An Introduction to Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how every person has multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are.[1] These different, intersecting identities shape personal and collective experiences. An intersectional approach encourages decision-makers to think beyond how decisions impact one population group at a time (e.g. women, immigrants) to consider how decisions impact people who are members of multiple, overlapping population groups at the same (e.g. a young immigrant woman living in poverty).[2] Intersectional analysis enables more effective policies and services that better meet people's complex needs.

Intersectionality is an increasingly referenced concept used by the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta and other municipalities, to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and services.

Elements of Intersectionality:
(1) Every person has multiple and simultaneous identities (for example: gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, indigenous identity, age, physical ability, socio-economic status).
(2) These identities contribute to differing experiences and differing degrees of privilege and oppression.
(3) Differences in privilege and oppression are created and reinforced by power dynamics in interpersonal relationships, organizations, and systems.

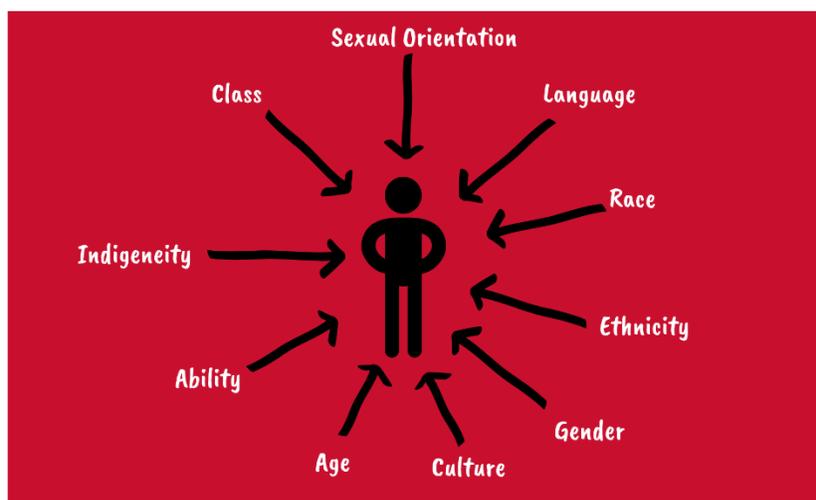**Examples of identity factors that 'intersect' to make us who we are:**

Image adapted from **All Booked Up** (http://allbookedup2014.blogspot.ca/2014/02/book-5-review-concise-chinese-english.html)

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1 Status of Women Canada.

2 Hankivisky, O. (2012). An Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis Framework. Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy.