



Embracing
Intersectionality
for Health Equity
& Justice

LIST OF SRHR TERMINOLOGY

Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, Quality (AAAQ)

The four essential standards for healthcare services. This is also called the AAAQ Framework.

Ableism

Bias, prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities.

Accessibility

The practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible. For example, equipment for people with hearing impairments in a conference room, or the availability of Braille translations for people with visual impairments.

Cisgender or Cis

Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cis-heteronormativity

The assumption that heterosexuality and being cisgender are the norm, which has an effect on interpersonal interactions and society, and can minoritise queer and gender diverse people.

Comprehensive sexuality education

A curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality.

Consent

Giving permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something.

Contraceptive

A device or drug used to prevent pregnancy.

(Dis)abilities

An umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem affecting body function or structure. An activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in carrying out a task or action. A participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in everyday life situations. So (dis)ability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between a person's body and the society in which they live.

Disability justice

A social justice movement which focuses on how disability and ableism relate to other forms of oppression and identity such as race, class and gender.

Discrimination

There are four types of discrimination: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, intersectional discrimination and multiple discrimination.

- » Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another because of their background or certain personal characteristics.
- » Indirect discrimination refers to laws, policies and practices that apply to everyone in the same way, and may appear neutral, but have a worse effect on some people than others.
- » Intersectional discrimination recognises the complex, multi-faceted dimensions of discrimination that combines social categories and/or personal characteristics.
- » Multiple discrimination is discrimination based on two or more identities/ intersecting characteristics, such as religion or belief, ethnicity, (dis)ability, age, gender and gender identity, and/or sexual orientation.

Diversity

Including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.

Duty bearers

The individual(s) or institution(s) with obligations and responsibilities in relation to the realisation of a right.

Equality

Equality can be looked at in three different ways: formal equality, substantive/de-facto equality and inclusive equality.

- » Formal equality is the concept that all people should be treated the same, regardless of difference. However, this approach does not take systemic discrimination and individual difference into account and can result in indirect discrimination (see entry at Discrimination).
- » Substantive/de-facto equality refers to equality in outcomes, and takes the effects of discrimination and difference into consideration. It recognises that rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout society, and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not achieve equality. It calls for the redistribution of resources, power and structures plus increased access to resources and participation for those who are minoritised.
- » Inclusive equality is defined as 'a substantive model of equality' incorporating four dimensions. The first dimension addresses socio-economic disadvantages. Another dimension helps combat stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and recognises the dignity of human beings and their intersectionality. A third dimension reaffirms people as members of social groups, and recognises humanity through inclusion in society. The final dimension makes space for difference as a matter of human dignity.

Equity

Equity refers to fairness and equality in outcomes, not just in support and opportunity.

Gender-based violence (GBV)

Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of their sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Gender expression

The way in which we express our gender through actions and appearance, which may be male, female or androgynous – a combination of the two.

Gender identity

Gender identity reflects a person's deeply felt and experienced sense of their gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Gender or gender-neutral pronouns

The set of pronouns that an individual wants others to use in order to reflect that person's gender identity: e.g. he/him, she/her, they/them.

Gender roles and relations

Functions and responsibilities expected to be fulfilled in any society and usually determined by underlying gender and social norms. This includes reproductive (caregiving and household), community and productive (breadwinning) roles. Gender transformative approaches seek to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and challenge unequal power relations. They no longer focus entirely on individual 'empowerment', now also working towards transforming the structures that reinforce gender inequality.

Global North vs Global South

The concept of a gap between different countries and regions of the world in terms of development and wealth.

Homophobia

A range of negative attitudes and feelings towards homosexuality in general or people who are identified or perceived as being lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Identity

The unique set of characteristics that can be used to identify a person as themselves and no one else.

Inclusion

Involvement and empowerment, recognising the inherent worth and dignity of all people.

Intersectionality

The idea that different aspects of a person's identity, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age and class, intersect and overlap, to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality helps us to be conscious of power and privilege - who has it and who does not - and serves as a starting point for truly inclusive equity and justice work.

LGBTQIA+

An acronym that indicates the spectrum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual + other people whose identities are not heterosexual and cisgender.

Meaningful participation

Meaningful participation is about ensuring that certain people have the opportunity to be involved in processes of decision-making on policies, strategies and programmes that affect them.

Minoritisation or marginalisation

When a certain person or groups of people are less able to do things or access basic services or opportunities.

Misogyny

Hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women.

