



# The Language of Inclusion

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**Advocate:** (noun) (1) A person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. (verb) (2) To actively support/plead in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance, educate others, etc.

**Affirmative Action:** Any action taken by an employer, in compliance with federal law, to promote the employment and advancement of people who have been the traditional targets of discrimination.

**Ageism:** Discriminatory behavior related to age.

**Alaska Native or Native American Indian or Native Indian American:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. It includes people who classify themselves as described below.

- *Native American / Native Indian American:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Native American,” entered the name of an Indian tribe, or report such entries as Canadian Indian, French-American Indian, or Spanish-American Indian.
- *Alaska Native:* Includes written responses of Eskimos, Aleuts, and Alaska Indians as well as entries such as Arctic Slope, Inupiat, Yupik, Alutiiq, Egegik, and Pribilofian. The Alaska tribes are the Alaskan Athabaskan, Tlingit, and Haida.

**Ally:** Dr. Makini King writes, “In social justice work the term Ally is often defined as a noun; a person who uses their privilege to advocate on behalf of someone else who doesn’t hold that same privilege. Allyship is one of the first action-oriented tools one learns in social justice and bias trainings. Awareness of injustices; racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and ableism (to name a few) is of course, the first step toward advocacy, but awareness alone is not enough to dismantle systems of oppression. To be an Ally requires that a person not simply notice an injustice, but also take action by bringing attention to the injustice and requesting that it be corrected. It is important to note here that Allies are not defined by the assignment of the term; one cannot simply declare themselves an Ally because they believe in justice. Allies are defined by their actions. In other words, the question to ask one’s self is not am I an Ally, but rather, how have I advocated for or supported marginalized people or communities today? Yes, “today” is critical to the assessment of one’s allyship, for the systems of injustice do not take days off and the work of allies must be just as steadfast.”

**Androgynous:** Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

**Asexual:** Or “ace.” Someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction. They are not to be confused with “aromantic people,” who experience little or no romantic attraction. Asexual people do not always identify as aromantic; aromantic people do not always identify as asexual. More generally, some people (asexual or otherwise) identify as having a romantic orientation different than their sexual orientation. The terminology is similar: homoromantic, heteroromantic, biromantic and so on.

**Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. It includes “Asian Indian,” “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “Korean,” “Japanese,” “Vietnamese,” and “Other Asian.”

- *Asian Indian:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Asian Indian” or identify themselves as Bengalese, Bharat, Dravidian, East Indian, or Goanese.
- *Chinese:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Chinese” or who identify themselves as Cantonese, or Chinese American.
- *Filipino:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Filipino” or as Philipino, Philippine, or Filipino American.
- *Japanese:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Japanese” or as Nipponese or Japanese American.
- *Korean:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Korean” or Korean American.
- *Vietnamese:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Vietnamese” or Vietnamese American.
- *Cambodian:* Includes people who indicate their race as Cambodian or Cambodia.
- *Hmong:* Includes people who indicate their race as Hmong, Laohmong, or Mong.

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## Asian: (cont.)

- *Laotian*: Includes people who indicate their race as Laotian, Laos, or Lao.
- *Thai*: Includes people who indicate their race as Thai, Thailand, or Siamese.
- *Other Asian*: Includes people who indicate their race as Bangladeshi, Burmese, Indonesian, Pakistani, or Sri Lankan.

**Assigned or Assumed Sex:** Refers to the sex someone was assigned at birth according to physical, hormonal, and/or chromosomal characteristics.

**Assimilation:** The process whereby a group gradually adopts the characteristics, customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture.

**Belonging:** It has been said that diversity is like being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance, and belonging is dancing like no one's watching to music the DJ selected that also happens to be my personal favorite playlist — it is that sense of psychological safety that employees can be their authentic selves without fear of judgment and overwhelmingly feel that they belong.

**Benevolent Sexism:** Less obvious. Kind of seems like a compliment, even though it's rooted in men's feelings of superiority. It's when men say women are worthy of their protection (off the sinking boat first) or that they're more nurturing than men (therefore should raise children). It's restrictive.

