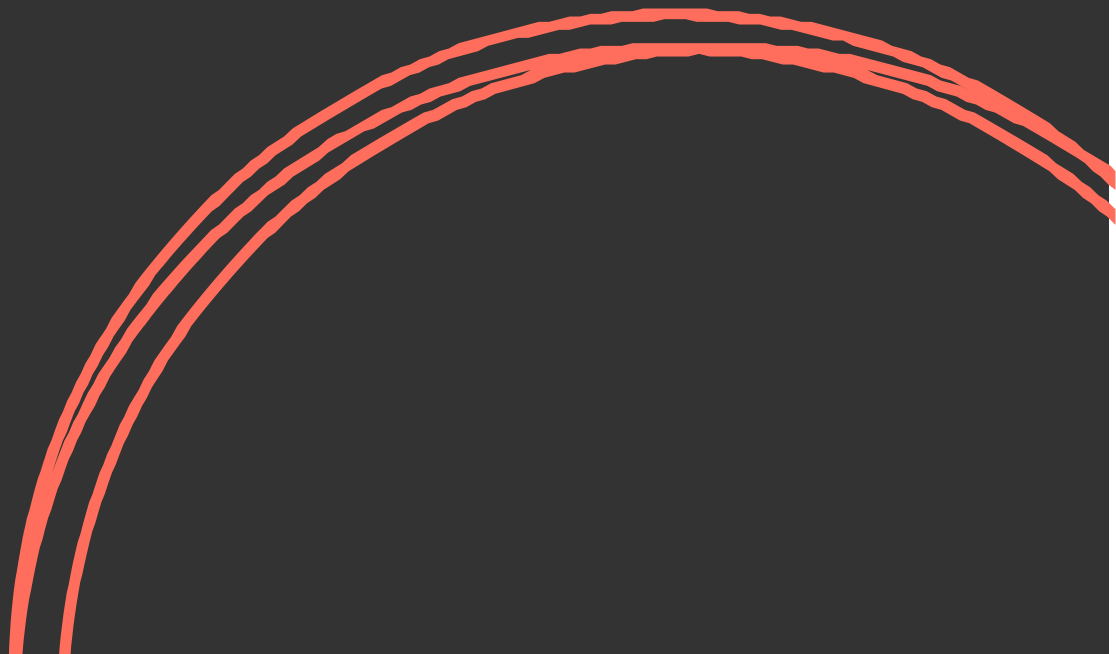




Language Guide

October 2024



Introduction

DEFINING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

There is not a universally agreed upon set of definitions for terms like equity, diversity and inclusion. Even the more frequently used terms can easily cause confusion at best and hostility at worst. In order to enhance our learning and discourse in this space, it is essential that we work towards a shared understanding through common language. By defining certain terms, we feel we can mitigate the feeling of being afraid to get things wrong, which can prevent the real work of learning and talking together.

This guide is not exhaustive but rather should serve as a tool to help you on your anti-oppressive journey.

Diversity

Diversity means having differences within an organisation or setting. Diversity recognises that we are all different in many ways, including differing identities, backgrounds and experiences. Some people prefer to use the term 'representation' to focus on how organisations should be reflective of the society we live in and the communities we serve.

Inclusion

Inclusion means being proactive to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate. It is about creating both a diverse environment and ensuring a culture exists where individuals can be their full selves.

Equality

Equality refers to equality of opportunity. Anyone and everyone is given the

same access to an opportunity. It means ensuring every individual has equal opportunities and recognising the importance of challenging bias or prejudice. This requires a proactive approach in making reasonable adjustments to address the visible and invisible barriers people face.

Equity

Equity refers to equality of outcome. There is a recognition that people do not all start from the same place and therefore adjustments need to be made where there is imbalance. Equity recognises that inequalities exist and simply providing the same opportunities to everyone is not an effective way to create equality of outcome. Instead changes or interventions are made to remove or mitigate barriers.

Intersectionality

We all have overlapping identities including – but not limited to – disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, class and sexual orientation. An intersectional approach requires us to understand that multiple forms of discrimination are experienced simultaneously, in different ways by people of different backgrounds. E.g. a Woman of Colour has to navigate both sexism and racism, often simultaneously.

Allyship

This is an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalised group.

Liberation

The work of fighting to end all forms of oppression by taking concrete steps to dismantle and re-envision the institutions, belief systems, and power structures that uphold them.

Oppression

Oppression is the systematic domination of a group of people by another group of people with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other. Oppression is institutionalised, historically formed, and perpetuated over time and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Privilege

Unearned systemic advantages, benefits or rights conferred upon people based on their membership in a dominant group beyond what is commonly experienced by members of the non-dominant group. The collective advantages that a person can inherit from birth and/or accumulate over the course of time. These advantages are often unseen or unrecognised by members of the dominant group.

Social justice

Social justice depends on four essential goals: human rights, access, participation, and equity. Social justice exists when each person can exercise their rights within a society and that everyone's human rights are respected and protected. It is when, everyone has equal access to institutions and services; they can participate fully in society and no one is held back by things out of their control like systemic oppression.

GENDER:

Cisgender

People whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender transition

The process a person may take to bring themselves and/or their bodies into alignment with their gender identity.

Gender dysphoria

Refers to psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity.

Gender identity

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Nonbinary

People who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as outside of a male-female gender binary.

Pronoun

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.

Trans

People whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. A trans man, for example, is someone who was listed as female at birth but whose gender identity is male.

SYSTEMS:

Systems of oppression run through our culture, language, laws, practices and institutions. They shape our beliefs and how we have learned to act. They shape what is broadly understood as "normal" or mainstream – and what is understood as abnormal, unacceptable, undesirable, or marginal.

A specific system of oppression targets certain groups negatively because of their identity and simultaneously targets positively those who are external to that group because of their identity/identities.

Ableism

Ableism is discrimination in favour of non-disabled people. A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence and excellence. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable or worthy based on people's appearance and/or their ability to satisfactorily produce, excel & "behave.

Antiblackness

Policies and practices rooted in institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of Black descent.

Anti-Semitism

A system oppression that perpetuates mistrust, hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious or racial group.

Classism

The systematic assignment of worth and ability based on social class and the systematic oppression of people without endowed or acquired economic power, social influence, and privilege by those who have access to control of the necessary resources by which other people make their living. This is perpetuated through individual attitudes, behaviours, systemic policies and practices that benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes and includes the rationale that supports these systems, this unequal valuing, and the culture that perpetuates them.

Disablism

Disablism is discrimination or prejudice against disabled people.

Homophobia

The mistreatment or oppression of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bisexual people. This can also include denying somebody's lesbian, gay or bisexual identity or refusing to accept it. Homophobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is the exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalisation and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life.

Misogynoir

The anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience / the specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women.

Racism

Prejudice and discrimination by an individual, community, and institution against a person or people based on their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group,

Sexism

The prejudicial attitudes and discrimination against women on the basis of their sex. Sexism ranges from the individual to the institutional level and includes beliefs, behaviours, use of language and policies reflecting and conveying a pervasive view that women are inferior.

Transmisogyny

The negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

Transphobia

The fear, hatred, disbelief, or mistrust of people who are transgender, thought to be transgender, or whose gender expression doesn't conform to traditional gender roles.

DISABILITY:

Neurodivergent

Someone whose neurological and cognitive functioning diverges from societal norms.

Neurotypical

Someone whose neurological and cognitive functioning is considered normative in society.

Social Model of Disability

The social model states that it is not the disability or diagnosis, but rather the social environment that is disabling e.g. that if all buildings had ramps and elevators, it would not be disabling to use a wheelchair.