**Definitions of Key Terms and Terminology English First Peoples** 

**First Peoples:** First Peoples is a term used to describe First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. It is comparable to “Aboriginal” or “Canadian Indigenous Peoples”

**Aboriginal:** a term defined in the *Constitution Act* of f 1982 that refers to all Indigenous people in Canada, including status and non-status “Indians” (as identified by the Indian Act), Metis, and Inuit. This term has been commonly used by the provincial, territorial and federal governments, but is decreasing in use.

**First Nations:** the self-determined political and organizational unit of the Aboriginal or Canadian Indigenous community that has the power to negotiate, on a government-to-government basis, with BC and Canada.

**Metis:** a person of European and First Nations ancestry belonging to, or descended from, the people who established themselves in the Red, Assiniboine, and Saskatchewan river valleys during the nineteenth century, forming a cultural group distinct from both European and other Canadian Indigenous peoples. The Metis established homelands in various parts of Canada, with unique traditions, language (Michif), way of life, collective consciousness, and nationhood.

**Inuit (singular: Inuk):** Original peoples whose origins are different from other Indigenous peoples in North America. The Inuit generally live in northern Canada and Alaska. The word Inuit means “the people” in the Inuit language of Inukut.

**Indian:** a term used historically to describe the first inhabitants of North and South America and used to define indigenous people under the Indian Act. The term has generally been replaced by Aboriginal peoples, as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982.

**Assimilation:** Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilation involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society. Assimilation may be compelled through force or undertaken voluntarily.

**Bias**: Bias is holding a prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

**Blood Memory**: Blood memory is a term often used by Indigenous Peoples to refer to memories stored in one's body cells and passed on genetically. It is also referred to as genetic memory or cellular memory. Blood memory is often described as one's ancestral or genetic connection to one's language, songs, ceremonies, land, teachings, etc.

**Colonialism/Colonization**: Colonialism is the attempted or actual imposition of policies, laws, mores, economies, cultures, or systems, and institutions put in place by settler governments to support and continue the occupation of Indigenous territories, the subjugation of Indigenous Nations, and the resulting internalized and externalized thought patterns that support this occupation and subjugation.

Colonialism is not to be confused with colonization.

Colonialism is the ideology advocating colonization. Colonization generally refers to the process by which Europeans invaded and occupied Indigenous national territories.

**Decolonizing:** Decolonization is a social and political process aimed at resisting and undoing the multifaceted impacts of colonization and re-establishing strong contemporary Indigenous Nations and institutions based on traditional values, philosophies, and knowledge systems.

It is the meaningful and active resistance to forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of Indigenous minds, bodies, and lands.

It requires individuals to question the legitimacy of the colonizer and reflect on the ways we have been influenced by colonialism consciously and critically.

**Discrimination:** Systemic discrimination is the creation and perpetuation of systems (that is, knowledge, education, governance, laws) based on the values and mores that are central to one fragment of a society and to which it assumes all societies subscribe.

**Intergenerational Trauma:** Intergenerational trauma is transmission of the effects of trauma across generations, affecting the children and grandchildren of those initially victimized. This includes the transmission of historical oppression and colonization that continues to impact the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples today.

**Seven Sacred Teachings**: The Seven Sacred Teachings is a term used by many, but not all, Indigenous peoples in what is now referred to as Canada. The term refers to the foundational concepts by which we should all live our lives in the best interest of ourselves, our families, our communities, and all living things. The Seven Sacred Teachings are: love, honesty, courage, wisdom, humility, truth, and respect.

**Stereotypes**: Stereotypes are commonly held public beliefs about a certain social group or type of individual. Stereotypes include images, understandings, or categorization of groups or individuals based on simplified or generalized understandings of the characteristics, nature, or descriptions of the individuals or groups. This categorization, which denies diversity, results in a skewed, false, or incorrect understanding about the characteristics, nature, or description of the individual or groups in question.