Diversity Toolkit:
Notes on Sexuality and Gender Identity

Diversity & Inclusion Office
Introduction

Diversity is inherent in the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s mission to advance the health and well-being of the people of the Commonwealth and the world. As a leading academic health sciences center, we are preparing tomorrow’s physicians, nurses and scientists to serve and relate to a multicultural society by

- building an inclusive culture characterized by civility and respect
- increasing numbers of underrepresented groups in student, faculty and staff positions,
- improving the cultural competence of our workforce through diversity education and programming, and
- advancing health equity by making a significant impact on reducing disparities through research, service and practice.

Diversity at UMMS is fully embraced and fundamental to its institutional excellence.

Vision

Diversity compels UMMS to lead in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to health sciences education, research and public service.

Mission

Through consultation, regulation, education, and collaboration, the Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO) is a catalyst for an inclusive academic medical health sciences center comprised of a diverse faculty, staff, and student body who possess the cultural competencies necessary to serve the people of the commonwealth and the world.

This toolkit is designed as a resource for improving interpersonal relations, increasing understanding, and furthering world-class service for our diverse patient population. By heightening awareness, enhancing communication and developing better cultural competence we keep patients first.

Cultural competence is the ability to respond appropriately to people of varying cultures, ages, races, religions, sexual orientations, abilities, and ethnicities in a way that recognizes difference and allows individuals to feel respected and valued. It is paramount that our faculty and staff maintain the highest level of cultural competence.

The data presented is not all-inclusive but should be considered a starting point for basic understanding. Culture is an ever-evolving variable entity, and as such, this toolkit should be viewed as a work in progress.

Please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Office with your suggestions for continuous improvement at 508-856-2179 or email us at diversity@umassmed.edu

Diversity and Inclusion Office
Patient Care Guide
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The Importance of Cultural Competence

What is cultural competence?

Cultural competence is the ability to respond appropriately to people of various cultures, ages, races, religions, sexual orientations, abilities, and ethnicities in a way that recognizes difference and allows individuals to feel respected and valued. It is rooted in compassion, empathy, and benevolence.

Why is cultural competence important?

A lack of cultural competence can lead to miscommunications that have a detrimental impact on patients. Sometimes, cultural differences can cause difficulties in provider-patient interactions, such as language barriers, contrasting understandings, or positional hierarchies.

Say you’re working with an elderly patient from Puerto Rico who doesn’t speak much English. You discover that she has a lump that might be cancerous. As with any other patient, you want to give her as much information as possible so she can make an educated decision about what to do. You decide to tell her that there’s a small chance that she has cancer and that you’d like to do a biopsy to know for sure.

What cultural traditions are important for this patient?

Generally speaking, older Puerto Ricans have a fatalistic view of illness. Even mentioning the slim possibility of cancer—a loaded word—would be tremendously upsetting for your patient to hear.

Consider highlighting the best possible outcome in this scenario, while avoiding the word “cancer.” It may feel uncomfortable, but it’s actually a demonstration of impressive cultural competence and compassion.
Values and Attitudes that Support Cultural Competence

- **Making** a conscious effort to avoid imposing your values on others.
- **Intervening** tactfully when others engage in behaviors that show cultural insensitivity or racial bias.
- **Understanding** that family is defined different by different cultures.
- **Respecting** individuals/families as decision makers even when your professional and moral views differ.
- **Recognizing** that the meaning or value of medical treatment and health education may vary.
- **Acknowledging** that religious and other beliefs influence responses to sickness, disease, and death.
- **Understanding** that health, wellness, and preventative services may have different meanings.
- **Realizing** beliefs influence reactions and approaches to children born with disorders or disabilities.
- **Seeing** that grief and bereavement are influenced by culture in a variety of ways.
- **Obtaining** information on acceptable behaviors, courtesies, and customs unique to a particular culture.
- **Keeping** abreast of major health concerns for a culturally diverse patient population.
- **Developing** an awareness of environmental or socioeconomic risk factors contributing to health issues.
- **Respecting** the validity of people’s stated identities.
- **Recognizing** that political correctness stems from empathy and compassion.
Cultural Differences Can Impact Patient Compliance in the Following Ways

- Not understanding instructions.
- Forgetting verbal advice.
- Not comprehending the seriousness of the condition.
- Not understanding the urgency of the recommended follow up visit, test, or referral.
- Being confused by oral instructions for use of medications.
- Language barriers, hearing impairment, fear, mental confusion, literacy may impede their capabilities.
- Compliance with prescribed treatment and self-care regiments.
- Making medication or treatment mistakes.
- Seeking preventative care soon enough.
- Getting diagnosed later in the course of the disease.
- Putting them at higher risk for hospitalization.
- Needing hospitalization nearly two days longer per visit than the norm.

Ask patients to repeat back the information or instructions that you have provided in their own words so that you can gauge and ensure the proper level of understanding.
Always provide written instructions and information when prescribing medication

1) Name of drug
2) How it should be taken, or applied, etc. Be specific
3) How long
4) What is it for
5) What will it do
6) Important side effects
7) When to notify a physician
8) What precautions to take
9) What to do if a dose is missed

Note: This is great advice for all patients, not just ones you perceive as culturally different
How to Use this Toolkit

Here at the Diversity and Inclusion Office, we understand that you are busy and do not have time to read a lengthy manual. That is why we have provided you with a toolkit that has background information on patients from diverse backgrounds.

If you are having trouble communicating with a patient from an unfamiliar background, or their behaviors or beliefs seem strange to you, look for their identity in the “You are working with a valued __________ patient.” That section includes general background information about that type of person, specific considerations before providing care, rituals, traditionalist beliefs, and end-of-life care guidelines, where applicable.

Read the “Notes on…” sections to gain an understanding of each type of identity category. They include basic tips for cultural competence and are intended to be educational. However, if you find yourself having difficulty communicating with a patient from an unfamiliar culture or with an unknown identity, check specific identity pages for guidance.

The Communication section explains how language barriers and communication styles can influence health disparities and provides guidelines for speaking with patients who don’t speak English as their first language.

The Glossary includes a comprehensive list of terms, ideas, and explanations of things that might come up while working with a diverse patient population. Use it if a patient uses a word you do not understand, or if you would like more information on a particular topic. Often, marginalized communities have difficulty building trust with authority. For example, the LGBTQAI community has had a tenuous relationship with medical professionals. Demonstrating an understanding of the issues that affect a particular community builds trust and communicates that you care.

Finally, keep in mind that this toolkit is a guide, not a prescriptive rulebook. There is diversity even among similar peoples. For example, not all Muslims, not all gay people, and not all Ghanaians are the same.
Notes on Sexuality and Gender Identity

The following section consists of information on patients you might encounter who are not heterosexual and/or cisgender. Some terms will be briefly defined here, but if you get confused you can always check the Glossary for a more comprehensive definition.

Sexuality

Sexuality is a trifecta consisting of sexual behavior, sexual attraction, and sexual orientation (or identity). These three things are often conflated, and for most people it is okay to lump them all together. However, it is crucial as a healthcare provider to remember that patients’ current sexual identity may not speak to their past sexual experiences. For example, it is possible that a lesbian has had sex with men.

It is often assumed in our society that everyone is straight and cisgender. While these assumptions hold true for most people, remember that you should never assume that someone is straight and cisgender.

Gender Identity

You may have heard of transgender people. Transgender (or trans for short) is an umbrella term used to refer to those whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth, and for those whose gender expression differs from what is culturally expected of them. Trans people can identify as genderqueer, agender, gender fluid, and gender non-conforming, to name just a few. They can also identify as women or men; a trans woman is a woman who was designated male at birth but who identifies as a woman (note the absent asterisk). While some trans people may desire to transition (have sex-reassignment surgery), others do not.

So if you’re not trans, then what are you?

Cisgender (or just “cis”) individuals have a gender identity that is aligned with their sex assigned at birth. Most people are cisgender. Their self-perception and gender expression match behaviors and roles considered appropriate for that sex.

Preferred Gender Pronouns and Names

Many trans people do not use the pronouns associated with their assigned sex. It is highly offensive to use incorrect pronouns to refer to someone. Calling them preferred pronouns is actually a misnomer. They are not preferred; it is just their pronoun.

It may feel strange to use they/them/their as singular pronouns, but such usage is grammatically correct. Think of what happens if you call a friend’s dog or cat “she,” and your friend corrects you, saying “he.” It’s normal to use correct gender pronouns when referring to animals. People are no different.
Respect the pronouns your patient gives.

To create a safe environment, give a patient your preferred pronouns first and then ask for theirs.

Correct terminology for gender and sexual minorities changes constantly, and not all agree on what is appropriate. Be open to learning new terms and don't argue with patients on how they identify. It’s their identity, not yours.

It is not uncommon for trans people to have a name they use different from their legal name. They may have chosen a new name because their legal one does not reflect their gender identity. Always use the name the patient uses.

### Pronoun Use and Pronunciation Guide

<table>
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<th>Object (object)</th>
<th>Possessor determiner</th>
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<td>I called <em>him</em></td>
<td><em>His</em> eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is <em>his</em></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tips for Working with Gender and Sexual Minorities

- **Don't make assumptions** about behavior, including sexual behavior, based on sexual orientation. Orientation (or identity) is what you are, not what you do.

- **Don't question the legitimacy of someone's identity.** If they say they are bisexual, then they are.

- Being transgender is **not mutually exclusive** with being a woman or man.

- Domestic violence can occur in same-sex relationships.

- **Never assume** a patient's gender based on appearance or sex.

- Ask **every** patient for their preferred gender pronouns.
You are working with a valued Asexual patient

What does it mean to be asexual?

- Asexual people (aka aces) do not experience sexual attraction. It is a sexual orientation, just like homosexual or bisexual. Being an orientation, asexuality refers to what people are, not what they do.

- Aces can have romantic and/or sexual relationships.

- Sexual attraction is a spectrum; similar to asexual is the identity of gray-sexual or gray-asexual. These people fall somewhere between asexual and sexual, experiencing sexual attraction very rarely, only under specific circumstances, or so little that it’s negligible.

- At least 1% of the population is believed to be asexual.

Asexuality is not…

- An abstinence pledge
- Celibacy
- A gender identity
- A disorder
- A hormone imbalance
- A fear of sex or relationships
Considerations before Providing Care

- Not experiencing sexual attraction does not mean not engaging in any sexual behaviors. Many aces have had sex and will continue to have sex, and as such are at risk for STIs. Ask questions about behaviors they have engaged in, not questions about who they are attracted to.

Asexual Resources

http://asexuality.org/?q=overview.html (last updated 2017)
https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq (last updated 2017)
Flag: https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols
You are working with a valued **Bisexual** patient

**What does it mean to be bisexual?**

- Bisexuals are people who are sexually and/or emotionally attracted to two or more sexes.

- **Individual definitions of bisexuality may vary.** Some bisexuals interpret the "bi-" as in "two" literally and are only attracted to women and men, others are attracted to more. Others understand it to mean "two" as in attraction to two or more sexes.

- Sometimes, people identify as bisexual first and gay later. This does not mean that all bisexuals do this, nor that bisexuality is a stepping-stone to homosexuality.

- Some bisexuals’ sexual attraction is dynamic, shifting and fluctuating at varying rates.

**Bisexual people are not...**

- Confused about their sexual identity

- Promiscuous

- Attention-seeking

- Going through a phase

**Considerations before Providing Care**

- Sexual attraction is not the same as sexual behavior. Ask specific questions about bisexuals' sexual partners; they could be people of any sex.

**Bisexual Resources**


Flag: [https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols](https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols)
You are working with a valued Gay patient

What does it mean to be gay?

- Gay people, or homosexuals, are people who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to the people of the same gender. A gay person could be any gender, though gay women sometimes prefer lesbian.

Gay people are not…

- Going through a phase
- Obsessed with sex

Considerations before Providing Care

- Many gay people do not like others to call them “homosexual” because it has been used as a derogatory term. Using “gay” is appropriate.

- Being gay does not mean a patient has not had sex with people of other sexes. Similarly, a straight person who has engaged in same-sex sexual behaviors is not necessarily gay. One study in New York found that 73% of those who reported sexual activity with cisgender men identified as straight.

- Homophobia is rampant in every corner of the world, and being gay can be a highly stigmatized identity. Many gay people may not be out (or open) about their sexual orientation to their family, friends, or anyone.

Gay Resources

PFLAG of Greater Worcester
4 Mann Street, Worcester, MA 01602
http://www.worcesterpflag.org/lgbt-resources.html (last updated 2017)

https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq (last updated 2017)
Flag: https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols
You are working with a valued Gender non-conforming patient

What does it mean to be a Gender non-conforming person?

- A gender non-conforming person does not identify as a woman or man; their gender lies outside of the gender binary of woman or man. While some may identify as gender non-conforming, it is also an umbrella term. Specific identities within non-binary can include agender, genderqueer, or bigender.

Gender non-conforming people are not...

- Confused about their gender

Considerations before Providing Care

- Many GNC people do not use the pronouns associated with their assigned sex. It is highly offensive to use incorrect pronouns to refer to someone. Calling them preferred pronouns is actually a misnomer. They are not preferred; they are mandatory. To create a safe environment, give a patient your preferred pronouns first and then ask for theirs.

- Keep in mind that some people have different preferences for what they like to be called. Be open to learning new terms and don’t argue with patients on how they identify. It’s their identity, not yours.

- If you have questions about a person’s biological sex, ask what sex they were assigned at birth.

- Do not ask about what gender were they when they were born. That question implies that the gender they identify as now is less valid or real.

- It is not uncommon for trans individuals to have a name they use different from their legal name. They may have chosen a new name because their legal one does not reflect their gender identity. Always use the name the patient uses.

- Trans people often use pronouns different from their assigned sex. They, them, theirs, ze, zir/zem, xirs/xes, and ze, hir, his are all possible pronouns trans people use. They are all grammatically correct. See the Pronoun Pronunciation Guide in the Notes on Gender and Sexual Minorities section to learn how to say them.

Terms to Avoid

- Transgenders, a transgender: Trans or transgender is an adjective, not a noun. Use GNC or non-binary.
- **Biologically fe/male, genetically fe/male, born a wo/man**: Asserting the false primacy of sex, these terms imply that a trans* person is not really the gender they claim to me. Instead use *assigned or designed fe/male at birth*. Further, because chromosomes and hormones affect sex, these terms imply that genitals alone determine sex.

**Gender non-conforming Resources**

https://www.glaad.org/tags/gender-non-conforming (last updated 22 July 2015) Flag:
https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols
You are working with a valued **Intersex** patient

**What does it mean to be intersex?**

- A person whose bodily or hormonal sex characteristics cannot be categorized as male or female. This may be due to external differences in genitalia, hormonal conditions, such as androgen, or insensitivity syndrome or chromosomal variance. Do not use *hermaphrodite*.

**Intersex people are not...**

- The same as trans* people. Most intersex individuals identify as female or male. If you’re confused about the difference between sex and gender, see the above section called “Notes on Gender and Sexual Minorities” to learn more.

**Considerations before Providing Care**

- For newborns who are intersex, surgeries done to make the genitals look more “normal” **should not be done**. Of course, medical procedures necessary for sustaining health should be performed.

**Terms to Avoid**

- *Intersexed*: Grammatically speaking, adding the “-ed” suffix is used to turn a verb into a participle. *Intersex* is a noun, not a verb. Saying *intersexed* is both grammatically incorrect and insulting.

**Intersex Resources**

http://www.isna.org/faq/ (last updated 2008)
https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq (last updated 2017)
Flag: https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols

Diversity and Inclusion Office
You are working with a valued Lesbian patient

What does it mean to be lesbian?

- Lesbians are women who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same sex.

Lesbians are not...

- Man-haters
- Going through a phase

Considerations before Providing Care

- Being a lesbian does not mean a patient has not had sex with people of other sexes. Over 75% of lesbians have reported prior sexual experiences with cisgender men. Similarly, a straight woman who has engaged in same-sex sexual behaviors is not necessarily a lesbian.

