

DEIA Commitment & Inclusive Language Training Glossary

What does DEIA stand for?

Diversity: *Celebrating differences within a community*

A community or group of people, which is composed of differing elements or qualities, who exist in relation to one another. Diversity indicates the practice of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, cultures, abilities, ideas, philosophies, and histories that exist among individuals within a shared community.

Equity: *Meeting people where they are, to help them succeed*

Upholding fairness or justice in the way people are treated and strives to ensure the absence of disparities. It is the practice or quality of providing fair access, opportunity, and advancement for a diverse group of people, while being mindful of their various needs, and making accommodations for those who may face barriers. Equity is not synonymous with equality. Equality is equally sharing, dividing and seeking to give the same thing to all people, regardless of their needs. However, equity is when everyone gets what they need in order to have access, opportunities, and a fair chance to succeed. Equity recognizes that the idea of equality ("the same for everyone") may not address widespread disparities and individual circumstances where individualized solutions are necessary.

Inclusion: *Welcoming new members and making everyone feel valued*

Creating a culture and environment that recognizes, appreciates, and effectively utilizes the contributions and perspectives of every person. Inclusion is equity in action. To be inclusive is to actively communicate with people about their needs; and support and embrace diversity in a way that clearly shows all individuals are valued, recognized, and accepted for who they truly are. This involves fostering authentic and empowered participation to generate a true sense of belonging for all community members. *"Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold."*

Accessibility: *Striving to better meet the needs of all members*

Making spaces, equipment, programs, activities, and environments easy to approach, reach, enter, use, obtain or understand. Ensuring full participation in the community is suitable, adaptable, or attainable for use by people with diverse abilities, modes of communication, languages spoken, and access to information.

Also, consider:

Socio-economic/financial accessibility: *Can everyone afford this activity?*

Location-based accessibility: *Is the location a relatively equitable distance for all participants?*

Transportation accessibility: *Can everyone get there relatively easily?*

Internet accessibility: *Does everyone have access to the web if that is necessary for participation?*

General Terms

Affirmation (*Affirming Language*):

To offer someone emotional support, encouragement, or validation. Using affirming language creates a comfortable and safe environment where people can grow, learn, and feel like they belong. The idea behind affirmation is that individuals have differences in their abilities, identities, and how they interact with the world around them – and these differences should not be considered something that needs to be “fixed!”

Assumptions:

A thing that is accepted as true without proof. Assumptions based on stereotypes and generalizations can be harmful. Assuming that a person will behave in a certain manner, is thinking in a particular way, or has certain preferences can distract us from being open to learning about that individual's actual qualities and abilities.

Generalization:

Assuming that all entities in a group will share the same characteristics, due to limited exposure to samples. Cultural generalization is a broad statement about a group of people.

Intersectionality:

Intersectionality refers to the idea that multiple identities and layers of advantage and disadvantage, can apply to one person. When an individual's identities overlap with several marginalized groups' experiences, this creates an overlapping experience of challenges and adversity.

Intentional Inclusion (*Intentionally Inclusive Language*):

The act of planning for, organizing around, and thinking about the diverse needs of individuals within a community when preparing for an event, meeting, conversation... etc.

Intentionally Inclusive Language means:

1. Choosing your words carefully and purposefully
2. Choosing language that includes rather than excludes
3. Choosing language that acknowledges accepts and celebrates differences
4. Choosing language that is welcoming to everyone!

Using inclusive language is being responsible for what you say and do and how the power of your words and actions can impact others.

Stereotype:

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person. Typically, stereotypes are built on a hurtful foundation, be that racism, ableism, sexism, or any other type of demeaning of others. If someone has the thought “this person probably does –blank- because they are –blank- identity” it's probably a stereotype.

Ability Related Terms

Accessible:

Being able to be reached or entered; Being easy to obtain or use; Being easily understood or appreciated; Being able to participate despite financial limitations. Making something accessible typically means making it easier for everyone to participate.

Invisible Disability:

Disabilities that are not immediately apparent. Typically, these are chronic illnesses and conditions that significantly impair normal activities of daily living. Also known as *hidden disabilities* or *non-visible disabilities (NVD)*.

Mobility Aid:

Devices designed to assist walking or otherwise improve the mobility of people with a mobility impairment. A mobility aid can refer to wheelchairs, scooters, crutches, canes, walkers, or any other device designed to help people with their independence and reduce pain. (*Also see Wheelchair User*)

Neurodiversity:

The diversity or variation of cognitive functioning and processing in people. Everyone has a unique brain and therefore different skills, abilities, and needs.

Neuro: as in Neurological, related to the nervous system

Diversity: The spectrum of variation

Neurodivergent:

Describes people who have one or multiple forms of neurodivergence, this includes people with Autism, ADHD, Tourette's, dyslexia, and a range of other neurodiverse conditions. Someone who is neurodivergent behaves, thinks, and learns differently compared to those who are neurotypical.

Neuro: as in Neurological, related to the nervous system

Divergent: differing from the standard

Neurotypical:

Describes people who do not have a neurodivergence. Someone who is neurotypical does not display characteristics of any neurodiverse conditions.

