

DIVERSITY DICTIONARY

The purpose of this Diversity Dictionary is to provide a starting point for a shared language that can be used in discussions around diversity and inclusion issues which will promote a shared understanding. Without a foundation in shared language it is difficult to have meaningful, fruitful conversations regarding diversity and inclusion.

<i>TERM</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>
Ally	Someone from outside a group who acts to interrupt bias, prevent discrimination, or surface equity issues, etc. affecting that group.
Access	The ability of a person or group to obtain needed resources and services.
Ageism	Prejudice or discrimination against a particular age group.
Assimilation	Absorption into the culture of an existing group, often to the loss of one's own culture or identity.
Bias	An inclination or preference that interferes with impartial judgment
Classism	The subordination of individuals or groups from a lesser social rank.
Color Blind	Choosing not to distinguish between different races or ethnicities. It is often expressed with the intention of support but tends to erase the realities of racial inequity in our society.
Cultural Awareness	The practice of being mindful that each person's values, relationships and characteristics are shaped by his/her society; these values, relationships and characteristics may or may not be the same as one's own.
Cultural Competence	Cultural competence operates on several levels. On the individual level it includes an awareness of who you are, what you bring to the table, a recognition of the power dynamics in play within any interaction, and a recognition of how you are perceived by others. At an institutional level, cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among

	professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
Difference	A distinct or separate quality, form or nature diverging from a culture's established norm.
Disability	Visible or non-visible differences in abilities, inclusive of sensory, cognitive, emotional, and physical issues.
Discrimination	The act of differentiating between people or groups and engaging in prejudicial treatment based on their actual or perceived membership in a certain diversity category.
Diversity	The fact or quality of being different; having a variety.
Equality	Treating all people the same, fairly. Ensuring equal <i>opportunities</i> .
Equity	Treating people fairly based on their needs. Ensuring equal <i>outcomes</i> .
Ethnocentrism	A belief in the superiority of one's own race/ethnicity or culture.
Gender	A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes certain qualities of masculinity and femininity to people.
Gender Identity	One's sense of one's own gender.
Historically Under-represented Group	A group defined by a common physical trait, belief or other distinctive characteristics that has previously had minimal access to political power and/or little or no influence on societal or governmental decisions that affect them.
Heterosexism	Discrimination or prejudice against those who are not heterosexual on the assumption that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation.
Implicit/Unconscious Bias	The beliefs we carry without awareness or conscious direction.
Inclusion	An environment where people invite, encourage, and incorporate different perspectives, ideas and experiences—where people feel valued for the differences they bring.
Institutional Oppression	Policies, practices and procedures that work to the

	benefit of dominant groups and to the detriment of marginalized groups, often unintentionally or inadvertently.
Internalized Oppression	When members of marginalized groups accept the socially contrived myth(s) of the subordinate status of their group.
Internalized Superiority	When members of majority groups accept the socially contrived myth(s) of the superiority of their group.
Justice	The act of ensuring fair treatment, access, and outcomes.
Marginalization	The process whereby certain groups are pushed to the edge of society and accorded lesser importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded, and their needs or desires ignored.
Microaggressions	The everyday slights, indignities, putdowns, and insults that people who are marginalized experience in their day-to-day interactions. Microaggressions often appear to be compliments but contain hidden insults to the target group about which it is being delivered.
Multiculturalism	An environment where individuals or groups of different cultures exist.
Oppression	A systemic marginalization of certain social groups involving control of the less powerful group and ideological domination.
Other	Something that stands out from the majority. An individual and/or group who is different in nature or kind. Describing someone as “other” is often a way of marginalizing individuals or groups resulting in loss of power.
Prejudice	Prejudgments and preconceived beliefs without facts.
Privilege	Privilege is a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. It can be seen as the opposite of oppression and needs to be understood within the context of power systems.
Protected Class	Under federal anti-discrimination law, a protected class is a characteristic of a person which cannot be targeted for discrimination

Racism	The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.
Sexism	Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.
Stereotype	A generalization of the “typical” characteristics associated with members of a particular group.
Tokenism	The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of representation and equality. It also includes the tendency to rely on those who are from marginalized groups to represent or speak for their groups, and furthermore place responsibility for social justice work on their shoulders.
Transgender	Transgender refers to people whose gender expression is not dictated by their sex assigned at birth. Often anyone who challenges gender norms and boundaries can describe themselves as transgender. Transgender is also an umbrella term including but not limited to someone who identifies as a cross-dresser, drag queen, drag king, transsexual.
Transphobia	A range of antagonistic attitudes and feelings against transsexuality and transsexual or transgender people. Transphobia can be emotional disgust, fear, anger or discomfort felt or expressed towards people who do not conform to society's gender expectation
Underserved	Lacking adequate access to services.
Us/Them Language	Being or pertaining to a divisive belief whereby those who are different are regarded negatively. Us/them language is often used to divide and further marginalize already oppressed groups.