- Homophobia is rampant in every corner of the world, and being a lesbian can be a highly stigmatized identity. Many lesbians may not be out (or open) about their sexual orientation to their family, friends, or anyone.

- Many— but not all— lesbians are comfortable being referred to as “gay” as well as “lesbian.”

Lesbian Resources

PFLAG of Greater Worcester
4 Mann Street, Worcester, MA 01602
http://www.worcesterpflag.org/lgbt-resources.html (last updated 2017)

https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq (last updated 2017)
Flag: https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols

Diversity and Inclusion Office
You are working with a valued **Pansexual** patient

**What does it mean to be pansexual?**

- Pansexuals are people who are sexually and/or emotionally attracted to two or more sexes.

- **Individual definitions of pansexuality may vary.** Some pansexuals interpret the “pan-" as in “all” literally and are attracted to people of all genders. Others may be only attracted to some genders, or their definition of pansexuality may be identical to another’s definition of bisexuality. That individual definitions of pan/bisexuality can vary does not mean that one is more valid than the other, or that anyone’s interpretation of their sexual identity is wrong.

- Sometimes, people identify as pansexual first and gay later, or bisexual first and pansexual later. This does not mean that all pansexuals do this, nor that bi/pansexuality is a stepping-stone to homosexuality.

- Some pansexuals’ sexual attraction is dynamic, shifting and fluctuating at varying rates.

**Pansexuals are not…**

- Confused about their sexual identity

- Promiscuous

- Attention-seeking

- Going through a phase

**Considerations before Providing Care**

- Sexual attraction is not the same as sexual behavior. Ask specific questions about pansexuals’ sexual partners; they could be people of any sex.

**Pansexual Resources**

[https://vaden.stanford.edu/health-resources/lgbtqia-health/pansexuality](https://vaden.stanford.edu/health-resources/lgbtqia-health/pansexuality) (last updated 2017)


Flag: [https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols](https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols)
You are working with a valued **Queer** patient

**What does it mean to be queer?**

- In essence, a queer person is someone who is not heterosexual (or straight).
- Queer is a word that has been used as a derogatory slur against sexual minorities. However, many sexual minorities have reclaimed the word and identify with it. Its meaning could be unique to any individual.
- Within the sexual minority community, queer can be used as an umbrella term in place of the lengthy acronym, LGBTQAIP.

**Queer people are not…**

- Confused about their sexual identity
- Going through a phase

**Considerations before Providing Care**

- Being queer does not mean a patient has not had sex with people of other sexes. Always ask who the patient has had sex and do not make assumptions about their sexual behavior based on sexual orientation.
- Homophobia is rampant in every corner of the world, and being queer can be a highly stigmatized identity. Many queer people may not be out (or open) about their sexual orientation to their family, friends, or anyone.
- Because queer is such a broad identity, some queer people are comfortable being referred to as another sexual orientation, such as lesbian or bisexual. You should always ask what the patient prefers.
- Queer should only be used to refer to patients who specifically identify as such. While it can be used as an umbrella term to refer to all sexual minorities, many gender and sexual minorities consider its use offensive when used outside of their community.

**Queer Resources**

Flag: https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols

Diversity and Inclusion Office
You are working with a valued Transgender Male patient

What does it mean to be a transgender man?

- Transgender (or trans for short) is an umbrella term used to refer to those whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth, and for those whose gender expression differs from what is culturally expected of them.

- If you’re confused about the difference between sex and gender, see the above section called “Notes on Gender and Sexual Minorities” to learn more.

Transgender men are not...

- Confused about their gender
- “Fake” men
- Tomboys

Considerations before Providing Care

- Many trans people do not use the pronouns associated with their assigned sex. It is highly offensive to use incorrect pronouns to refer to someone. Calling them preferred pronouns is actually a misnomer. They are not preferred; it is just their pronoun.

- Correct terminology for trans individuals changes constantly, and not all trans individuals agree on what is appropriate. Given that, keep in mind that some people have different preferences for what they like to be called. Be open to learning new terms and don’t argue with patients on how they identify. It’s their identity, not yours.

- Do not ask about what gender a person is born as. That question implies that the gender they identify as now is less valid or real. If you have questions about their biological sex, ask what sex they were assigned at birth.

- It is not uncommon for trans individuals to have a name they use different from their legal name. They may have chosen a new name because their legal one does not reflect their gender identity. Always use the name the patient uses.

- Trans people often use pronouns different from their assigned sex. They, them, theirs, ze, zir/zem, xirs/xes, and ze, hir, his are all possible pronouns trans people use. They are all grammatically correct. See the Pronoun Pronunciation Guide in the Notes on Gender and Sexual Minorities section to learn how to say them.
Transgender Resources

http://www.common-grnd.com/transgender.htm (last updated 2010)
https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/transgender.htm (last updated 18 May 2017)
https://www.glaad.org/transgender (last updated 2017)
Flag: https://www.glaad.org/blog/mashable-publishes-date-compilation-lgbt-flags-and-symbols
You are working with a valued **Transgender Female** patient

What does it mean to be a transgender woman?

- Transgender (or trans for short) is an umbrella term used to refer to those whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth, and for those whose gender expression differs from what is culturally expected of them.

- If you’re confused about the difference between sex and gender, see the above section called “Notes on Gender and Sexual Minorities” to learn more.

Transgender women are not...

- Confused about their gender
- “Fake” women

Considerations before Providing Care

- Many trans people do not use the pronouns associated with their assigned sex. It is highly offensive to use incorrect pronouns to refer to someone. Calling them *preferred* pronouns is actually a misnomer. **They are not preferred; it is just their pronoun.**

- Correct terminology for trans individuals changes constantly, and not all trans individuals agree on what is appropriate. Given that, keep in mind that some people have different preferences for what they like to be called. **Be open to learning new terms and don’t argue with patients on how they identify.** It’s **their** identity, not yours.

- Do not ask about what gender a person is born as. That question implies that the gender they identify as now is less valid or real. If you have questions about their biological sex, ask what sex they were assigned at birth.

- It is not uncommon for trans individuals to have a name they use different from their legal name. They may have chosen a new name because their legal one does not reflect their gender identity. **Always use the name the patient uses.**

- Trans people often use pronouns different from their assigned sex. **They, them, theirs, ze, zir/zem, xirs/xes,** and **ze, hir, his** are all possible pronouns trans* people use. **They are all grammatically correct.** See the Pronoun Pronunciation Guide in the Notes on Gender and Sexual Minorities section to learn how to say them.
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Communication
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Key to Successful Cross Cultural Communication

Withhold Assumption  Assumptions are beliefs, not objective truths
Be Empathetic  You must be empathetic to gain an understanding and appreciation of people from other cultures
Involve Others  Involving others solidifies relationships and is essential for collecting different points of view.

Exercise Open-Mindedness  Open-mindedness fosters innovation and creativity.
Show Sensitivity  Insensitivity is divisive, counterproductive, and stifles progress.
Use Wisdom  Interact with others in a mature and respectful manner.
Listen Actively  Attentive listening is vital to understanding meanings, read between the lines.
Speak Affirmatively  Cross-cultural communication is enhanced through positive speech.
Ask Questions  Asking questions allows you to increase your knowledge and stops you from making assumptions.
Observe Attentively  Pay attention to voice tone, emotion, body language, and other behaviors.
Utilize Patience  Respect is formed through patience and cultural knowledge is enhanced.
Be Flexible  Rigidity inhibits our ability to embrace cross-cultural differences.
Remove Barriers  Barriers can be broken down through learning. Preconceptions and stereotypes are obstructive.
Build Trust  Mutual understanding leads to greater trust, once established greater cooperation ensues.
Find Commonality  Develop a sense of mutual understanding by focusing on commonalities.
Show Respect  Showing respect and courtesy for others creates a climate of openness and civility.
Exercise Tolerance  Tolerance is necessary for respecting other people’s views and realities.
Identify Problems  Review the context of situations or circumstances and focus on getting to the root of the issue.
| **Interact** | Frequent interaction builds deeper interpersonal relationships and greater awareness. |
| **Simplify Language** | Avoid using complex language, slang, or colloquialisms. |
| **Take Turns** | Relationships are enhanced by allowing equal time to converse, making points and listening to responses. |
| **Confirm Understanding** | Ensure that the message is clear by asking others to summarize or rephrase and repeat back. |
| **Write** | Writing information helps those who lack the confidence to say they don’t understand. |
| **Avoid Blame** | Blame is destructive. Analyze the situation, break it down constructively, and seek a solution. |
| **Be Cautious with Humor** | A funny joke to one person can be insulting to another. Be sensitive with humor. |
| **Be Supportive** | Making others comfortable and encouraging interaction builds trust. |
| **Self-Reflect** | Look inward and find ways to improve yourself. |
Understanding Intention and Impact

This model provides you with a framework for understanding the dynamics of communicating across differences. It lays out a set of skills designed to improve the communication process in a diverse setting.

