

DIVERSITY - EQUITY - INCLUSION

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS



A

ACCULTURATION

The process of becoming familiar with and able to function effectively in a different culture or environment – without losing one's own cultural identity.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Action taken by an employer to promote the employment and/or advancement of people who have been the traditional targets of discrimination.

ALLY

Advocates for individuals from underrepresented or marginalized groups. Allies take actions that support people outside of their own group. They stand beside those they represent. They stand with the people they support. They do not speak for them.

ASSIMILATION

Giving up of one's own culture or self-identity in order to fully adopt the culture, values and patterns of another group.

ASSUMPTIONS

Ideas and beliefs that are taken for granted to be true or real. Deeply-held perspectives about what matters, how things happen, what people are like and what can be expected of others.

B

BLACK LIVES MATTER (BLM)

A social movement begun in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the death of Trayvon

Martin focused on building local power, seeking social justice and intervening when violence is inflicted on Black communities by systemic racism.

C

CHANGE AGENT

An individual whose commitment, skills, knowledge and formal and informal influence can effect change.

CISGENDER

Often abbreviated as cis, the term describes people whose gender identity (and often gender expression) matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

COLORBLINDNESS

The process by which a person attempts to ignore the existence of race or skin color, often expressed as "I don't see color." Although the intention may be to see past skin color to just see the person, this deemphasizing of race, ignores the real, lived experience of people of color and ignores their experience.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The ability to interact effectively across various elements of diversity and to flex with differences those elements present. It requires awareness of one's own culture, assumptions, values, styles, biases, attitudes and privilege, in addition to an understanding of others' cultures, assumptions, values, styles, biases, attitudes, privilege, etc. A culturally competent individual

understands their potential impact on others and interacts in appropriate and effective ways that promote inclusion.

CULTURE

A total way of life for a group of people. Culture is developed and communicated, consciously or unconsciously, to subsequent generations. It consists of ideas, belief systems, habits, attitudes, language, customs and traditions that help to create the "rules" for a group of people to coexist.

D

DISABILITY (OR DIFFERING ABILITY)

A mental or physical difference that limits a person in everyday activities. Increasingly, disability is being discussed as a social construct, meaning that physical and mental norms are arbitrary from which we then determine what is different or what is a functional versus perceived disability.



“ No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world. ”

- ROBIN WILLIAMS

DISCOUNTING

Causing someone to feel less valuable or less important.

DISCRIMINATION

The denial of equal and equitable treatment to individuals or groups based on their race, national origin, religion, age, color, differing abilities or gender.

DIVERSITY

The differences and similarities of people found in our workforce and marketplace. Diversity includes many visible features such as race, gender and age and some less obvious such as personality style, ethnicity, cognitive functions, etc.

E**E.E.O.**

Equal Employment Opportunity means freedom from discrimination on the basis of protected classes such as race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or genetic information.

EMOTIONAL TAX

Effects on health, well-being and ability to fully engage and thrive in the workplace that result from a combination of being on guard to protect against bias, feeling different at work because of gender, race and/or ethnicity.

EQUALITY

Treating everyone the same way, often referred to as a “one size fits all” approach.

EQUITY

Ensuring people have an equal opportunity to things, resources and opportunities. It doesn't mean everyone gets the same thing – but instead, gets what they need. There is an understanding that one size does not fit all.

ETHNICITY

A group of people that identify with one another based on shared culture.

ETHNOCENTRISM

The feeling and belief that one's own culture should be the primary frame of reference when understanding others.

F**FRAME OF REFERENCE**

A particular way of perceiving and making sense of the world around us. A set of filters – developed over time from our life experiences – through which thoughts, actions and decisions pass.

G**GENDER EXPRESSION**

The way that someone outwardly displays their gender through style, demeanor and social behavior.

GENDER IDENTITY

Refers to the internal perception of one's gender – how people label themselves.

GENDER NON-BINARY

Relating to or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female.

GENERALIZATION

Information about a group of people that does not apply to each individual in the group, but, instead, is applied to the entire group.