**Bias:** An inclination of preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

**Bicultural:** A person who is bicultural has the ability to function effectively and appropriately and can select appropriate behaviors, values and attitudes within either culture.

**Bigotry:** Prejudice carried to the extreme of overt hatred, often carried to the point of violence.

**Biphobia:** Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.

**Biracial:** Of, relating to, or involving people from two races; also having parents from two different races.

**Bisexual:** A person whose emotional, sexual, or romantic attractions are to people of their gender or other gender identities. It is not a way station from straight to gay, as it had once been described.

**Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. It may include people who indicate their race as "Black" or "African American," or as "Afro American," "Kenyan," "Nigerian," or "Haitian." The term "African American" is considered to be the more professional and accepted usage.

**Bropropriating:** Stealing an idea from a woman and putting it into the world as your own.

**Change Agents:** Change agents are individuals within an organization, at any level. They are educated about managing diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and committed to facilitating change by modeling appropriate behaviors. They also take every opportunity to ensure that systems, policies and practices are flexible enough to work for everyone, modifying them as appropriate. Change agents include top leadership, management and employees at every level. Because managing diversity represents a major change in the management of human resources, without multi-level change agents implementation will stall. It requires support from leaders with vision, credibility and authority -- our champions. A managing diversity champion actively supports the organization's commitment to managing diversity and is seen by others as a valued member of the current culture and thus has credibility as the organization moves to the new vision.

**Cisgender:** Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

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**Classism:** Any attitude or institutional practice which subordinates people due to income, occupation, education and/or their economic condition.

**Cognitive Bias:** An assumption implicitly made about the world and people based on cultural inputs.

**Coming Out of the Closet:** The process of self-acceptance and disclosure of sexual orientation to others. People can disclose to none, some, or all of the people they know.

**Cross-Cultural:** The interaction, communication, or other processes between people or entities from two or more different cultures.

**Cultural Competence:** The ability to function effectively in a society of culture variation.

**Cultural Conditioning:** The unconscious process by which we are socialized to adopt the way of thinking of our own group.

**Cultural Diversity:** Developing organizational processes that are inclusionary rather than exclusionary for cultural conformity.

**Cross Dressing:** When someone wears clothing traditionally worn by the other gender. People who identify as Cross-Dressers typically do not want to transition their bodies or live full-time as the other gender.

**Culture:** The collective behavior patterns, communication styles, beliefs, concepts, values, institutions, standards, and other factors unique to a community that are socially transmitted to individuals and to which individuals are expected to conform.

**Demisexual:** Someone who generally does not experience sexual attraction unless they have formed a strong emotional, but not necessarily romantic, connection with someone.

**Discrimination:** Illegal treatment of a person or group (either intentional or unintentional) based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, veteran's status and in some states, sexual orientation. The term also includes the failure to remedy the effects of past discrimination.

Making decisions in prejudicial manner that may exclude or deny opportunity; making distinctions based on racial, ethnic, or distinguishing features such as usage, religious identification or disability.

- Combination of prejudice (superiority/inferiority belief system) and institutional power, the power to impose that system on others
- Without power, we all have about the same ability to be prejudiced
- Destructive "isms" (racism, sexism, ageism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, etc.)
- Use of institutional power to reinforce biased belief systems and to disadvantage others.

**Diverse Supplier:** A minority-owned business that is at least 51 percent owned, managed and controlled by one or more African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Indian Americans / Native Americans, Asian Indian Americans or Asian Pacific Americans. Acceptable certifications are provided by the National Minority Supplier Development Council and by Federal, State and Local Governments.

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**Diversity:** Diversity is the similarities and differences of people found in our workforce, our customers, and in the community in which we serve. Diversity includes many characteristics that may be visible such as race, gender, and age, and it also includes less obvious characteristics like personality style, ethnicity, ability, education, religion, job function, life experience, life style, sexual orientation, gender identity, geography, regional differences, work experience, and family situation that make us similar to and different from one another.