Message

- The communication process begins with a message
- The sender delivers a message with a specific neutral intent to the receiver
- There is intention on the part of the sender
- There is impact on the part of the receiver
- Both go through a meaning making process
- The sender mentally reviews his words to make sure they match the intent of the message
- The receiver is taking in what has just been said and is experiencing an impact
- Both make sense of the exchange between them
- The impact of the message on the receiver may be positive or negative

Positive

- If the impact is felt as positive, then effective communication takes place and the receiver becomes the sender by returning another message

Negative

- If the impact is negative, then the communication becomes ineffective
- The impact needs to be shared with the sender
- The sender needs to acknowledge the impact that the message had on the receiver and then clarify the original intent

The receiver has a responsibility to inform the sender about the negative impact of the message in a productive manner. Not informing the sender inhibits understanding and can lead to assumptions about the real meaning of the intended message.

Once the sender has been informed of a miscommunication, it is important for them to acknowledge the impact that the message had on the receiver, and then restate the message in a context that better explains the intent.

While both participants may feel some initial discomfort, talking about the impact opens up the opportunity for clarification and increases understanding. Staying engaged in the conversation is critical to effective communication.
## Lexicon of Appropriate Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of Using:</th>
<th>Consider Using:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active role</td>
<td>Take part in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Something you do, or do often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust</td>
<td>Change; fine-tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse (reaction)</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ailment</td>
<td>Sickness, illness, problem with your health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>Stay away from; do not use; do not eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benign</td>
<td>Will not cause harm; harmless; is not cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiac</td>
<td>Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cautiously</td>
<td>With care; slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic</td>
<td>Happens repeatedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Learning; thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>Work together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>How you feel; health problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysfunction</td>
<td>Problem; not working well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edema</td>
<td>Swelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive</td>
<td>Too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Other thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Lexicon of Appropriate Terms Cont.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of Using:</th>
<th>Consider Using:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gauge</td>
<td>Measure; test; get a better idea of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>Product sold without a brand name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous</td>
<td>Not safe; dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-intensity</td>
<td>Use an example like running, exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase gradually</td>
<td>Add to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibitor</td>
<td>Drug or medicine that stops something bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>Off and on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmark</td>
<td>Very important event; turning point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesion</td>
<td>Wound; sore; infected patch of skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Not too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>Operation; something done to treat the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>Get worse or better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosthesis</td>
<td>Replacement for a body part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral</td>
<td>Get a second opinion; see another doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routinely</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significantly</td>
<td>Enough to make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Help with needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>For a limited time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxic</td>
<td>Poisonous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertigo</td>
<td>Dizziness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness</td>
<td>Feeling good; good health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Structures that Support Diversity

Dialogue – A free flow of meaning between people. Used to explore complex issues from many points of view. The purpose of dialogue is to go beyond any one individual’s understanding.

Discussion – Views are presented and defended to provide a useful analysis of whole situation. Productive discussion converges on a conclusion or course of action.

Systems Thinking – A way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. Engaging in systems thinking and communicating from this mental model helps one to see how to change systems more affectively and to act more in tune with the larger processes of the natural and economic world.

Collaborative Inquiry – Staying engaged in a conversation or discussion in the spirit of learning more about the other person/group’s perspective.

Cooperative Problem Solving – Parties communicate their interests to each other before identifying possible solutions. The communication is done in a manner that enhances appreciation of each other and supports the empowerment of all parties. Parties identify as many mutually beneficial potential solutions as possible without evaluating them, then the best option is selected using rating criteria that are based on all relevant needs.

Consensus - After productive discussion, consensus is achieved when all negotiating parties agree they have been heard and will support the implementation of the solution. They agree to accept the solution even if it was not their preferred option.

Collaborative Conflict Management – Interacting together in a manner that enhances appreciation of all parties, supports empowerment and protects the interests of all parties. Possibilities and options are jointly explored. Collaborative outcomes are positive even if no agreement is reached because the process enhanced the parties’ appreciation of each other and supported the empowerment of all parties.

Mediation - A negotiated session in which an impartial third party person works with individuals to help them enhance their appreciation of each other, support empowerment of the parties and jointly creates mutually acceptable solution.

Know and be able to use the various types of communication structures. The skill is being able to use the right structure for the right situation.
Intention vs. Impact

Sender

Intention

Clarify Intent

Intention-Impact Model
Communicating Across Differences

Acknowledge Impact

Receiver

Message

Impact

Meaning Making

Negative

Interpreted as an “ism”

Impact Feedback

Positive

Effective Communication
Glossary

These are definitions and terms often used to refer to the various identities people may hold. Some are offensive and outdated, others are the preferred terms. Because each person has their own preferences and may not like the most politically correct term, this glossary is not meant to be prescriptive.

Glossary Resources

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/
http://www.transequality.org/issues/resources/transgender-terminology
http://lgbt.princeton.edu/resources/#education
A

Able-Bodied
A person who is fit and healthy; not physically disabled.

Ableism
Discriminatory preference based on mental or physical disability.

Aboriginal
First inhabitants of a geographical area. People indigenous to the area. The shortened form “Abo” is considered abusive and condescending.

Accent
A distinctive way of pronouncing a language, especially one associated with a particular country, area, or social class. Characterizing an individual as having a thick accent, could be defining him as “other” or “less than” and could be seen as stereotyping.

Acculturation
The process of assimilating to a different culture, typically the dominant one.

ADA
Acronym for American Disabilities Act, federal civil rights legislation dealing with discrimination in employment, public accommodations, transportation, governmental activities, and communications, on the basis of disability.

Advertising/Media and Diversity
Often a haven for stereotypes that affect the public’s perception of various groups, with dominant groups being presented as the norm, and others as deviations from the norm.

Affirmative Action
Federal law aimed at “providing access” to correct the effects of discrimination in employment or education. Taking concrete steps to eliminate discrimination.

Africa
Use when relating to the content as a whole. Use specific countries or regions when possible. Do not use Dark Continent.

African
Resident of Africa, regardless of race or ethnicity.

African American
Americans of African origin. Black is also acceptable.

Age/Ageism
A group identity based on the chronological number of years since a person’s birth. Discrimination often occurs against people who are “too young” or “too old.” When in doubt do not refer to a person’s age.

Diversity and Inclusion Office
**Agender**
A person who identifies as not having a gender. See also *Transgender/Trans*.

**Agnosticism**
The belief that one cannot know the existence of God without physical evidence. Not a religion.

**AIDS**
Acronym for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Individuals diagnosed with AIDS prefer to be identified as *people with AIDS* (PWSs) rather than as *AIDS victims*.

**Alien**
Used to describe a foreign-born U.S. resident who is not a citizen. Those who enter legally are known as “resident aliens” and are issued “alien registration cards” or “green cards.” Those who enter illegally are classified as “illegal aliens.” These terms can be considered derogatory and should be avoided outside the legal context. These terms can be isolating and demeaning to immigrants. Use *legal immigrant* or *legal resident* instead of *resident alien*. Use *undocumented immigrant* instead of *illegal alien*.

