintains human dignity.
- Context** Food insecurity refers to the inability to obtain nutritionally adequate and safe foods due to a lack of money to purchase them, or the limited availability of these foods in geographically isolated communities.
- Sources**
- Campbell, C.C. (1991). Food insecurity: A nutritional outcome or a predictor variable?

*The Journal of Nutrition*, 121(3), 408-415.

- Davis, B., & Tarasuk, V. (1994). Hunger in Canada. *Agricultural and Human Values*, 11(4), 50-57.
- Growing Food Security in Alberta. (2008). *What is food security*. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from <http://www.foodsecurityalberta.ca/Home/WhatisFoodSecurity/tabid/61/Default.aspx>

**See also** Access, Community, Determinants of Health, Disadvantaged Populations, Physical Environment, Poverty, Remote Populations, Social Determinants of Health, Socio-economic Status, Vulnerable Populations

## G

### Gender

**Definition** Gender is the characteristics of women and men which are socially constructed, whereas sex designates those characteristics that are biologically determined.

**Context**

- Sources**
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2010). *Questions & answers: Gender identity in schools*. Retrieved December 31, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/qagis-qrise/qagis-qrise-eng.php>
  - World Health Organization (WHO): Gender Policy. (2002). *Integrating gender perspectives in the work of WHO*. Retrieved February 12, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: <http://www.who.int/gender/documents/engpolicy.pdf>

**See also** Diversity, Gender and Sexually Diverse Persons, Social Determinants of Health

### Gender and Sexually Diverse Persons

**Definition** This designation refers to all people who identify themselves as being gender and/or sexually diverse.

**Context** This term includes, but is not limited to, people who self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Inter-sexed, Transgender or Two-Spirited.

**Sources** Alberta Health Services (AHS): Healthy Diverse Populations. (2009). *Diversity definitions*. Retrieved February 11, 2011 from the Alberta Health Services website: [http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity\\_resources/definitions/definitions\\_main.htm](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity_resources/definitions/definitions_main.htm)

**See also** Community, Diversity, Gender

## H

### Health

- Definition** Health is a resource for living, not the objective of living; a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities and assets.
- Context** Health corresponds to the notion of pursuing one's goals, acquiring skills and education, and the ability to grow. This broader notion of health recognizes the range of social, economic and physical environmental factors that contribute to health. The best articulation of this concept of health is "the capacity of people to adapt to, respond to, or control life's challenges and changes (Frankish et al 1996)."
- Sources**
- Frankish, C.J., Green, L.W., Ratner, P.A., Chomik, T., & Larsen, C. (1996). *Health impact assessment as a tool for population health promotion and public policy*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/impact-repercussions/index-eng.php>
  - Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2001). *Population health: Defining health*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/approach-approche/index-eng.php#def\\_health](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/approach-approche/index-eng.php#def_health)
  - World Health Organization (WHO), Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), and Health and Welfare Canada. (1986, Nov. 21). *Ottawa Charter for health promotion*. Presented at the First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa, Ontario. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa\\_charter\\_hp.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa_charter_hp.pdf)
- See also** Health Behaviours, Health Indicators, Health Inequalities, Health Inequities, Health Outcomes, Health Status, Healthy Communities, Healthy Public Policy, Mental Health, Mental Illness, Population Health, Population Health Approach, Resilience, Social Determinants of Health

### Health Behaviours

- Definition** Health behaviours are activities engaged in by individuals that promote, protect, maintain or harm their health.
- Context** The term health behaviour is correctly used interchangeably with risk or protective factors. Common health behaviours are physical activity, nutrition, tobacco and alcohol use. Individual health behaviours are strongly influenced by the context in which people live. Unhealthy behaviours are often associated with maladaptive coping mechanisms.
- Sources**
- Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI): Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI). (2004). *Improving the health of Canadians*. Retrieved February 12, 2011 from <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/H118-14-2004-1E.pdf>

- Lindquist, T.L., Beilin, L.J., & Knuiiman, M.W. (1997). Influence of lifestyle, coping, and job stress on blood pressure in men and women. *Hypertension*, 29(1), 1-7.
- World Health Organization (WHO): Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH). (2007). *Achieving health equity: From root causes to fair outcomes*. [Interim statement]. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_media/cdsh\\_interim\\_statement\\_final\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_media/cdsh_interim_statement_final_07.pdf)

**See also** Empowerment, Lifestyle, Determinants of Health, Downstream, Health Indicators

## Health Equity

**Definition** Health equity means that all persons have fair opportunities to attain their health potential to the fullest extent possible.

**Context** Health equity is the absence of socially produced unfair and unjust inequalities in health between groups with different levels of social advantage/disadvantage (social stratification). Assessing health equity requires comparing health and its social determinants between more and less advantaged social groups.

- Sources**
- Braveman, P. (2006). Health disparities and health equity: Concepts and measurement. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 27, 167-194.
  - Macinko, J.A., & Starfield, B. (2002). Annotated bibliography on equity in health, 1980-2001. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 1, 1-20.
  - Reutter, L., & Kushner, K.E. (2010). Health equity through action on the social determinants of health: Taking up the challenge in nursing. *Nursing Inquiry*, 17(3), 269-280.
  - Whitehead, M. (1992). The concepts and principles of equity and health. *International Journal of Health Services: Planning, Administration, Evaluation*, 22(3), 429-445.

**See also** Disadvantaged Populations, Health Inequalities, Health Inequities, Health Outcomes, Healthy Public Policy, Human Rights, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health, Social Exclusion, Social Gradient, Social Justice, Social Stratification, Unfair, Unjust

## Health Impact Assessment

**Definition** Health impact assessment (HIA) is a combination of procedures, methods and tools used to assess the potential effects of a policy, program or project on the health of a population.