**Diversity Disconnect:** Refers to tension, misunderstandings, or conflicts caused by cultural differences in perceptions, values, beliefs and experiences. A diversity disconnect is often caused by the misinterpretation of a statement or a behavior.

**Disability Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE):** The DOBE certification is granted to businesses that are at least 51% owned, operated, controlled, and managed by a person with a disability.

**Domestic Partner:** Unmarried partners who share living quarters.

**EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity):** Basing terms and conditions of employment, as well as management decisions, on job-related factors without regard to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion or sex.

**Equality:** The state of being equal. It's foundational in a democratic society. The fight for equality is the fight to attain different kinds of equality, like racial, gender, or the equality of opportunity between rich and poor, is often associated with progress toward that ideal of everyone being truly equal.

**Ethnic:** Of or relating to people grouped according to a common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin.

**Ethnicity:** Refers to shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distinctions that set apart one group of people from another. The most common characteristics distinguishing various ethnic groups are culture, religion, language, or the like.

**Feminazi:** A derogatory term for a radical feminist.

**Feminism:** Belief in and desire for equality between the sexes. It is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities and encompasses social, political and economic equality.

**Frames of Reference:** A particular way of perceiving and making sense of the world around us. A set of filters through which thoughts, actions and decisions pass.

**Gay:** A common and acceptable word for males who are attracted to other males, but sometimes used for both genders.

**Gender:** This term refers to the external, socially constructed rules, roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for women and men; gender categories are "women" and "men."

**Gender Dysphoria:** Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term - which replaces Gender Identity Disorder - "is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults." It is important to note this is a clinical diagnosis given to transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. It is considered offensive because it labels them "disordered." "Dysphoria" is used by many trans people to describe experiences of discomfort and/ or alienation from one's mind and/or body, but cis individuals should not use this term to "diagnose" or label trans people's lived experiences.

**Gender-Expansive:** Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

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**Gender Expression:** External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

**Gender Identity:** One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Nonconforming, or G.N.C.:** One who expresses gender outside traditional norms associated with masculinity or femininity. Not all gender-nonconforming people are transgender, and some transgender people express gender in conventionally masculine or feminine ways.

**Genderqueer:** Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Gender Fluid:** A term used by people whose identity shifts or fluctuates. Sometimes these individuals may identify or express themselves as more masculine on some days, and more feminine on others.

**Gender Role:** Rules assigned by society that define what clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc., are considered appropriate and in- appropriate for members of a given sex.

**Gender-Neutral:** Someone who prefers not to be described by a specific gender, but prefers "they" as a singular pronoun (the American Dialect Society's 2015 Word of the Year) or the honorific "Mx.," a substitute for "Mr." or "Ms." that entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 2015.

**Gender Transition:** The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.

**Glass Ceiling:** Barriers, either real or perceived, that affect the promotion or hiring of protected group members.

**Go Back To Where You Came From:** This is a derogatory phrase and should never be used. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has written specific rules that protect people, mostly immigrants, against employment discrimination on the basis of their national origin. The agency is responsible for enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination and harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age and disability. "Ethnic slurs and other verbal or physical conduct because of nationality are illegal if they are severe or pervasive and create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment, interfere with work performance, or negatively affect job opportunities," the commission said on its website to describe harassment based on national origin. "Examples of potentially unlawful conduct include insults, taunting, or ethnic epithets, such as making fun of a person's foreign accent or comments like, 'Go back to where you came from,' whether made by supervisors or co-workers."

**Graysexual:** Someone who occasionally experiences sexual attraction but usually does not; it covers a kind of gray space between asexuality and sexual identity.

**Harassment (Ethnic and Racial):** Words or conduct communicated with malice and with the intent to intimidate or harass another person in a way that is associated with that person's race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin.

**Harassment (Malicious):** Intentional intimidation associated with a person's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, or mental, physical, or sensory disability that causes physical injury to another person; or by words or conduct places another person in reasonable fear of harm.

**Harassment (Sexual)** See Sexual Harassment.

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**Heteronormative:** Cultural rules (including social, family, and legal) that pressure everyone to conform to a heterosexual standard of identity.