**Ally**
A person who supports the efforts of a group but is not a member of that group.

**Amerasian**
Person born of American and Asian descent, in either Korea or Vietnam with an Asian mother and a non-Asian American father. Originally described people fathered by members of the U.S. military during the Korean and Vietnam wars. The term is not derogatory, but should be avoided.

**American**
A term used to refer to citizens of the United States. However, this is a limited use of the term since *American* includes all people in the western hemisphere (North, South, and Central America). America is comprised of more than just the United States. To present a more global focus use *U.S. resident* or *U.S. citizen*.

**American Indian**
Term for *Native Americans*. Do not use *Indian* as a synonym.

**Anglo American**
An American or inhabitant of the U.S. whose language and ancestry are English. Dated term that is not generally used correctly. People use it interchangeably with white Americans of European ancestry.

**Anti-bias**
An active commitment to challenging prejudice, stereotyping, and all forms of discrimination.

**Anti-Semitism**
Hostility toward or discrimination against Jews.
Arab
Any native of 22 Arab countries or one who claims ancestry of the Arab world. Not all Middle Easterners or Middle Eastern Americans are Arab. Not all Arabs are Muslim, many are Christian, and not all Muslims are Arab, most live in other places including Asia, Indonesia, Africa, and North America.

Arab American
U.S. citizen of Arabic descent.

Asexual
A person who does not experience sexual attraction. Being asexual does not mean that you have never or will not ever engage in sexual behaviors.

Asian American
Used to designate U.S. citizens of Asian origin.

Asian Indian
A person who originates or is descended from the Indian subcontinent, although commonly used to refer to a person from India.

Assumption
Something taken for granted or accepted as true without proof. A supposition.

Atheism/Atheist
The belief that there is no God. A person who denies the existence of God. Not a religion.
**Baha’i**
A religion that emphasizes the spiritual unity of humankind, and the oneness of God. Baha’i believe in the equality of men and women. Founded by Mirza Husayn-‘Ali Nuri, who took the name Baha’u’llah while in exile in Baghdad. Praying is done in private.

**Bias**
A conscious or subconscious preference which interferes with impartial judgment.

**Bigotry**
An unreasonable belief or an irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices about other groups of people.

**Bilingual**
Fluency between any two languages.

**Bindi**
A decorative mark worn in the middle of the forehead by some Indian women, especially if they are Hindus.

**Birth Defect**
A physical or biochemical abnormality that is present at birth and that may be inherited or the result of environmental influence. Can sometimes be seen as derogatory so use *congenital disability* or *disability since birth*.

**Bisexual**
A person who is attracted to two or more genders. Is often conceptually interchangeable with *pansexual* depending on a person’s individual definition but cannot be used interchangeably.

**Black**
Non-white person of African descent regardless of national origin.

**Blind**
Use only for a person with total loss of sight. Many people who are legally blind have partial sight. Use *visually impaired, partially sighted, or person with low vision*.

**Braille**
A system for writing and printing for people who are visually impaired. When characters and letters are formed by raised dots felt with the fingers, not limited to English.
**Brain Injury**
Describes a condition where there is long term or temporary disruption in brain function resulting from injury to the brain. Do not say *brain damaged*.

**Buddhism**
A religion of eastern and central Asia growing out of the teaching of Gautama Buddha that suffering is inherent in life and that one can be liberated from it by mental and moral purification.
Cantonese
A form of Chinese spoken mainly in southeastern China.

Catholic
Usually refers to the Roman Catholic church, but can also refer to other Catholic Christian denominations such as the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Caucasian
Used as a synonym for white person. Derived from the erroneous notion that origin of the Indo-Europeans was the Russian Caucasus Mountains. Was once used to designate one of the geographical types of human beings including people from Europe. Africa and India characterized by tall stature, and straight or wavy hair, etc. Loosely called the “white race” although it embraced many peoples of dark skin color. It is now generally discredited as an anthropological term.

Chicano/Chicana
Derived from Mexicano. Refers to people of Mexican origin, used by some members of the younger Mexican American generation.

Chinese
A person from China, or the written language of China and Taiwan. The spoken language is Mandarin. Should not be used as a synonym for a Chinese American.

Christianity
Began as a breakaway sect of Judaism about 2000 years ago. The two religions share the same history up to the time of Jesus Christ. Christians believe in original sin and that Jesus died in the place of humanity to save humans from that sin. They believe in heaven and that those who repent their sins before God will join him in heaven.

Cisgender
A person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth. For example, a person assigned female at birth that identifies as a woman.

Civil Rights
Political, social and economic legal rights are responsibilities guaranteed by the government. The rights of personal liberty guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the 13th and 14th amendments to the Constitution and by acts of congress. The Civil Rights Movement refers to the struggles of African Americans. Do not use special rights.

Civil Union
Legal recognition of same-sex couples that provides many of the legal rights of married couples, although different from a marriage or domestic partnership.

Class
A group identity usually based on economic or social status.

Diversity and Inclusion Office
**Closed, in the Closet**
A term used to describe gender and sexual minorities who do not want to reveal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Code Switching**
When a person who is bi-or multilingual shifts between languages (codes) while speaking. Switching may occur for several reasons. The speaker may be unable to express themselves adequately in one language, the speaker may switch unconsciously when upset, tired, or excited, or the speaker may switch in order to express solidarity with a particular group.

**Cognitive Disability**
A disability that affects learning and similar brain functions. Avoid *mental retardation* and use specific disabilities when possible.

**Colored Person**
A pejorative term used to describe non-white people. Harkens back to Jim Crow segregation laws that defined non-white people as being “colored.” It was legally and socially used as an exclusionary tool. Use *people of color* or *person of color*. Used to exclude them from places and spaces.

**Coming Out**
Abbreviated from “coming out of the closet,” meaning to reveal one’s formerly hidden sexual orientation or gender identity. Refers to the overall developmental process that gender and sexual minorities experience as they come to terms with their sexuality and/or gender identity.

**Confucianism**
Founded in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. by the philosopher Confucius, one of the Chinese traditional religions, whose followers recorded his sayings and dialogues. Confucianism, which grew out of a tumultuous time in Chinese history, stresses the relationship between individuals, their families, and social, based on “li” (proper behavior) and “jen” (sympathetic attitude).

**Congenital Disability**
A disability since birth or born with a disability. Do not use *birth defect*.

**Cripple**
Derogatory term for a person with a physical disability.

**Cross-Dresser**
A term for people who dress in clothing traditionally or stereotypically worn by the other sex, but who generally have no intent to live full-time as the other gender. The older term "transvestite" is considered derogatory by many in the United States.

**Cross-Sex Couples**
Couples with partners who have different sexes. Heterosexuality should not be assumed as one or both partners could bisexual, pansexual, or queer.
**Culture**
The patterns of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by a group of people. These patterns can be seen in language, governing practices, arts, customs, food, religion, holiday celebrations, dating, clothing, and more.

**Cultural Competence**
The ability to respond appropriately to people of varying cultures, ages, races, religions, sexual orientations, abilities, and ethnicities in a way that recognizes difference and allows individuals to feel respected and valued.

**Cultural Myopia**
The belief that one’s particular culture is appropriate to all situations and relevant to all other individuals.

**Cultural Sensitivity**
Basic and obvious respect and appreciation of various cultures that many differ from your own.
Deaf
Used to describe a person with total or profound hearing loss. Many only have mild or partial loss of hearing. Use *person with hearing loss, partially deaf, or hearing impaired*. Do not use *deaf-dumb or deaf-mute*.

Derogatory Term
Offensive words or phrases that should be avoided.

Developmental Disability
Federal, local, and legal definitions vary, but the term can include conditions such as autism and epilepsy. Use specific terms when possible.

Disability
General term for functional limitation. *Person with a disability, disabled person, or differently able* is preferred. Do not use *victim of, suffers from, stricken with, or afflicted with*.

Disadvantaged
A historically oppressed group having less than sufficient resources to meet basic needs or a lack of access to the full benefits of economic, social, and political opportunity.