**Context** Assessing the health and social impact of programs and policies is an important aspect of population health. Policies or programs of any nature may directly affect the health of a population, or may indirectly affect their health by altering, influencing or affecting the determinants of health.

- Sources**
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2001). *Health impact assessment*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/implement/implementation2-eng.php#assessment>
  - World Health Organization (WHO): Health Topics. (2011). *Health impact assessment*. Retrieved February 12, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/topics/health\\_impact\\_assessment/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/health_impact_assessment/en/)
- See also** Determinants of Health, Health Indicators, Health Outcomes, Health Status, Healthy Public Policy, Policy, Population Health, Public Health, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health

## Health Indicators (Population Based)

- Definition** Health indicators include the various signs, counts, rates and statistics through which assessment and interpretation of the health of a population is conducted.
- Context** Health indicators are used to measure changes in the health status of the population.
- Sources** Young, T.K. (2005). Measuring health and disease in populations (II). In T.K. Young, *Population health: Concepts and Methods* (pp.67-114). (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New York: Oxford University Press.
- See also** Health Status, Population Health, Population Health Approach

## Health Inequalities

- Definition** Health inequalities is a generic term used to designate differences or variations in health outcomes between population groups. Some health inequalities reflect random variations (i.e., unexplained causes), while others result from individual biological endowment, the consequences of health behaviours, social stratification, economic opportunity or access to health care. The term *health disparities* is more commonly used in the U.S. while *health inequalities* is used more often in the Canadian context.
- Context** A broad range of factors influence the development and persistence of inequalities in health; these factors are commonly referred to as the social determinants of health (see SDOH). The terms disparities and inequalities are often correctly used interchangeably.
- Sources**
- Alberta Health Services (AHS): Regional Diversity Advisory Committee. (2008). *Regional diversity directional document 2008-2012*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from [http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity\\_resources/research\\_publications/directional\\_document.pdf](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity_resources/research_publications/directional_document.pdf)
  - Asada, Y. (2005). A framework for measuring health inequity. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 59(8), 700-705.
  - Braveman, P. (2006). Health disparities and health equity: Concepts and measurement. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 27, 167-194.



- Health Disparities Task Group of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health and Health Security. (2005). *Reducing health disparities: Roles of the health sector: Recommended policy directions and activities*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved January 26, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/disparities/pdf06/disparities\\_recommended\\_policy.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/disparities/pdf06/disparities_recommended_policy.pdf)
- National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH). *Integrating social determinants of health and health equity into Canadian public health practice: Environmental scan 2010*. [Environmental scan]. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health website: <http://www.nccdh.ca/supportfiles/Environmental-Scan-2010.pdf>
- Solar, O., & Irwin, A. (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)

**See also** Access, Determinants of Health, Health Equity, Health Inequities, Health Outcomes, Social Exclusion, Socio-economic Status

## Health Inequities

**Definition** Health inequities refer to differences in health outcomes between population groups that are socially produced, unfair and unjust.

**Context** The crux of the distinction between inequality and inequity is that the identification of health inequities entails value judgment premised upon ones theories of (a) social justice, (b) how society is organized and (c) the root causes underlying health inequalities. These differences systematically place vulnerable populations at further risk for poor health outcomes. Assessing health inequities requires comparing health and its social determinants between more and less advantaged social groups.

- Sources**
- Braveman, P. (2006). Health disparities and health equity: Concepts and measurement. *Annual Review of Public Health, 27*, 167-194.
  - National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH). *Integrating social determinants of health and health equity into Canadian public health practice: Environmental scan 2010*. [Environmental scan]. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health website: <http://www.nccdh.ca/supportfiles/Environmental-Scan-2010.pdf>
  - Whitehead, M. (1992). The concepts and principles of equity and health. *International Journal of Health Services: Planning, Administration, Evaluation, 22*(3), 429-445.

**See also** Deprivation, Disadvantaged Populations, Health Equity, Health Inequalities, Health

Outcomes, Healthy Public Policy, Human Rights, Marginalized Populations, Poverty, Social Determinants of Health, Social Exclusion, Social Stratification, Social-Gradient, Unfair, Unjust, Vulnerable Populations

## Health Literacy

**Definition** Health literacy is the ability to access, understand, evaluate and communicate information as a way to promote, maintain and improve health in a variety of settings across the life-course.

### Context

**Sources** Rootman, I., & Gordon-El-Bihbety, D. (2008). *A vision for a health literate Canada: Report of the expert panel on health literacy*. Retrieved February 28, 2011 from the Canadian Public Health Association website: [http://www.cpha.ca/uploads/portals/h-l/report\\_e.pdf](http://www.cpha.ca/uploads/portals/h-l/report_e.pdf)

**See also** Access, Health Behaviours

## Health Outcomes

**Definition** Health outcomes are changes in the health of an individual or group which may or may not originate from health system interventions.

**Context** The health system typically reports health outcomes relevant to the services or interventions it provides.

**Sources** Frommer, M., Rubin, G., & Lyle, D. (1992). The NSW Health Outcomes program. *New South Wales Public Health Bulletin*, 3(12), 135-137.

**See also** Health, Health Behaviours, Health Indicators, Health Status, Mental Health, Mental Illness, Public Health, Population Health Approach

## Health Status (Individual & Population)

**Definition** Health status is a description and/or measurement of the health of an individual or population at a particular point in time.

### Context

**Sources** World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)

**See also** Health, Health Behaviours, Health Indicators, Health Outcomes, Population Health Approach

## Healthy Communities

**Definition** A healthy community strives to continually improve its physical and social environments,

and its community resources. Healthy communities enable people to mutually support each other in performing life functions.