I**IMPACT**

The actual effect or results of an action or behavior.

INCLUSION

Creating a workplace of mutual respect, trust and commitment so that everyone will feel free to, and be encouraged to, contribute based on their unique talents, experiences and backgrounds.

INDIGENOUS

A person or group of people whose culture, identity and, often, spirituality are rooted in a particular place.

INTENT

The purpose for which an action is taken.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The intertwining of social identities – such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation and/or gender identity – which can result in unique experiences, opportunities and barriers.

J**JUDGMENT**

One's own opinion about whether another person's behavior or characteristics are “good” or “bad,” “right” or “wrong,” “normal” or “abnormal.”

L**LATINX**

Relating to or marked by Latin American heritage — used as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina.

LGBTQIA

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity), intersex, and asexual/aromantic/agender.

M

MANAGING DIVERSITY

The management of an organization's culture and systems to ensure that all people are given the opportunity to contribute to the business goals of the company.

MARKETPLACE DIVERSITY

A consumer base that is made up of individuals with distinctive backgrounds, needs and preferences who purchase and/or utilize the goods and services that meet those needs.

MELTING POT

A concept that holds that people from other countries and regions came to the United States and blended into a common way of life and work.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Subtle, often unconscious, everyday behaviors that often unintentionally denigrate someone from a historically marginalized or non-dominant group. They are small; but, if experienced chronically, a person can feel excluded, devalued and disengaged. Over time microaggressions have been described as "death by a thousand tiny cuts."

MUTUAL ADAPTATION

A process by which both individuals and the corporate culture adjust to differing needs so that neither is expected to take on the entire responsibility for changing.

N

NEURODIVERSITY

The concept that there is great diversity in how people's brains are wired and work and that neurological differences should be valued in the same way we value any other human variation.

NORM

A standard, model, pattern or average behavior of a larger group.

O

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The prevailing beliefs, assumptions, values, norms and attitudes that are shared by members of an organization. They operate unconsciously in a basic, "taken-for-granted" fashion and define an organization's view of itself and its environment.

P

PEOPLE OF COLOR

Individuals who do not identify as only white or Caucasian under the current U.S. Census ethnicity categories. This is the preferred and most inclusive term, currently.

PREJUDICE

The inclination to cast a group of people in a favorable or unfavorable light, usually based on a superior/inferior belief system and without just grounds or sufficient information. Prejudice can be directed at many different groups. For example, it can be race-based (racism), gender-based (sexism), age-based (ageism), ethnic-based (ethnocentrism) or based on other factors.

PRIVILEGE

Access to resources a person has, consciously or not consciously, by virtue of being part of a dominant group in society. Privilege provides freedom from stress, anxiety, fear or harm related to your identity.

R

RACE (versus ETHNICITY)

Race is a false construct that historically and currently conflates skin color and ancestry with behavior and culture. However, though race is a false construct, its existence is a widely-held assumption and has real consequences for all people.

S

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The type of attraction one feels for others, often based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to.

STEREOTYPE

An overly-simplified opinion or statement applied to all members of a group without regard to individual differences.

T

TEAM

A group of people who pool their knowledge, skills and creativity to achieve goals.

TRANSGENDER

A person whose gender identity (and sometimes expression) does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to various different ways that people transgress gender norms.



U

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

An implicit association, whether about people, places or situations which are often based on mistaken, inaccurate or incomplete information and include the personal histories we bring to the situation.

V

VALUES

Sets of internal instructions based on cultural and personal experience, which determine acceptable behavior for a group or individual – what a group considers important, right or desired behavior for its members.

VALUING DIVERSITY

Creating productive and respectful relationships with all co-workers and customers – whether we perceive them as similar to or different than ourselves.

W

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Consists of individuals who bring different skills, resources and perspectives to the workplace and who have distinctive needs, preferences and expectations.

NOTES



- RALPH WALDO EMERSON
Words are also actions, and actions
are a kind of words