Discrimination
A prejudice based action taken by a dominant group member against a subordinate group member. These actions are used to limit another group’s opportunities, confidence, access, and ability to perform in society.

Diversity
The condition of being different or having differences. Differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, health, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical size, education level, job and function, personality traits, and other human differences.

Diversity Competence
The capacity to function effectively with differences and to successfully utilize a diverse workforce.

Diversity as Economic Empowerment
A diverse employee base creates value for patients, employees, and stakeholders through innovation technology, and operational expertise. It establishes access to market shares and new talent and legitimizes the organization to critical consumer or constituent groups.

Diversity as Inclusion
Human capital is the greatest asset of an organization and key to its effectiveness. Diversity is an organizational asset because differences enhance work practices by redefining markets, products, and strategies.
**Diversity as Representation**  
Having representation of diverse groups (particularly race and gender) in the workforce promotes equal opportunity recruitment and compliance with federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.

**Diversity as Social Justice**  
Eliminating oppression or the ways in which inequitable practices of power is used. Eradicating the “-isms” or destructive beliefs and attitudes that are based solely on group identity.

**Domestic Partner**  
Unmarried same-sex partners who share living quarters. Not the same as marriages or civil unions.

**Dominant**  
A group having power or control over key aspects of a culture or a political system. Members of the dominant group derive benefits and privilege from the formal and informal societal structures, process, and practices. Not synonymous with “majority” as a majority refers to numbers and not power dynamics. Dominant groups view themselves as superior, ideal or model people and view others as flawed, inferior, or less than.

**Drag Queen**  
Used to refer to male performers who dress as women for the purpose of entertaining others at bars, clubs, or other events. It is also sometimes used in a derogatory manner to refer to transgender women.

**Dwarf**  
A person whose limbs and features are often proportioned differently when compared to the average human anatomy. Derogatory term for a person of short stature. Derived from dwarfism, a medical term. Use Little Person.
**E**

**EEOC**  
Acronym for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency that enforces civil rights laws.

**Emigrant**  
Person who leaves their country of origin to reside in a foreign country.

**ESL**  

**Eskimos**  
People inhabiting the arctic coastal regions of North America and parts of Greenland and northeast Siberia. Generally considered Native American People in Alaska and Canada. Appropriate for Inupiat Eskimos or Yupik Eskimos. Not relevant for Aleut or Inuit.

**Ethnicity**  
Classification of human based on shared cultural heritage, such as place of birth, language, customs, etc. Do not use “race” as a synonym.

**Ethnocentrism**  
Using one’s own group as a norm or standard by which to assess others. Systemic oppression based on the often unconscious belief in the inherent superiority of one’s group.

**Eurocentric/Eurocentrism**  
Concepts of expression that place Europe as a center of the world. Systemic oppression based on preference for the European culture over others.

**European American**  
A citizen of the U.S. with European ancestry.
Female
Biological adjectives that refers to humans, animals, plants, etc., but can tend to be dehumanizing when inappropriately used as a synonym for woman or women.

Feminist/Feminism
A social movement that advocates for women’s rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes.

Filipino
Person from the Philippines.

FTM
Acronym for female to male. Describes a transgender person designated female at birth who identifies as a man.

Fundamentalism/Fundamentalist
A movement or point of view, usually religious, characterized by a return to fundamental principles, by rigid adherence to those principles, and often by intolerance of other views.
Gay
A man who is attracted to people of the same gender.

Gay Marriage
Marriage for same-sex couples. Same-sex marriage is also appropriate.

Gender
A social construction that assigns particular characteristics, norms, and roles to sex and genitalia. Refers to the different roles that women and men play in society. The behavioral, cultural, and psychological traits typically associated with one's biological sex. Usually refers to those aspects of life that are shaped by social forces or to the meaning that society gives to biological differences. Do not use sex as a synonym.

Gender and Sexual Minorities
Refers to any non-heterosexual and/or trans* individual. Includes homosexuals, bisexuals, pansexuals, asexuals, transgender people, and other non-binary individuals. Some consider pedophilia to be a sexual minority, but the Diversity and Inclusion Office does not endorse that interpretation.

Gender-Neutral Terms
Terms, such as pronouns, that do not designate the gender of the subject. In general use gender neutral terms (e.g. “police officer,” not “policeman”) when possible. For more gender-neutral terms, see earlier section called Sexuality and Gender Identity.

Gender-Neutral Pronouns
Pronouns that do not designate gender. Singular “they/them” is considered grammatically correct and should be the default pronouns used until a person expresses their preferred pronouns. Other examples include “xe/xem” (pronounced zee/zem).

Gender Expression
Describes how gender identity is expressed, through external characteristics and behavior that are socially defined as feminine or masculine, regardless of sexual orientation.

Gender Identity
Self-internal identification as a woman, man, or other non-binary gender, regardless of biological sex.

Genocide
The systematic and planned extermination of an entire national, racial, political or ethnic group.

Ghetto
An area or section of the city where groups live based on class, race, ethnicity, or religion, and can be derogatory when used by someone outside of the community. Avoid using ghetto when describing a low income area. Use the name of the neighborhood.

Diversity and Inclusion Office
**Glass Ceiling**
An unofficially acknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities.

**Group Identity**
A category of differences that describes a set of common physical traits, characteristics, or attributes. Everyone has multiple group identities including, age, ability, class, education level, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, language, religion, and sexual orientation. In organizations and society, the extent to which one is aware of the meaning and impact of these identities is key to understanding the impact of diversity and changing the status quo.

**Group Membership**
Denotes inclusion with regards to a particular group identity; for each identity there is a dominant and a subordinate group. Recognizing and understanding the impact of one’s membership is essential to changing the dynamics of oppression.
Handicapped
Having a condition that markedly restricts one’s ability to function physically, mentally, or socially. Although not derogatory, “disabled” or “differently-abled” are preferred.

Hate Crime
An act by any person or group against the person or property of another which constitutes an expression of hostility because of race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity.

Hermaphrodite
A medical term for an entity with both male and female reproductive organs. A derogatory term for an intersex person.

Heteronormativity
Belief system positing that heterosexuality is the default and normative sexuality and that sex/gender/sexuality are dualistic, static, and innate.

Heterosexism
The presumption that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality. Prejudice, bias, or discrimination is based on this presumption. Systemic oppression of sexual minorities.

Hindi
Official language of India. Not synonymous with Hindu, an adherent of Hinduism.

Hinduism
The dominant religion in India emphasizing dharma, basic principles of cosmic or individual existence within nature, with its resulting ritual, social observances, mystic contemplations, and ascetic practices.

Hispanic
Refers to individuals of Spanish or Portuguese speaking origin. Also of, relating to, or being a person of Latin American descent living in the U.S.

Homophobia
Having or showing a dislike of or prejudice against sexual minorities.

Homosexual
Person attracted to people of the same gender. Has become a derogatory term with gay or lesbian being preferred.

Horizontal Hostility
The act of oppressed groups policing their own community’s actions, appearances, and beliefs to uphold mainstream ideologies. For example, traditionally masculine gay men who are contemptible of effeminate gay men. Similar to respectability politics.
Immigrant
Person who resides in a nation, country, or region, other than his or her origin.

Inclusion/Inclusiveness
As a diversity concept, it is a strategy, an approach, or a concept focusing on all members playing a part in a group’s or an organization’s mission, and a level of respect which offers the opportunity to share unique perspectives and contribute individual strengths.

Indian/East Indian
Accurately defined as one who originates from the Indian continent or East Indies. Use “Indian American” if referring to someone born in the U.S. of Eastern Indian descent. The term has inaccurately been applied to Native people who inhabited North America before it became the United States. The preferred term for the group is “American Indian.”

Indigenous
Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native.

Integration
The bringing of different racial or ethnic groups into free and equal association.

Intersex
A person whose bodily or hormonal sex characteristics cannot be categorized as male or female. This may be due to external differences in genitalia, hormonal conditions, such as androgen, or insensitivity syndrome or chromosomal variance. Do not use hermaphrodite.