- Context** There is an international movement called *Healthy Communities* which takes a holistic view of communities. Healthy community initiatives are intersectoral collaborations that integrate social, economic, political and environmental goals to benefit the whole community.
- Sources**
- Nutbeam, D. (1998). Health promotion glossary. *Health Promotion International*, 13(4), 349-364.
  - Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition. (n.d.). *What makes a healthy community?* Retrieved May 19, 2011 from the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition website: <http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/what-makes-a-healthy-community>
  - Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2008). *Canadian best practices portal glossary*. Retrieved December 29, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all\\_terms-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all_terms-eng.html)
  - World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)
- See also** Community, Community Capacity Building, Community Development, Community Engagement, Determinants of Health, Empowerment, Health Literacy, Health Outcomes, Physical Environment, Social Environment

## Healthy Public Policy

- Definition** Healthy public policy includes decisions or actions enacted by various levels of government and other public actors intended to have a positive effect on the health of a population.
- Context** Healthy Public Policy is one of five key strategies in the Ottawa Charter (1986). Healthy Public Policy strives to make physical and social environments health enhancing and is characterized by a concern for equity and accountability for health impacts. These policies may be embedded in legislation, by-laws, regulations, standards, direction setting strategic plans and institutional norms and practices.
- Sources**
- Holmes, P., Neville, D., Donovan, C., & MacDonald, C.A. (2001). The Newfoundland and Labrador Heart Health Program dissemination story: The formation and functioning of effective coalitions. *Promotion and Education*, 8 (supplement 1), 8-12.
  - Milio, N. (2001). Glossary: Healthy public policy. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(9), 622-623.
  - Smith, B.L. (2003). *Public policy and public participation: Engaging citizens and community in the development of public policy*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the

Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Public\\_policy/public\\_2003\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Public_policy/public_2003_e.pdf)

**See also** Health, Health Equity, Health Indicators, Health Outcomes, Health Status, Policy, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health, Social Environment

## Homeless

**Definition** Homeless refers to people who do not have a permanent residence to which they can return whenever they choose.

**Context** Homelessness is at one end of the housing continuum. Homelessness can be categorized as:

- 1) absolute – persons living outdoors in areas not anticipated for human occupancy and/or in community shelters;
- 2) “couch surfing” – persons temporarily staying with family and friends;
- 3) at risk of homelessness – persons living in inappropriate or unsafe housing as well as those who spend more than 50% of their total income on housing.

**Sources**

- Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2011). *Facts on homelessness*. Retrieved June 11, 2011 from the Calgary Homeless Foundation website: <http://calgaryhomeless.com/assets/get-involved/FactsheetJan2011.pdf>
- Frankish, J., Hwang, S.W., & Quantz, D. (2005). Homelessness and health in Canada: Research lessons and priorities. *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 96*, S23-S29.

**See also** Deprivation, Determinants of Health, Disadvantaged Populations, Health Inequities, Housing Continuum, Marginalized Populations, Poverty, Social Determinants of Health, Socio-economic Status, Vulnerable Populations

## Housing Continuum

**Definition** The housing continuum is a framework for understanding the housing needs and the range of housing choices (rental and ownership, market and non market) available to households with varying socio-economic status.

**Context** The ideal housing mix is one that accommodates the housing needs and preferences from a variety of income levels, age groups and household types by offering a range of housing forms, ownership/rental opportunities and price ranges. The complete range would include emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, social housing, assisted living market rental and ownership housing (both entry level and luxury). Typically, the complete housing continuum is found only in larger urban centres where specialized facilities are located to serve a broader regional market.

**Sources** Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associated Ltd. (2008). *Strathcona county: Housing needs assessment*. Retrieved February 13, 2011 from the Strathcona County website:

<http://www.strathcona.ab.ca/files/attachment-CPIA-Affordable-Housing-Report-Nov-21-Draft-1-websize.pdf>

**See also** Homeless, Social Determinants of Health, Socio-economic Status

## Human Rights

**Definition** Human rights include individual rights and social rights, and provide a universal frame of reference for deciding questions of equity and social justice.

**Context** The right to health as set forth in the WHO Constitution and international human rights treaties is the right to the highest attainable standard of health understood as the standard of health enjoyed by the most socially advantaged group in society.

**Sources**

- Braveman, P., & Gruskin, S. (2003). Defining equity in health. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57(4), 254-258.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2006). *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. [Basic documents, 45<sup>th</sup> ed., supplement]. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from the World Health Organization website:  
[http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf)

**See also** Discrimination, Health, Health Equity, Health Outcomes, Prejudice, Racialization, Racism, Social Determinants of Health, Social Justice, Social Stratification, Unfair, Unjust

## I

## Immigrant

**Definition** Immigrants are people born outside of Canada who currently reside within the nation and who have sought permanent residence in Canada. Known as landed immigrants, these individuals have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities.

