



Appendix A: Definitions

- **Trauma:** In this document, *trauma* refers to the psychological effects of a life event that is out of an individual's control and overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope.^{13,18} Trauma has serious long-term mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, and behavioural impacts.¹⁹
- **Re-traumatization:** When a person is exposed to people, situations, or environments which immerse them in memories of their previous trauma, sometimes in a way which may cause feelings of reliving the initial traumatic experience.¹⁹ A patient may refer to a person, situation, or environment that might re-traumatize them as a "trigger", or a re-traumatizing experience as "triggering".
- **Intergenerational trauma:** Also referred to as trans- or multigenerational trauma, is compounded trauma that is transferred from those who directly experience an incident to the next generations. This type of trauma may start with a traumatic event affecting an individual, those affecting multiple family members, or affecting larger community through collective trauma.²⁰ "For Indigenous peoples, the historical (and present) trauma includes trauma created because assimilative policies and laws aimed at attempted cultural genocide and continues to be (exacerbated) by forms of colonialism and discrimination. Examples include the Indian Residential Schools, as well as Missing and Murdered Indigenous women."² Also refer to [Indian Hospitals in Canada](#) to learn more.
- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):** Childhood experience of trauma (also known as ACEs) can affect the developing brain and body, resulting in neurobehavioral, social, emotional, and cognitive changes, all of which can have a lifelong impact on the patient's health.^{1,11,14}
- **Trauma-informed practice:** A strengths-based approach to interactions with patients that acknowledges the conscious and unconscious impacts of trauma on health and functioning, and emphasizes safety, supported structured choice, appropriately timed collaboration, as well as creating trustworthy services and practices. Challenging behaviours are recognized as previously adaptive coping strategies to survive past and current stress and may now interfere with healthy functioning.¹⁹
- **Cultural safety:** Provides an environment that is physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually safe. An individual's cultural identity and needs are recognized and respected. When an individual's cultural identity and well-being is disempowered, diminished or demeaned, the environment is culturally unsafe.² Practitioners should be cognizant of those who have been harmed and continue to be harmed by systemic oppression (e.g., colonialism, medical racism, systemic ableism). Cultural safety is also an 'outcome' based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system; it is when Indigenous people feel safe when receiving Health Care."²¹
- **Cultural humility:** Is a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.²² It is also imperative that practitioners acknowledge power dynamics.
- **Resilience:** The ability to cope, heal and thrive despite adversity.²³⁻²⁵ "The healthy brain has a considerable capacity for resilience, based upon its ability to respond to interventions designed to open "windows of plasticity" and redirect its function toward better health."²⁶ "Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to be shaped and "re-wired" by new learning and experiences. In contrast to earlier assumptions, considerable research now shows that both the function and structure of the human brain can change in healthy ways with targeted practice even into late adulthood."^{27,28}
- **Bullying:** A form of violence (common among youth), that entails any unwanted aggressive action(s) that includes observed and/or perceived power imbalance and is often repeated multiple times. Bullying may cause physical, psychological, social, or educational harm or distress. These behaviours may occur through technology, which is referred to as cyberbullying.²⁹