Islam
Religion founded by the prophet Muhammad who is believed to be the last in a long line of holy prophets, preceded by Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Being devoted to the Koran, followers worship Allah. They respect the earlier prophets but regard the concept of the divinity of Jesus as blasphemous. There are two main divisions: Sunnis and Shiite. They are divided over the succession after the prophet. The Shi’a believe the prophet explicitly appointed Imam Ali as his successor. The Sunnis do not believe that Ali was appointed; rather, they adhere to the orthodox tradition and acknowledge the first four caliphs are rightful successors. Most Islamic countries have Sunni majorities except for Iran which is predominantly Shia. Islam and Muslim are not synonymous. Islam is the religion while a Muslim is a follower of that religion.

-Isms
The suffix “-ism” denotes the condition of systemic oppression resulting from prejudices embedded in an organization or society’s culture, based on the assumption that the dominant group possesses innately superior qualities. The outcomes are to advantage one group over another. Subordinated group members (by gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) experience disadvantages by being excluded, underutilized, unrecognized and underdeveloped. Dominant group members experience privilege by being included, more fully utilized, recognized and developed.

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J

**Judaism/Jewish/Jew**
Founded 2000 B.C. by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, espouses belief in a monotheistic God who leads his people by speaking through prophets. His word is revealed in the Torah (Old Testament). They believe that a messiah will eventually bring the world to a state of paradise. The term *Jew* can be both religious and ethnic. Jews can be of any race or nationality.

**Jihad**
Arabic word for *struggle or striving*. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslims or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam. Jihad does not refer to violence and is not a declaration of war against other religions.
Latin America
Includes all countries in America that are primarily Spanish and Portuguese speaking. The regions are Mexico, Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

Latino/Latina/Latin@/Latinx
Person of Latin American descent, regardless of their ability to speak Spanish. Latinx refers to a person of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina)

Lesbian
A woman who is attracted to people of the same gender.

Leveraging Diversity
Making use of the different perspectives, experiences, and abilities that people bring to the workplace to enhance organizational effectiveness and performance.

Lifestyle
The way in which a person or group lives. Historically been used as a synonym to describe gay, lesbian, and bisexual, and other sexual minorities, inferring that it is a phase.

LGBTQAIP
Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, asexual, intersex, and pansexual. There are countless variations of this acronym, but LGBTQ is the most widely accepted and used.
Macho
The Spanish word for *male*. It is often used in Latino and Latin American cultures to mean *sexist*.

Male
Biological adjective that may refer to humans, plants, or animals.

Managing Diversity
A term describing initiatives used to help organizations navigate rapidly changing demographics in the workforce through an organizational change in culture focused on eliminating racism, sexism, other forms of discrimination and oppression in order to foster an environment where all people have equal opportunity.

Mandarin
Official language of China and Taiwan, not a dialect. Refers to spoken language only. Written language is Chinese.

Migrant
A person who migrates. Frequently refers to farm laborers who move often to different locations to harvest seasonal crops. Not a synonym for *immigrant* or *emigrant*.

Minority
Segment of the population not in the majority based on certain characteristics and is often subject to differential treatment.

Miscegenation
Term referring to sexual relations between women and men of different races that produce multiracial children. Can also refer to interracial marriage or cohabitation. Sprang from the white supremacist desire to keep the white race “pure” after traditional forms of slavery were legalized. Anti-miscegenation laws were legal in the U.S. until the 1967 Supreme Court Case *Loving v. Virginia*.

Misogyny
Hatred of women, often manifested in sexual discrimination, denigration, or violence against and sexual objectification of women.

Model Minority
Stereotyping description of a particular subordinated group that is being favored at any given time by the majority culture. The model group is chosen based on how well they model majority group behaviors. In America, Asians are often viewed as the model minority.

MSM
Acronym for men who have sex with men. Clinical label that often refers to gay, bisexual, or pansexual cisgender men, but could refer to straight cisgender men. Is not exclusive of men who have sex with women. Patients will rarely use to describe themselves. Do not use call patients MSMs; instead, use their given sexual identity.

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MTF
Acronym for male to female. Describes a transgender person designated male at birth who is transitioning, has transitioned, or who identifies as a woman.

Multicultural/Multiculturalism
As a synonym for diversity it is a focus on recognizing the significance of all cultures regardless of differences. A pluralistic culture that reflects the interests, contributions, and values of members of diverse groups.

Multiracial/Mixed Race
A term relating to people of several or many races.

Muslim
Follower of the Islamic religion.
National Origin
A group identity based on the nation from which a person originates, regardless of the nation in which he or she resides.

Native American
Descendants of native inhabitants of the United States. Often used interchangeably with American Indian. Native people can also be acceptable. The best practice is to refer to the specific tribal affiliation or nation. When in doubt, ask.

Nazi/Nazism
“National Socialist German Workers Party” brought to power in 1933 under Adolph Hitler. “Nazism” is the ideology and practice of the Nazis, who have a policy of racist national expression and state control of the economy. The term has also recently been applied to other movements. Feminazi incorrectly and negatively connects the feminist and the Nazi movements. A Neo-Nazi is a supporter of the new outgrowth of the original Nazi movement.

Negro
Outdated term for African Americans and black people.

Neo-Colonization
Contemporary policies used by western “first world” nations and organizations to exert regulation, power, and control disguised as a humanitarian help or aid over poorer “third world” nations. These polices are distinct from but related to the earlier periods of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations.

Non-Disabled
Person without a disability. Able-bodied is also acceptable.
Opportunities

- Systematic mistreatment of particular individuals. Oppression is not just an isolated incident. Rather, it is a complex system of sustained and pervasive beliefs, laws or policies, behaviors, and feelings. Oppression can be broken up into four levels: ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized.

  - Ideological oppression refers to societal beliefs of one group being superior to another. It is manifested in the subsequent three levels of oppression.

  - Institutional oppression is laws and policies that reflect and enforce prejudiced ideology. For example, laws that. School policies that prohibit trans* individuals from putting their preferred pronouns or names on their transcripts are another example.

  - Interpersonal oppression is what we normally think of when we think of oppression. It refers to individual acts of racism, sexism, homo/transphobia, classism, or ableism, such as calling a person who uses a wheelchair “crippled.”

  - Finally, internalized oppression is what occurs when oppressed people internalize the ideology of inferiority, see it reflected in institutional practice, and experience it in interpersonal interactions. They begin to believe that it is true and engage in practices that reinforce it, such as horizontal hostility. It manifests itself in the belief that one is to blame for one’s own oppression, rather than ideological, institutional, and interpersonal discrimination.

Organizational Cultural Competence
A goal toward which all organizations strive; it is the capacity to function effectively with all cultures and to creatively utilize a diverse workforce.

Out
For lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, it is the state of having one’s sexual orientation or gender identity being known.

Outing
Inadvertently or intentionally sharing information about another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent. This act deprives the person of choosing when, how, and whom they want to tell. There are degrees of being out; a person may be out to some people or groups and not others, or they may only share varying degrees of information about their orientation. Outing someone can have profoundly negative consequences for that person’s safety, life, work life, and future career opportunities.
Pacific Islander
Used by U.S. Census Bureau to describe people from Fiji, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Samoa, Tahiti, and Tonga. Use specific countries when possible.

Pacific Rim
Imaginary line that frames the Pacific Ocean. Primarily bordering the U.S., Canada, China, Japan, and Australia. Try to use specific countries and regions instead.

Paganism/Pagan
A religion incorporating beliefs or practices from outside the main world religions, especially nature worship.

Paraplegia
Paralysis of the legs and lower body, typically caused by spinal injury or disease.

Partner
Used to identify someone in a romantic relationship with another, typically same-sex relationships, but becoming more common to use in heterosexual relationships.

Patriarchy
Structural and ideological system that perpetuates the privileging of particular kinds of masculinity and cisgender men. A system in which cisgender men have institutional control and dominance.

People of Color
Describes all racial and ethnic groups other than white.

Pink Triangle
Symbol gay men were required to wear in Nazi concentration camps. Adopted in the late 1970s as a symbol of gay pride.