**Context**

**Sources**

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). (2010). *Facts and figures 2009 – immigration overview: Permanent and temporary residents*. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website:  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2009/permanent/index.asp>
- Statistics Canada. (2007). *Calgary Health Region, Alberta (Code4823) (table). 2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. Retrieved May 31, 2007 from the Statistics Canada website: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>

**See also** Discrimination, Diversity, Ethnicity, Prejudice, Race, Racialization, Racism, Refugee

## Income

- Definition** Income is the gain or benefit received usually for goods and services derived from labour or capital.
- Context** Income is a determinant of health and a strong predictor of health outcomes; it is the indicator of socio-economic status that most directly measures material resources. Synonyms include wages, earnings, salary, annuity, interest and/or earnings.
- Sources** Solar, O., & Irwin, A. (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website:  
[http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)
- See also** Employment, Living Wage, Determinants of Health, Social Determinants of Health, Socio-economic Status

## Intersectoral Action

- Definition** Intersectoral collaborative action is the joint action taken by health and other government sectors, as well as representatives from private, voluntary and non-profit groups, to improve the health of populations. Intersectoral action achieves more effective, efficient or sustainable outcomes than could be accomplished by one sector acting alone.
- Context** The following sectors are considered to fall within the broad public sector (or government) category: health, environment, education, finance/treasuries, defense and natural resources. The non-government sector includes actors from the private sector, including professional and media organizations.
- Sources** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2011). *Canadian best practices portal. Key element 6: Collaborate across sectors and levels*. Retrieved April 29, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/population\\_health/key\\_element\\_6-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/population_health/key_element_6-eng.html)
- See also** Collaboration, Health Outcomes, Population Health Approach, Public Health

## Inuit

- Definition** Inuit are the Aboriginal people of arctic Canada who self-identify as Inuit.
- Context**
- Sources** Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC): Communications Branch. (2002). *Words first: An evolving terminology relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from: <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/R2-236-2002E.pdf>
- See also** Aboriginal People(s), First Nations, Métis

## L

## Lifestyle

- Definition** Lifestyle is synonymous with identifiable patterns of behavior which are determined by the interplay between an individual's personal characteristics, social interactions and socio-economic and environmental conditions.
- Context** The concept has come to suggest that individuals freely choose their health habits with little or no consideration of the physical and/or social environment.
- Sources**
- Nutbeam, D. (1998). Health promotion glossary. *Health Promotion International*, 13(4), 349-364.
  - World Health Organization (WHO). (1998). *Health promotion glossary*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp\\_glossary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/hp_glossary_en.pdf)
- See also** Downstream, Health, Health Behaviours, Health Indicators, Social Determinants of Health

## Living Wage

- Definition** Living wage is the amount of income an individual or family requires to meet their basic needs, maintain a safe, decent standard of living and to save for future needs and goals.
- Context** The concept is based on basic human needs not market driven factors.
- Sources** Edmonton Social Planning Council. (2007). *Working for a living wage*. Retrieved May 20, 2011 from the Edmonton Social Planning Council website: <http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/content/view/963/271/>
- See also** Employment, Food Insecurity/Security, Health Equity, Housing Continuum, Income, Poverty, Social Determinants of Health, Socio-economic Status, Well-being

TOP

## M

## Marginalized Populations

- Definition** Marginalized populations refer to populations that are not fully integrated into all aspects of society.
- Context** Marginalized populations may or may not be disadvantaged. The term is sometimes correctly used interchangeably with disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Marginalization is closely related to social exclusion.
- Sources**
- Parkes, M.W., Spiegel, J., Breilh, J., Cabarcas, F., Huish, R., & Yassi, A. (2009). Promoting the health of marginalized populations in Ecuador through international

collaboration and educational innovations. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 87(4), 312-319.

- World Health Organization (WHO). (2007). *Health of indigenous peoples* [Fact sheet 326]. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs326/en/>

**See also** Discrimination, Disadvantaged Populations, Minority Populations, Prejudice, Racilization, Racism, Social Exclusion, Social Stratification, Vulnerable Populations

## Mental Health

**Definition** Mental health is defined as “[a] state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (Herrman, Saxena, & Moodie, 2005).”

**Context** This term is not to be considered synonymous with mental illness.

**Sources** Herrman, H., Saxena, S., & Moodie, R. (Eds.) (2005). *Promoting mental health: Concepts, emerging evidence, practice*. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/evidence/MH\\_Promotion\\_Book.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/MH_Promotion_Book.pdf)

**See also** Determinants of Health, Empowerment, Health, Resilience, Mental Illness, Well-being

## Mental Illness

**Definition** Mental illness disturbs a person’s thoughts, emotions and/or behaviours, and may interfere with day-to-day functioning. A person can have a mental health problem or concern without having a diagnosable mental illness.

**Context** Some mental illnesses or disorders include depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, substance use disorders, eating disorders and personality disorders. Each affects people in different ways. Individuals with mental illness may be discriminated against, be the subject of prejudice or judgments, and may be disadvantaged and/or marginalized.

**Sources** Alberta Healthy Living Network, Common Messages for Mental Health, December 2008 [http://www.publichealth.ualberta.ca/en/multimedia/docs\\_reports/~media/University%20of%20Alberta/Faculties/SchoolofPublicHealth/Faculty%20Site/Media/podcasts%20and%20powerpoint/Alberta%20Healthy%20Living%20Network/AHLN\\_Mental\\_Health.ashx](http://www.publichealth.ualberta.ca/en/multimedia/docs_reports/~media/University%20of%20Alberta/Faculties/SchoolofPublicHealth/Faculty%20Site/Media/podcasts%20and%20powerpoint/Alberta%20Healthy%20Living%20Network/AHLN_Mental_Health.ashx)

**See also** Discrimination, Health, Mental Health, Prejudice, Social Exclusion, Vulnerable Populations

## Métis

**Definition** Métis refers broadly to people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry who self-identify as Métis.