Neocolonialism

Use of economic or political pressure by powerful countries to control or influence other countries.

Non-binary

An umbrella term for gender identities that are not solely – or not at all – male or female.

Oppression

Malicious or unjust treatment, or exercise of power, often appearing to be under governmental authority or widespread cultural disapproval.

Pan-Africanism

A worldwide movement that aims to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between all indigenous African people and diasporas of people of African descent.

Patriarchy

A social system in which positions of dominance and privilege are primarily held by men.

Power/privilege

A societal structure that provides people with more or less influence, and opportunities to influence society and their own lives. The situation a person is in could relate to their financial status, sex and ethnicity.

Power relations

Power relations is the interaction of processes and systems of power that shapes experiences of privilege and disadvantage between and within groups. A person can experience power in some contexts and oppression in others.

Queer

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it.

Racial and ethnic identity

Racial and ethnic identity refers to the idea that all individuals are members of a particular cultural, national or racial group that may share some of the following elements: culture, religion, race, language or place of origin. Two people can share the same race but have different ethnicities.

Racism

Prejudice, discrimination or hostility shown by an individual, community or institution against or towards a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is minoritised.

Reasonable accommodations

Changes or adjustments in a system to make that system fair and usable for each individual, based on a proven need.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity acknowledges the importance of power, examining it at two different levels. These are the micro level of yourself and your relationships with others, but also the macro levels of the society we live in. As a feature of policy and programming processes, reflexivity can be quite transformative, enabling critical self-awareness, increasing role awareness, challenging power and privilege, and questioning assumptions.

Right holders

Individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty bearers.

Safe space

A term for an area or forum. This could be a space where a minoritised group should not be confronted with standard mainstream stereotypes and minoritisation. Or a space where a shared political or social viewpoint is required for participation.

Sex

Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorised as male, female or intersex. There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs and external genitalia.

Sex characteristics

Primary sex characteristics include genitalia and hormonal structure. Secondary sex characteristics include muscle mass, hair distribution and stature.

Sexism

Discrimination or prejudice based on gender or sex, typically against women.

Sexual orientation

A person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

The human rights that allow people to make informed decisions about their relationships, their bodies, family planning, sexuality and wellbeing. It also means having access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services, such as treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), access to contraceptives, safe and legal abortion, menstrual healthcare, maternal care and support during pregnancy. Because of global gender inequality, many people – the majority of them women, though also LGBTQIA+ people – face barriers in achieving SRHR.

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services

Sexual and reproductive health services may include the provision of contraceptives, abortion, sexual health checks, treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and other forms of support – relating to both mental and physical health.

Social model

The social model of (dis)ability is a reaction to the dominant medical model of (dis)ability, which is a functional analysis of the body as machine to be fixed in order to conform with normative values. The social model is based on the premise that sensory, physical, intellectual, psychosocial and other impairments are met with physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers in society. It is these barriers that hinder full and effective participation of people with (dis)abilities.

Social norms

Unwritten rules about how people are expected to behave in a given situation or social group. Social norms are grounded in customs, traditions and value systems that develop over time and vary across organisations, countries and cultures. Social norms usually advantage those in the majority, keeping the status quo that allows some groups to dominate. They may also act as a brake – or accelerator – in a behaviour change process, so it should be a critical consideration in inclusive development.

Socio-economic status

A classification of the social standing or class of an individual or a group compared to others in society, usually based on the level of education, income and occupation. Three major categories that are often referred to: high, middle and low socio-economic status.

Tokenism

A symbolic gesture, or doing the bare minimum, instead of making a real effort to do a particular thing – often used in relation to a small number of people from under-represented groups being included in order to give the impression of full inclusion or diversity.

Trans

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using a wide variety of terms, including: transsexual, transgender, crossdresser, agender, gender-fluid, gender-queer (GQ), gender-variant or differently gendered.

Unconscious biases

Social stereotypes about certain people that individuals have without being consciously aware of it. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs and prejudices about various social and identity groups, and these are often incompatible with your own conscious values. We apply these biases to all aspects of our lives, including our behaviour and decision-making.

Undermining

To make someone less confident, less powerful, or less likely to succeed, or to make something weaker, often gradually.

Universal design

The design of products, environments, programmes and services so that they can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design does not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of people with disabilities where this is needed.

See also:

[Guidelines on disability inclusive language](#) (UN)

[Guidelines on gender-inclusive language](#) (UN)