Pluralism
A culture that incorporates mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork, and productivity among diverse individuals.

Political Correctness
Relating to or supporting broad social, political, and educational change, to redress historical injustices in matters such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. In practice, people attempting political correctness try to avoid offending others by taking measures or using language they perceive as safe. At the root of political correctness are compassion, respect, and empathy.

Prejudice
Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.
**Primitive**
Term characterizing, individuals, groups, or societies, as uncivilized or less sophisticated.

**Privilege**
Power and advantage derived from historical oppression and exploitation of other groups. A right or immunity granted as a benefit. The power structure of organizations and government through their infrastructure, policies, and practices reinforces the privileged group by advantaging them and disadvantaging others by creating barriers to attaining equal status. For example, white people in America are privileged in that their race will not limit their economic or educational prospects.

**Protestantism**
Religious denominations which broke from the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century. Includes Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Quaker. Not appropriate use for Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Scientist, Mormons, or Eastern Orthodox churches.

**Psychiatric Disability**
Acute or chronic mental illness. Psychotic, schizophrenic, neurotic and similar words should only be used in the appropriate clinical context. *Crazy, manic, lunatic, demented, psycho,* and *schizo* are offensive. Use *psychiatric disability, psychiatric illness, emotional disorder,* or *mental disorder.*
**Quadriplegia**
Paralysis of all four limbs.

**Queen**
An effeminate gay man. Considered derogatory when used by someone outside of the gay community.

**Queer**
A term used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual and, often also transgender, people. Some use queer as an alternative to "gay" in an effort to be more inclusive. Depending on the user, the term has either a derogatory or an affirming connotation, as many have sought to reclaim the term that was once widely used in a negative way.

**Quran**
Muslim holy book. Alternately spelled *Koran*. 
Race
Group identity related to local geographic or global human population distinguished as a group by genetic physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair texture, facial features, etc. Today race is believed to be a social construct, without biological merit. *Ethnicity* and *race* are not synonymous. For example, a black Frenchman might consider his ethnicity French while his race would be determined by his genetic heritage.

Racism
Systematic discrimination based on race. Racial prejudice + power = racism. While it is possible to discriminate against white people, it is not possible to be racist to a white person.

Rainbow Flag
Flag adopted by the LGBT community to symbolize gay or LGBT pride or safe spaces for LGBT people.

Religion
An organized belief system based on certain doctrines of faith or a belief in a supreme being or God. Organized religion suggests the manner in which people should live and the beliefs that they should accept or reject.

Reservation
A section of land set aside by the federal government for Native Americans.

Respectability Politics
Coined by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, refers to attempts by marginalized groups to police their own members and show their social values as being consistent with mainstream values. It is the idea that in order for a group to gain more rights, they must act and appear "respectable." Originally used to refer to policing of African American women’s behaviors, the concept can be applied in other situations. It is similar to *horizontal hostility*.

Reverse Discrimination
Perceived discrimination against the majority group, especially resulting from policies enacted to correct past discrimination. While such discrimination may be racially motivated, *reverse discrimination* is not the same as racism because the former is not institutionally enforced.
**S**

**Same-Sex Couple**
Couple comprised of partners of the same sex.

**Same-Sex Union**
Union performed by a member of the clergy that is not legally recognized as a marriage.

**Scapegoating**
Blaming an individual or group for something when, in reality, there is no one person or group responsible.

**Semite**
A member of any of the peoples speaking Semitic languages, e.g. Hebrew, Arabic.

**Sex**
Genitally-based physical distinction between female and male. Do not use gender as a synonym.

**Sexism**
Systemic oppression based on sex and/or gender. Gendered prejudice + power = sexism.

**Sexual Attraction**
Innate sexual desire towards a particular gender(s). A component of sexuality. While sexual attraction is innate, it can be fluid.

**Sexual Identity/Orientation**
An identity based on emotional, romantic, and sexual desires, often determined by a person’s sexual attraction. A component of sexuality. Do not use sexual preference.

**Sexual Preference**
A term that is often based on the incorrect assumption that people choose their sexual orientation. This term is also connected with the term lifestyle as it is assumed in both cases that the person or group chooses to behave in a particular manner. Use sexual orientation.

**Sexuality**
Comprised of three parts: sexual behavior, sexual attraction, and sexual orientation (an identity). For many, these components align, such as a woman who is attracted to women, identifies as lesbian, and has sex with women. For others, these components are distinctly separate, such as a man who is attracted to men, identifies as gay, but has sex with men and women.

**Shinto/Shintoist**
The ancient native religion of Japan. Stresses belief in spiritual beings and reverence for ancestors. Adherents are expected to celebrate their gods, or kami. Support the societies in which kami are patron, remain pure and sincere, and enjoy life.
**Sikhism/Sikh**
Religion founded by Shri Guru Nanek in the Punjab area, now in Pakistan. Sikhs believe in a single formless God with many names who can be known through meditation. They pray several times a day and are not allowed to worship icons or idols. They believe in samsara, karma and reincarnation as Hindus do, but reject the caste system. They believe that everyone has equal status in the eyes of God. Although elements of Islam have been incorporated, it is not Islamic.

**Slang Terms**
A type of language that consists of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people.

**Social Construct**
A perception of a person, group, or idea has been constructed through cultural and social practice and norms but appears to be natural. For example, gender is a social construct. Any perceived different among genders is not universally true and is a result of socially constructed/fabricated notions of what any one gender is and how people of that gender should act.

**Social Justice**
Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

**Spanglish**
Spanish characterized by words borrowed from the English language. Not a language or a dialect.

**Spanish**
Language primarily spoken in Spain and Latin America, or a person from Spain. Not a synonym for Latino or Hispanic.

**Stereotyping**
A standardized impression of a person or group that represents an oversimplified opinion, image, attitude, or uncritical judgment.

**Straight**
Person who is attracted to people of a gender different than their own. Synonymous with heterosexual.

**Systemic Discrimination**
Patterns of discrimination embedded in the policies and practices of an organization, institution, and/or society.

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Taoism/Taoist
Both a philosophy and a religion. Founded in China in 4th century B.C. by Laozi, derived primarily from the Tao Te Ching, which claims that an ever changing universe follows the Tao or path. Taoism prescribes that people live simply, spontaneously, and in close touch with nature. Meditation allows people to achieve contact with the Tao. It has been discouraged since the Communist revolution in China but flourishes in Taiwan.

Third World
Used during the Cold War to describe countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America still developing economically. Developing country is preferred.

TOEFL
Acronym for Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, a method of teaching English in other countries to non-English speaking people.

Tolerance
Acceptance and open mindedness to different practices, attitudes and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with differences.

Transgender/Trans
A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Transgender is a broad term and is good for non-transgender people to use. "Trans" is shorthand for "transgender." (Note: Transgender is correctly used as an adjective, not a noun, thus "transgender people" is appropriate but "transgenders" is often viewed as disrespectful.)

Transsexual
An older term for people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth who seeks to transition from male to female or female to male. Many do not prefer this term because it is thought to sound overly clinical.

Transvestite
A person who adopts the dress and often social behavior typical of another sex. A common term for this is cross-dressing. People from all sexual orientations cross-dress. A derogatory term for transsexual or transgender.

Tribe
A unit of social organization consisting of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry, culture and leadership. Many Native Americans prefer Nation. In various African countries tribe may be offensive, and ethnic group is often preferred.
Underrepresented
Group identities whose numbers are demographically fewer than the larger majority groups. A historically oppressed group characterized by lack of access to the full benefits of the economic, social, and political opportunity, and often used as a replacement term for minority.
White
People of European origin. The term is not synonymous with Caucasian. In the U.S. European American can also be used; some prefer terms that identify their country or origin, such as Italian American, Greek American, etc.

WSW
Acronym for women who have sex with women. Clinical label that often refers to gay, bisexual, or pansexual cisgender women, but could refer to straight cisgender women. Is not exclusive of women who have sex with women. Patients will rarely use to describe themselves. Do not use call patients WSWs; instead, use their given sexual identity.