**Heterosexism:** The attitude that heterosexuality is the only valid sexual orientation. Heterosexism denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, relationship, or community. Heterosexism often takes the form of ignoring or discriminating against LGBTQIA+ individuals or discounting their experiences altogether.

**Heterosexual/Straight:** A person whose emotional, sexual, or romantic attractions are primarily to members of the opposite sex.

**Hispanic or Latin** People who identify with the terms “Hispanic” or “Latino” are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories—“Mexican,” “Puerto Rican,” or “Cuban”—as well as those who indicate that they are “other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino.” Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.

**Homophobia:** The irrational fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex. It is the fear that enforces sexism and heterosexism. The extreme behavior of homophobia is violence.

**Hostile Sexism:** The one most people think about. Openly insulting, objectifying, and degrading women.

**Immigrant:** Anyone who has moved internationally into a destination country of which they are not natives. In the U.S., with the exception of Native Americans, we are all immigrants.

**Inclusion:** Providing equal opportunity to all people to fully engage themselves in creating an environment and a cultural attitude whereby everyone and every group fits, feels accepted, has value, and is supported by a foundation built on trust and mutual respect.

**Inclusiveness:** The act of encouraging belonging.

**Institution Racism:** A variety of systems operating within an organization that have attitudes, behaviors, and practices that subordinate persons or groups because of race or ethnic background.

**Ism:** Power plus prejudice.

**Internalized Oppression:** The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to oppression: accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

**Internalized Sexism:** When the belief in women's inferiority becomes part of one's own worldview and self-concept.

**Interpersonal Violence or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** Intimate partner violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner.

**Intersectionality:** A legal term created by Kimberle Crenshaw that holds the classical models of oppression within society, such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, species or disability do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination.

**Intersex:** A term for someone born with biological sex characteristics that aren't traditionally associated with male or female bodies. Intersexuality does not refer to sexual orientation or gender identity.

**In The Closet (Closeted):** LGBTQIA+ individuals who do not openly disclose their sexual orientation to others. People can disclose to none, some, or all of the people they know.



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**Latinx:** The gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina and even Latin@. Used by scholars, activists and an increasing number of journalists, Latinx is quickly gaining popularity among the general public. It's part of a "linguistic revolution" that aims to move beyond gender binaries and is inclusive of the intersecting identities of Latin American descendants. In addition to men and women from all racial backgrounds, Latinx also makes room for people who are transgender, queer, agender, non-binary, gender non-conforming or gender fluid. Despite the growing popularity of the term, Latinx has been faced with criticism. Many opponents of the term have suggested that using an un-gendered noun like Latinx is disrespectful to the Spanish language and some have even called the term "a blatant form of linguistic imperialism."

**Lesbian:** A woman whose emotional, sexual, or romantic attractions are primarily to other women.

**LGBTQIA+:** This is the acronym most commonly used in the United States to address the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. The acronym can vary in a number of ways, including LGBT, GLBT and GLB, and now includes additional letters, such as Q (queer; also questioning); A (straight ally); and I (intersex) along with the + symbol to denote everything on the gender and sexuality spectrum that letters and words cannot yet describe.

**M.A.A.B./F.A.A.B./U.A.A.B.:** Male-assigned at birth/female-assigned at birth/unassigned at birth.

**Male Gaze:** A way of looking at the world through a masculine lens that views women as sexual objects.

**Managing Diversity:** This is a comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees. This process takes into account the need to change organization systems to sustain the organization's ability to get from all employees everything they have to offer. It means approaching diversity at all three levels: Individual, team or department and organizational. It deals with the way managers do their jobs. It requires a fundamental change in the culture and the way things are done. It is a change in the corporate way of life.