Wheelchair User: (alternatively Mobility Aid User)

Someone who already has a wheelchair (or mobility aid) or who can benefit from using a wheelchair (or mobility aid) because their ability to walk is limited.

Some people may prefer to be referred to as a "person who uses a wheelchair". Ask people how they wish to be addressed whenever possible.

Cultural Competency-Related Terms

Cultural Appreciation:

The earnest desire to learn about or explore a different culture. Approached with a genuine willingness to learn, listen, and strive to understand another culture by honoring its beliefs and traditions.

Cultural Appropriation:

The inappropriate and unwelcome adoption of the aesthetics, customs, clothing, artifacts, practices, etc. of one social or ethnic group by members of another (typically dominant) community or society.

Cultural Consciousness/Cultural Sensitivity:

Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value – positive or negative, better, or worse, right, or wrong. This also means being aware of and responsible for one's knowledge of their own culture and having the ability to apply skills such as emotional awareness and collaboration skills to understand, traverse and engage with diverse cultures and broader social issues. Being culturally conscience/sensitive also means being respectful and receptive to others' cultural backgrounds. *(Sometimes also referred to as Cultural Awareness.)*

Diverse and Accurate Representation:

We all want to see ourselves represented in the world around us, but for many people, accurate representation is hard to find. Here are some guidelines:

1. Choose to tell stories that are representative of a broad range of people and cultures
2. Consider cultural and historical context
3. Ensure that what you say is accurate
4. AVOID cultural appropriation

Gender-related terms

Cisgender:

A person whose gender identity corresponds with their sex assigned at birth. Can be abbreviated to "cis." A cisgender person's gender expression and sexual/romantic orientations may vary. *(See transgender and sex assigned at birth)*

Gender non-conforming:

A broad term that describes people who have, or are perceived to have, gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. Keep in mind that these expectations can vary across cultures and have changed over time. *(Also referred to as gender-nonconforming, gender nonconforming).*

"Gender non-conforming" can be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as transgender, non-binary, questioning, agender, bigender, genderqueer, or gender-fluid.

Gender-Inclusive Language:

The use of words that are descriptive but not unnecessarily gender-specific. For example, using the term “firefighter” instead of “fireman”. Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender, or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Gender-Neutral Pronouns:

A term for pronouns that can be used in place of gender-specific pronouns when referring to someone in the third person.

Gender-Specific Pronouns:

A term for the pronouns typically used by English speakers to refer to each other in the third person. Gender-specific pronouns in English are “she” and “he.”

Intersex:

People whose primary and/or secondary sex-determining anatomical characteristics do not align with a binary categorization of male or female. Intersex people can be assigned intersex at birth if they are born with both male and female anatomical characteristics. However, some intersex people find out later in life, that their secondary sex characteristics, internal anatomy, hormones, and other factors vary from typically binary bodies. Some but not all intersex people consider themselves nonbinary. (*See sex assigned at birth.*)

LGBT(QIA+):

A common abbreviation that refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Sometimes this acronym includes QIA+ (queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual/aromantic) or other letters—added to signify further inclusion.

Neopronoun:

A term that refers to a category of English third-person personal pronouns beyond “he”, “she”, “they”, “one”, and “it”. Neopronouns are preferred by some nonbinary individuals who feel that neopronouns provide options to reflect their gender identity more accurately than conventional pronouns. Neopronoun can be a word created to serve as a pronoun without expressing gender, like “ze” and “zir.” A neopronoun can also be a so-called “noun-self pronoun,” in which a pre-existing word is drafted into use as a pronoun. (*See nonbinary and transgender.*)

Nonbinary:

(*Can be abbreviated to “enby,” pronounced N. B.*) Describes a person who does not identify exclusively as a “man” or a “woman.” Nonbinary people may feel that they exist as both, neither, or a mix of identities. While many nonbinary people also identify as transgender, not all do. Nonbinary can be used as an umbrella term for more nuanced gender identities, people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary gender categories. Including but not limited to agender, bigender, genderqueer, or gender-fluid. (*Also written as non-binary*); (*See intersex, transgender, and sex assigned at birth.*)

Sex Assigned at Birth:

The typically binary sex (male or female) that is assigned to a child at birth. Most often this assignment is based on the child's external anatomy. However, some people may be assigned intersex at birth. Also referred to as birth sex, natal sex, biological sex, or sex. (See *cisgender*, *intersex*, *nonbinary* and *transgender*.)

Transgender:

Can be abbreviated to "trans." An umbrella term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from their sex assigned at birth. Some people described by this definition don't consider themselves transgender—they may use other words or may identify simply as a man, woman, or nonbinary person. A person who was *assigned female at birth* (AFAB) but who identifies as a man/male is a transgender man (also known as a *female-to-male transgender* person, or FTM). A person who was *assigned male at birth* (AMAB) but who identifies as a woman/female is a transgender woman (also known as a *male-to-female transgender* person, or MTF). A person may (or may not) consider themselves transgender if they identify as nonbinary. (See *cisgender*, *nonbinary* and *sex assigned at birth*.)