

Moving Toward a **COMMON LANGUAGE**



Language Matters



Words have different meanings depending on one's lived and learned experiences. Because language is a key element of practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion, a first step to having productive conversations around DEI is adopting an accepted, shared language that guides how we engage and communicate around a myriad of topics.

Active, positive engagement around DEI requires the use of a vocabulary that is clearly defined, yet malleable, to allow for change as our language continues to evolve. Our goal is to focus DEI engagement around a common language to enhance the quality and value of discussions around our DEI work.

Our Common Language...



- promotes clear and open dialogue with others
- puts people first, making all feel included and valued
- is free from words or phrases that explicitly or implicitly stereotype, discriminate, or express prejudice
- helps to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations
- can help to build trust across lines of difference
- requires an ongoing commitment to learning and evolving

Understanding

DIVERSITY

Definition:

Differences expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective

Examples:

- Colleagues from multiple generations
- Religions practiced by individuals on a team
- Educational backgrounds of those in the same role
- Unseen mental or physical abilities/disabilities
- Differences in communication styles among staff

Understanding

EQUITY

Definition:

Promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources, ensuring an equal opportunity for success for all persons, regardless of sex, marital status, gender expression, and any other characteristics or identities

Examples:

- Inclusive, competency-based hiring practices
- Accommodations for health conditions
- Policies that accommodate a wide variety of needs
- Support for individual cultural and religious events
- Opportunities for everyone to grow into positions of leadership

Understanding

INCLUSION

Definition:

Creating an environment where all perspectives are respectfully heard, differences are welcomed, and where every individual feels a sense of belonging, and is valued as a fully participating member of the community

Examples:

- Engagement and learning opportunities
- Participation in inclusive and diverse cultural celebrations
- Implementation of stay interviews into unit operations
- Elevation of those who have fewer opportunities to be heard
- Celebrate individual employee successes

Understanding

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Definition:

People-first language that is free from words, phrases, or expressions that stereotype or express forms of bias or prejudice. In a more general sense, language that acknowledges, accepts, affirms, and celebrates differences of those in our community

Examples:

- Gender neutral language
- Personal pronouns
- Factual attributes instead of labels
- Plain (non-colloquial) language

Understanding

CULTURE

Definition:

Languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities that make interactions and environments meaningful. More broadly, a set of unspoken rules that shape values, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication

Examples:

- Dance
- Music
- Spiritual practices
- Dress
- Traditions
- Arts (culinary, folk, visual)

Understanding

WORKPLACE CULTURE

Definition:

Patterns of behavior that are supported by the shared experiences, values, and beliefs of an organization. Broadly speaking, the shared attitudes, standards, and priorities of teams, departments, units and other employee groups within an organization

Examples:

- Communication
- Sense of belonging
- Inclusive leadership
- Transparency
- Mission and values
- Employee engagement

Understanding

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Definition:

Grounded in the respect and appreciation of cultural differences, the set of interpersonal skills or attributes that allows one the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures

Examples:

- Understanding the social norms of other cultures
- Acknowledging and appreciating differences in communication styles across cultures
- Respecting the religious beliefs and practices of others
- Actively engaging with others from diverse backgrounds
- Practicing constructive uncertainty

Understanding

ALLY

Definition:

Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with marginalized groups in the struggle for justice

Examples:

One who:

- Speaks out in support of those whose voices are seldom heard or acknowledged
- Takes action when witnessing behavior or language that is degrading or offensive
- Speaks less; Listens more
- Shares the spotlight and credit when appropriate

Understanding

PRIVILEGE

Definition:

Operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural and institutional levels, and gives unearned advantages, favors, and/or benefits to members of dominant groups, often at the expense of members of non-dominant groups

Examples:

Often based on:

- Socio-economic status
- Gender
- Age
- Religion
- Sexual identity

Understanding

MARGINALIZATION

Definition:

Process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) excluded, isolated, or distanced from access to power and resources granted to those in majority and/or privileged groups.

Examples:

- Giving someone credit for another person's ideas
- Refusal to acknowledge the contributions of some, but praising the contributions of others
- Use of derogatory, offensive, or bullying language
- Speaking to an individual without acknowledging others in shared space

Understanding

INTERSECTIONALITY

Definition:

The complex ways in which multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap and/or intersect in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups; a framework for understanding how issues like sexism, racism, and classism can overlap in multiple ways.

Examples:

- LGBTQI+ women with disabilities reported significantly higher levels of sexual harassment than both men with disabilities and non-disabled men and women.
- White women in the US earn 81 cents for every dollar a white man earns; the same figure for American Indian, Alaska Native, Black, African American, and Hispanic women is 75 cents.