**Mansplain (verb) Mansplains (adjective):** When a man explains something to a woman in a condescending way when he either 1) doesn't know anything about it or 2) knows far less than the woman he is talking to.  
(*Sorry, if you already knew that.*)

**Maninterrupting:** When a man interrupts a woman, especially excessively.

**Melting Pot:** A place where immigrants of different ethnicity or culture form an integrated and homogenous society.

**Micro-inequities:** Small, sometimes unspoken, often unconscious messages we constantly send and receive that have a powerful impact on our interactions with others. They can be either positive or negative. Some common examples include a wink of understanding from across the table; a distracted glance at the ceiling or watch while someone is speaking.

**Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)** — a business that is at least 51 percent owned/operated/ controlled by:

- African American (ethnic origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa)
- Hispanic American (ethnic origins in any of the Spanish-speaking areas of Latin America or the following regions: Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean basin only)
- Asian-Pacific American (ethnic origins in Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific, or the Northern Mariana Islands)
- Asian-Indian American (ethnic origins in India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh)
- Native American (a person who is American Indian, Eskimo, Aleutian, or native Hawaiian, and regarded as such by the community of which she or he claims to be a part)

**Misandry:** Hatred of men.

**Misogynoir:** Misogyny directed toward Black women.



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**Misogyny:** Hatred of women.

**Multicultural:** The co-existence of many distinct cultures within a given context, such as community or nation.

**Myth:** An ill-founded belief, usually based on limited experience, given uncritical acceptance by members of a group, especially in support of existing or traditional practices and institutions.

**Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicate their race as “Native Hawaiian,” “Guamanian or Chamorro,” “Samoaan,” and “Other Pacific Islander.”

- *Native Hawaiian:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Native Hawaiian” or who identify themselves as “Part Hawaiian” or “Hawaiian.”
- *Guamanian or Chamorro* — Includes people who indicate their race as Chamorro or Guamanian.
- *Samoaan:* Includes people who indicate their race as “Samoaan” or who identified themselves as American Samoaan or Western Samoaan.
- *Other Pacific Islander:* Includes people who indicate their race as a Pacific Islander group such as Tahitian, Northern Mariana Islander, Palauan, Fijian, or a cultural group such as Melanesian, Micronesian, or Polynesian.

**Non-Binary:** A person who identifies as neither male nor female and sees themselves outside the gender binary. This is sometimes shortened to N.B. or enby. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. One notable example of someone who identifies as Non-Binary is Taylor Mason, a financial analyst on the show “Billions.” Taylor is believed to be the first gender non-binary character on television and is played by the non-binary actor Asia Kate Dillon.

**Non-LGBTQIA+:** Anyone who does not identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community; most commonly refers to straight/heterosexual individuals.

**Organizational Assessment:** Organizational assessment involves discovering where the organization is today. This process examines systems, policies and practices to ensure they are flexible enough to support the future state environment. This phase is at the heart of “managing diversity.” It involves data collection to assess the organizational climate. It consists of surveys (Employee Opinion Surveys) which are attitudinal in nature to get a sense of what the work environment is like, cultural audits (which look at the organization's roots that drive its systems), assessments of written and unwritten organization policies and procedures, and reviews of complaint and grievance data. Change to support the effective management of diversity must take place at a root level to be lasting.

**Organizational Culture:** “Underlying values, beliefs and principles that serve as a foundation for the organization's management system, as well as the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those principles.” (Cox, Taylor Jr., Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research & Practice, Berrett-Koehler: San Francisco, 1993, p. 161)

**Out Employee:** An employee who discloses his or her LGBTQIA+ identity to a few, some, or all of his or her coworkers.

**Outing:** Exposing someone's LGBTQIA+ identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

**Pansexual:** Someone who is attracted to people of all gender identities. Or someone who is attracted to a person's qualities regardless of their gender identity. (The prefix “pan” means “all,” rejecting the gender binary that some argue is implied by “bisexual.”)

**Patriarchy:** A hierarchical-structured society in which men hold more power.

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**Persons of Color:** People of non-European ancestry. All persons self-identifying by the general categories of African-American or Black; Hispanic, Latino or Chicano; Asian or Pacific Islander; American Indian or Native American or Alaskan Native.