- Context** Métis are distinct from First Nations, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis are recognized as Aboriginal people in the Constitution Act of 1982.
- Sources** Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC): Communications Branch. (2002). *Words first: An evolving terminology relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from: <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/R2-236-2002E.pdf>
- See also** Aboriginal People(s), First Nations, Inuit

## Minority Populations

- Definition** Minority populations are populations or groups with similar ethnic, racial, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics and are a smaller proportion to the rest of the population in a given area.
- Context** A minority population or group may or may not be disadvantaged.
- Sources** Minority Rights Group International. (2007). *Who are minorities?* Retrieved May 17, 2011 from the Minority Rights Group International website: <http://www.minorityrights.org/566/who-are-minorities/who-are-minorities.html>
- See also** Culture, Diversity, Disadvantaged Populations, Ethnicity, Marginalized Populations, Prejudice, Race, Racialization, Racism, Vulnerable Populations

## O

### Organizational Capacity

- Definition** Organizational capacity is the ability of an organization to facilitate, support and fulfill an initiative, program, mandate or common goal.
- Context** Organization capacity encompasses resources (financial, staff), leadership support, internal champions, workload assessment, and social and political support for a common goal.
- Sources** Sutcliffe, P., Snelling, S., & Laclé, S. (2010). *Implementing local public health practices to reduce social inequities in health*. [Intervention project. Final report]. Retrieved January 26, 2011 from the Sudbury & District Health Unit website: <http://www.sdhu.com/uploads/content/listings/FINALIPPRSDHUMay2010.pdf>
- See also** Diversity Competency, Policy, Social Environment

## P

### Pathways

- Definition** Pathways are the courses of biological and social development.

- Context** There are four main pathways (or mechanisms) through which health outcomes are produced: material circumstances (living and working conditions, food security), psychosocial factors (stress), health behaviours and biological factors.
- Sources** Krieger, N. (2001). A glossary for social epidemiology. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(10), 693-700.
- See also** Health, Health Behaviours, Health Outcomes, Employment, Food Insecurity/Security, Income, Mental Health, Physical Environment, Social Environment

## Physical Environment

- Definition** The physical environment consists of two main components the natural environment (air, water and soil) and the built environment (housing, indoor air quality, community design, transportation and food systems).
- Context** The physical environment is an intermediary determinant of health.
- Sources** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2003). *What makes Canadians healthy or unhealthy?* Retrieved February 13, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/determinants/determinants-eng.php#physenviron>
- See also** Community, Determinant of Health, Pathways, Social Determinants of Health

## Policy

- Definition** Policy includes the decisions and actions that maintain or change what would otherwise occur. Policy sets priorities and guides resource allocation to achieve a desired objective.
- Context** Any person, group or organization engaging in these activities may be considered a *policy maker*.
- Sources**
- Holmes, P., Neville, D., Donovan, C., & MacDonald, C.A. (2001). The Newfoundland and Labrador Heart Health Program dissemination story: The formation and functioning of effective coalitions. *Promotion and Education*, 8 (supplement 1), 8-12.
  - Milio, N. (2001). Glossary: Healthy public policy. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(9), 622-623.
  - Smith, B.L. (2003). *Public policy and public participation: Engaging citizens and community in the development of public policy*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Public\\_policy/public\\_2003\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Public_policy/public_2003_e.pdf)
- See also** Advocacy, Healthy Public Policy, Population Health Approach, Public Health, Public Policy

## Population Health

- Definition** Population health is a term that describes the health of the population and can be measured by health status indicators and other indicators.
- Context** The distinction between population health and public health is that population health describes the condition of the population, where as public health is the practices, procedures, institutions and disciplines required to achieve the desired state of population health.
- Sources** Last, J. (2007). *A dictionary of public health*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2008). *Canadian best practices portal glossary*. Retrieved December 29, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all\\_terms-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all_terms-eng.html)
- See also** Health, Health Impact Assessment, Health Indicators, Health Outcomes, Health Status, Healthy Public Policy, Public Health, Population Health Approach

## Population Health Approach

- Definition** A population health approach is an approach to health that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups.
- Context** To reach these objectives, population health looks at and acts upon a broad range of factors and conditions that have a strong influence on individual and population health.
- Sources** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2008). *Canadian best practices portal glossary*. Retrieved December 29, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all\\_terms-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all_terms-eng.html)
- See also** Health, Health Equity, Health Indicators, Health Inequalities, Health Inequities, Health Outcomes, Health Status, Healthy Public Policy, Population Health, Public Health

## Poverty

- Definition** Poverty is the condition of not having sufficient economic and other resources to live with the dignity, choices and power that enable full participation in society.
- Context** “In Canada, the assumption[s] underlying the definitions of poverty are frequently implicit rather than explicitly stated... The various measures used in Canada are not even called measures of poverty by Statistics Canada but rather indicators of low income (Raphael, 2007).”
- Sources**
- Kawachi, I., Subramanian, S.V., & Almeida-Filho, N. (2002). A glossary for health inequalities. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 56(9), 647-652.
  - Raphael, D. (2007). *Poverty and policy in Canada: implications for health and quality of life*. Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc. Toronto.

- Vibrant Communities Calgary. (2010). *What is poverty?* Retrieved May 22, 2011 from the Vibrant Communities Calgary website:  
[http://www.vibrantcalgary.com/uploads/pdfs/What\\_is\\_Poverty.pdf](http://www.vibrantcalgary.com/uploads/pdfs/What_is_Poverty.pdf)

**See also** Deprivation, Disadvantaged Populations, Employment, Food Insecurity/Security, Homeless, Income, Living Wage, Marginalized Populations, Social Determinants of Health, Social Exclusion, Socio-economic Status, Vulnerable Populations

## Prejudice

**Definition** Prejudice is a preconceived judgment, preference or idea formed without accurate knowledge or examination of appropriate facts.

**Context** Prejudice is socially learned and perpetuated, and grounded in misconceptions or inflexible generalizations. While prejudiced opinions may be positive, they are more often hostile and in either case are based on false or incomplete conclusions. Prejudice based on ethnicity, race, gender and sexually diversity, disability, geography, religion, socio-economic status or other characteristics may lead to discriminatory action.

