## **DEFINITIONS: 4 I'S OF OPPRESSION**

**Oppression:** A system of mistreatment, exploitation and abuse of a marginalized group(s) for the social, economic or political benefit of a dominant group(s). This happens within a social hierarchy where people are ranked according to status, often based on aspects of social identity.

In any society, there are core belief(s) or ideologies about how the dominant and marginalized groups relate to each other, which are embedded in the societal institutions (e.g., government, economy, criminal justice system, health care, education, media, etc.). These core beliefs are also expressed through interpersonal relationships and communication and in the internalized messages that people have about themselves and how they should be treated.

#### Institutional

The idea or belief that one group is better than other groups gets rooted in our societal institutions including the legal system/law enforcement, education

system, employment system, housing, media images, political power, etc., where those in marginalized groups experience unfair treatment, discrimination and biased

#### Interpersonal

The idea or belief that one group is better than other groups gives "permission" and reinforcement for individual members of the dominant

group to personally disrespect, devalue or mistreat individuals in marginalized groups which can include jokes, slurs, exclusion, stereotyping, threats, exist ideologies (or beliefs) that one bullying, physical assaults, dehumanization etc.

group of people are inherently superior to other groups and have the right to control them. These ideologies are reflected in the gualities attributed to the dominant and marginalized (or oppressed) groups. The dominant group is often portrayed as better (i.e., more intelligent, capable, stronger, deserving, advanced) and the opposite qualities are attributed to the marginalized group.

Ideology

In an oppressive society, there

### Internalized

The idea or belief that one group is better than other groups gets internalized so that people in marginalized groups feel inferior and start to believe the stereotypes, prejudice and negative messages about themselves, which can result in feelings of powerlessness, despair, passivity, aggression, self-harm, etc.

# **4 I'S OF OPPRESSION CYCLE**