- Sources**
- *The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*. Prejudice. Retrieved June 01, 2011, from Dictionary.com website:  
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/prejudice>
  - Oxford Dictionaries. (2010). *Prejudice*. Retrieved February 13, 2011 from the Oxford Dictionaries website :  
[http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m\\_en\\_gb0657460#m\\_en\\_gb0657460](http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0657460#m_en_gb0657460)

**See also** Disability, Discrimination, Diversity, Ethnicity, Health Inequities, Race, Racialization, Racism, Social Exclusion, Unfair, Unjust

## Public Health

**Definition** Public health is a professional practice aimed at improving health, prolonging life and enhancing the quality of life among whole populations.

**Context** Public health is achieved through health promotion and protection, disease prevention and other forms of health intervention including policy advocacy.

- Sources**
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2008). *Canadian best practices portal glossary*. Retrieved December 29, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website:  
[http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all\\_terms-eng.html](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/glossary/all_terms-eng.html)

**See also** Access, Advocacy, Collaboration, Community Capacity Building, Health, Health Status, Healthy Public Policy, Intersectoral Action, Population Health, Population Health Approach, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health

## Public Policy

- Definition** Public Policy, also known as government policy, is the broad framework of ideas and values that guide decisions, action or inaction that governments take with respect to matters affecting the population.
- Context** Public policies are developed by federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels of government and government agencies. Components may include analysis, decision-making and outcomes.
- Sources**
- Holmes, P., Neville, D., Donovan, C., & MacDonald, C.A. (2001). The Newfoundland and Labrador Heart Health Program dissemination story: The formation and functioning of effective coalitions. *Promotion and Education*, 8 (supplement 1), 8-12.
  - Milio, N. (2001). Glossary: Healthy public policy. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(9), 622-623.
  - Smith, B.L. (2003). *Public policy and public participation: Engaging citizens and community in the development of public policy*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Public\\_policy/public\\_2003\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Public_policy/public_2003_e.pdf)
- See also** Advocacy, Healthy Public Policy, Policy, Population Health Approach

## R

### Race

- Definition** Race is an arbitrary classification of individuals and groups based on physical and cultural characteristics. Race includes socially constructed differences among people based on characteristics such as accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences and/or places of origin. The concept of race is imposed on populations whereas ethnicity is based on self-identification.
- Context** The terms race and ethnicity are sometimes incorrectly interchanged. Race and ethnicity are not synonymous terms.
- Sources** Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). (2011). *Racial discrimination, race, and racism*. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from the Ontario Human Rights Commission website: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/factsheets/race>
- See also** Culture, Discrimination, Diversity, Ethnicity, Immigrant, Minority Populations, Prejudice, Racialization, Racism, Refugee

### Racialization

- Definition** Racialization is the process by which societies construct races as *real*, different and

unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life.

- Context** Racialization is to put a racial connotation on information or policy. This implies that measured average biological differences between members of diverse racial/ethnic groups are assumed to reflect innate, genetically determined differences.
- Sources**
- Krieger, N. (2001). A glossary for social epidemiology. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(10), 693-700.
  - Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). (2011). *Racial discrimination, race, and racism*. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from the Ontario Human Rights Commission website: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/factsheets/race>
- See also** Diversity, Discrimination, Ethnicity, Healthy Public Policy, Immigrant, Minority Population, Prejudice, Policy, Public Policy, Race, Racism, Refugee

## Racism

- Definition** Racism is an ideology, action or conduct that either directly or indirectly conveys that one racial group is inherently superior to another. Racial classifications are socially constructed views of arbitrary physical and cultural distinctions.
- Context** Racism has the effect of imposing burdens on an individual or group and/or withholding or limiting access to benefits available to other members of society.
- Sources** Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). (2011). *Racial discrimination, race, and racism*. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from the Ontario Human Rights Commission website: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/factsheets/race>
- See also** Discrimination, Diversity, Ethnicity, Immigrant, Minority Population, Prejudice, Race, Racialization

## Refugee

- Definition** Refugee refers to an individual or group who leave their country of origin or habitual residence due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, social group and/or political affiliation.
- Context** Refugees are considered landed immigrants and permanent residents in Canada.
- Sources**
- The 1951 Refugee Convention, The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1951).
  - Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). (2010). *Facts and figures 2009 – immigration overview: Permanent and temporary residents*. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2009/permanent/index.asp>
- See also** Discrimination, Diversity, Immigrant, Racialization, Racism, Vulnerable Populations

## Remote Populations

**Definition** Remote populations include groups that are geographically isolated and may have limited access to some resources and services for all or part of the year.

**Context**

**Sources** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2010). *Considerations for definitions of “remote” and “isolated” in the context of pandemic (H1N1) 2009*. Retrieved December 31, 2010 from the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/guidance\\_lignesdirectrices/cdricp-cdeicp-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/guidance_lignesdirectrices/cdricp-cdeicp-eng.php)

**See also** Aboriginal People(s), Access, Community, Determinants of Health, Food Insecurity/Security, Physical Environment, Rural-Urban Continuum, Vulnerable Populations

## Resilience

**Definition** Resilience is the capacity of individuals, families, groups, communities and societies to cope successfully in the face of significant adversity or risk.

**Context** Resilience develops and changes over time. It is enhanced by health behaviours and contributes to the maintenance or enhancement of health.

**Sources**

- Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI): Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI). (2009). *Improving the health of Canadians 2009: Exploring positive mental health*. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from [http://www.cpa.ca/cpsite/userfiles/Documents/Practice\\_Page/positive\\_mh\\_en.pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpsite/userfiles/Documents/Practice_Page/positive_mh_en.pdf)
- Mangham, C. et al. (1995). *Resiliency: Relevance to health promotion- Detailed analysis. (Canada’s drug strategy)*. Ottawa: Health Canada.

**See also** Community, Empowerment, Health, Health Behaviour, Mental Health

## Rural-Urban Continuum

**Definition** The rural urban continuum is a classification scheme that distinguishes urban settlements from rural settlements and can be thought of as the degree of urbanization and proximity to metropolitan/urban areas. Rural-urban continuum captures the concentration of population, service, governance, and economic activity in a physical environment, as well as the way people live in these settlements.

Recognizing the shift from viewing urban and rural as opposites, Alberta Health Services’ Geographic Working Group, in partnership with Alberta Health & Wellness, developed an official definition of *rural-urban continuum* for the Alberta context. Led by the AHS Geographic Working Committee, the definition is comprised of seven categories: (1) metro (Edmonton and Calgary); (2) urban (Fort McMurray, Grand Prairie, Red Deer,

Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat); (3) geographies with moderate metropolitan influence; (4) geographies with moderate urban influence; (5) rural (6) rural remote and (7) rural centre areas.

<b>Context</b>	The classifications are based on population density and local geographic areas (aggregation of Dissemination Areas, local travel patterns, knowledge about local populations, services utilization, etc). As all of the circumstances that influence the rural-urban continuum can influence multiple health behaviours, access and determinants of health, people living in more rural or remote areas may experience higher risks of negative health outcomes.
<b>Sources</b>	Alberta Health Services (AHS): Geographic Working Committee. (2011). <i>Rural-urban continuum</i> . [Lead by Dr. Judy Seidel, Senior Scientist/Manager, Public Health Innovation & Decision Support].
<b>See also</b>	Access, Determinants of Health, Health Outcomes, Remote Populations

## S

### Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

<b>Definition</b>	Social determinants of health are the social conditions and processes that promote and/or undermine the distribution of health outcomes among population groups.
<b>Context</b>	Not all health determinants are equal in impact. It is important to distinguish between the structural and intermediary determinants as they play different roles in the creation of population health outcomes and require different interventions. Social determinants of health can be divided into the two following groups. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Structural determinants</i> sort (or socially stratify) individuals and groups into social classes with resulting unequal distribution of and access to resources for living. The structural determinants are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education</li> <li>▪ Employment</li> <li>▪ Early childhood development</li> <li>▪ Ethnicity/Aboriginal status</li> <li>▪ Social exclusion</li> <li>▪ Gender</li> <li>▪ Social safety network</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Some synonyms for structural determinants of health are causes of the causes, root causes, systemic factors, primordial factors, underlying conditions, pre-requisites for health and social determinants of health. This list is not exhaustive.</p>



2. *Intermediary determinants* do not sort populations into ranked groups or social classes. The main categories and corresponding intermediary determinants of health include the following:

- Material (intermediary determinants: housing, workplace, food security)
- Psychosocial circumstances (intermediary determinant: stress)
- Health behaviours (intermediary determinants: tobacco use, alcohol use, physical activity, healthy eating)
- Human biology and genetics
- Health care system (intermediary determinant: access to health care services)

#### Sources

- National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH). *Integrating social determinants of health and health equity into Canadian public health practice: Environmental scan 2010*. [Environmental scan]. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health website: <http://www.nccdh.ca/supportfiles/Environmental-Scan-2010.pdf>
- Raphael, D. (2009). *Social determinants of health: Canadian perspectives*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Solar, O., & Irwin, A. (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)
- World Health Organization (WHO): Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH). (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)

#### See also

Aboriginal People(s), Determinants of Health, Discrimination, Education Level, Employment, Ethnicity, Food Insecurity/Security, Gender, Health, Health Equity, Health Inequalities, Health Inequities, Income, Poverty, Social Environment, Social Exclusion, Social Gradient, Social Stratification, Socio-economic Status

## Social Environment

#### Definition

The social environment includes the groups to which individuals belong, the neighbourhoods in which they live, the organization of their workplace and the policies created to order individual's lives.

- Context** Sometimes used interchangeably with the concept of social determinants of health; often cited as a determinant of health.
- Sources** Yen, I.H., & Syme, S.L. (1999). The social environment and health: A discussion of the epidemiologic literature. *Annual Review of Public Health, 20*(1), 287-308.
- See also** Community, Context, Healthy Public Policy, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health

## Social Exclusion

- Definition** Social exclusion is an expression of unequal relations of power among groups in society that determine unequal access to economic, social, political and cultural resources. Social exclusion limits full participation in social life.
- Context** Social exclusion is closely related to marginalization.
- Sources** Galabuzi, G.E. (2009). Social exclusion. In J. Mikkonen & D. Raphael (Eds.), *Social determinants of health: The Canadian facts* (pp. 32). Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management. Retrieved May 22, 2011 from [http://www.thecanadianfacts.org/The\\_Canadian\\_Facts.pdf](http://www.thecanadianfacts.org/The_Canadian_Facts.pdf)
- See also** Deprivation, Discrimination, Health Inequalities, Health Inequities, Marginalized Populations, Racialization, Racism, Social Determinants of Health, Social Stratification, Unfair, Unjust

## Social Gradient

- Definition** The social gradient is the linear decrease or increase in health outcomes that corresponds with social stratification whether measured by income, occupation or education levels.
- Context** The impact of the social gradient is sometimes expressed as a shortfall in health, i.e., the number of lives that would have been saved if all groups had the same level of health as the most advantaged group.
- Sources**
- Marmot, M.G. (2004). *Status syndrome: How your social standing directly affects your health and life expectancy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
  - Whitehead, M., & Dahlgren, G. (2006). *Concepts and principles for tackling social inequities in health: Leveling up part 1*. Retrieved March 1, 2011 from [http://www.enothe.eu/cop/docs/concepts\\_and\\_principles.pdf](http://www.enothe.eu/cop/docs/concepts_and_principles.pdf)
- See also** Health, Health Outcomes, Income, Healthy Public Policy, Public Policy, Social Exclusion, Social Stratification, Socio-economic Status

## Social Justice

- Definition** Social justice includes ideas and actions towards creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity. Proponents of social justice understand and value individual and collective human rights and recognize the dignity of every

individual and group.

**Context**

**Sources**

- Butts, J.B., & Rich, K. (2005). *Nursing ethics: Across the curriculum and into practice*. Sudbury, Mass: Jones and Bartlett.
- Zajda, J.I., Majhanovich, S., & Rust, V.D. (2006). *Education and social justice*. Dordrecht: Springer.

**See also**

Health Equity, Human Rights, Unfair, Unjust

## Social Stratification

**Definition**

Social Stratification is the process of sorting people into different social groups according to their access to prized societal values and resources (e.g., social status, class, power and community respect).

**Context**

**Sources**

- Healthy Public Policy (HPP), Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP), and Alberta Health Services (AHS). (2011). *Social environments and health*. [Concept paper]. Edmonton: Healthy Public Policy, Alberta Health Services.
- Solar, O., & Irwin, A. (2007). *A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health*. [Discussion paper]. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_framework\\_action\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_framework_action_05_07.pdf)

**See also**

Discrimination, Social Determinants of Health, Social Exclusion, Social Gradient, Socio-economic Status, Racialization

## Socio-economic Status (SES)

**Definition**

Socio-economic status is a composite measure of individual and group income, education, occupation and social status.

**Context**

Socio-economic status is one of the strongest predictors of health.

**Sources**

- Modeste, N.N., & Tamayose, T.S. (2004). *Dictionary of public health promotion and education: Terms and concepts*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- World Health Organization (WHO): Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH). (2007). *Achieving health equity: From root causes to fair outcomes*. [Interim statement]. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from the World Health Organization website: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/resources/csdh\\_media/cdsh\\_interim\\_statement\\_final\\_07.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_media/cdsh_interim_statement_final_07.pdf)

**See also**

Deprivation, Disadvantaged Populations, Education Level, Employment, Health Inequities,

Income, Poverty, Social Determinants of Health, Social Gradient, Social Stratification

## U

### Unfair

**Definition** Unfair can be defined as not based on or behaving according to the principles or equality and justice.

**Context**

**Sources** Oxford Dictionaries. (2010). *Unfair*. Retrieved February 13, 2011 from the Oxford Dictionaries website:  
[http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m\\_en\\_gb0903060#m\\_en\\_gb0903060](http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0903060#m_en_gb0903060)

**See also** Health Inequities, Social Justice, Unjust

### Unjust

**Definition** Unjust can be defined as not based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair.

**Context**

**Sources** Oxford Dictionaries. (2010). *Unjust*. Retrieved February 13, 2011 from the Oxford Dictionaries website:  
[http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m\\_en\\_gb0906790#m\\_en\\_gb0906790](http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0906790#m_en_gb0906790)

**See also** Health Inequities, Social Justice, Unfair

### Upstream

**Definition** Upstream refers to a broad array of factors or conditions that influence individual and population health usually characterized as beyond an individual's direct control.

**Context** Upstream can be thought of as addressing the problem at the source and may include societal structures, public policy and the social determinants of health. A synonym is *distal*.

**Sources** Bryan, H. (2006). *A social-determinants approach to reporting on the health status of the Interior Health population*. Retrieved May 31, 2011 from the Interior Health website:  
[http://www.interiorhealth.ca/uploadedFiles/Choose\\_Health/Pop\\_Health/PopHealthReport2006.pdf](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/uploadedFiles/Choose_Health/Pop_Health/PopHealthReport2006.pdf)

**See also** Advocacy, Downstream, Health, Health Outcomes, Healthy Public Policy, Policy, Population Health Approach, Public Health, Public Policy, Social Determinants of Health

## V

**Vulnerable Population**

- Definition** Vulnerable populations refer to groups that have increased susceptibility to adverse health outcomes as a result of inequitable access to the resources needed to address risks to health.
- Context** The following groups have been identified by *Reducing Disparities, HPDIP, AHS* as vulnerable populations: people living in poverty; Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and temporary foreign workers; refugees; people with disabilities; people who are gender and sexually diverse; people experiencing homelessness (or people who lack affordable housing); people with low literacy skills; and people living in poor, rural or remote communities.
- Sources** Calgary Health Region (CHR): Reducing Disparities, Health Promotion Disease and Injury Prevention, Population and Public Health. (2010). *Vulnerable populations in Alberta*. Retrieved June 7, 2011 from [http://iweb.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/resources/res\\_pub/reports.htm](http://iweb.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/resources/res_pub/reports.htm)
- See also** Access, Determinants of Health, Deprivation, Disadvantaged Populations, Marginalized Populations, Social Exclusion

## W

**Well-Being**

- Definition** Well-being is a self-perceived satisfactory state of existence. Well-being is subjective but may include the presence of health and a sense of empowerment enabling an individual to influence their determinants of health.
- Context** Well-being is a difficult term to accurately define as it is based in an individual's perception of their current lifestyle and ability to affect their future.
- Sources** Dictionary.com. Well-being. Retrieved on June 3, 2011. From website <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/well-being>
- See also** Empowerment, Health, Lifestyle, Resilience, Social Determinants of Health, Social Stratification, Socio-Economic Status