**Physical Abilities:**

- Disabled (disAbled, disABLED). This is the most currently appropriate term.
- Vision impaired (limited vision)
- Blind (no vision)
- Hearing impaired (limited hearing)
- Deaf (no hearing)
- Hidden challenges (e.g., high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, etc.)
- Little People

**Pluralism:** A system that holds within it individuals or groups differing in a basic background experiences and cultures. It allows for the development of a common tradition, while preserving the right of each group to maintain its cultural heritage.

**Prejudice:** Implies a preconceived idea, judgment, or opinion, usually an unfavorable one marked by hatred, and is directed toward a racial religious, cultural, or ethnic group.

- Judgments about others that reinforce superiority/inferiority belief systems.
- Exaggerate value/worth of a particular group while diminishing worth for other group(s).
- Reinforced supported by stereotypes.

**Privilege:** The proven concept that some people in society are advantaged over others.

**Queer:** A fluid term with numerous meanings. It is commonly used to describe sexual orientation and/or gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to heterosexual norms. The term is often used to refer to the general LGBTQIA+ community. It can be either a positive or a negative term, depending on the context in which it is used.

**Questioning:** A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Race:** As a biological concept, it defines groups of human beings based on a set of genetically transmitted characteristics, i.e., physical characteristics, including color. The concept of race as a socio-cultural concept is being replaced by the more appropriate concept of ethnicity. The concept of race as used socio-politically by the U.S. Census Bureau reflects self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. The latter socio-cultural and socio-political categories include both racial and national-origin groups.

**Racism:** An assumption that there is an inherent purity and superiority of certain races and inferiority of others. It denotes any attitude, behavior, or institutional structure that subordinates persons or groups because of their race or ethnic background. Such practices can be intentional or unintentional.

**Reproductive Rights:** The rights of individuals to decide whether to reproduce and have reproductive health, including an individual's right to plan a family, terminate a pregnancy, use contraceptives, learn about sex education in public schools, and gain access to reproductive health services.

**Same-Gender Loving:** A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

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**Self-Esteem:** How a person feels about herself or himself; pride in oneself. Self-esteem is linked to family traditions, language, social customs, economic background, and other aspects of one's cultural environment.

**Sex:** This term refers to the biological characteristics that define an individual; sex categories are “female,” “male,” or “non-binary.”

**Sexism:** A system of beliefs or attitudes, which relegates women to limited roles and/or options because of their sex. It centers on the idea that women are inferior to men.

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors (quid pro quo) and other verbal or physical conducts of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either implicitly a condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfacing with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile working environment. (This definition is according to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines.)

**Sexual Minority:** Individuals who do not identify as part of the sexual majority or cultural mainstream (e.g., straight). Individuals can identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, for example.

**Sexual Orientation:** A person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted.

**Sexual Preference:** This term implies sexuality is an individual's choice. This term has a negative connotation and should not be used.

**Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS):** Genital surgery that a transgender person may undergo. It is only one part of a transgender person's transition. The term is used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's anatomical sex characteristics. While not inherently derogatory term, it is reductive.

**Some Other Race:** Includes all other responses not included in the “White,” “African American or Black,” “American Indian or Native American and Alaska Native,” “Asian,” and the “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” race categories described above. Persons identified as multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic/Latino group (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban) in the “Some other race” category are included in this category.

**Straight/Heterosexual:** A person whose emotional, sexual, or romantic attractions are primarily to members of the opposite sex.

**Stereotypes:** The belief that all people of a certain racial, ethnic, or cultural group are the same and behave in the same way.

**TERF:** The acronym for “trans exclusionary radical feminists,” referring to feminists who are transphobic.

**Transgender:** People who identify with the characteristics, roles, behaviors, or desires of a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth.

**Transgendered:** Not a word. Often used as one.

**Trans or Trans+:** Two umbrella terms for non-cisgender identities.

**Transition:** The term used to describe the process of changing from one gender to the other; taking steps such as changing one's name and/or medical intervention.

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**Trans Man:** Someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as male.

**Transmisogyny:** A blend of transphobia and misogyny, which manifests as discrimination against "trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum."

**Transphobia:** The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

**Trans Woman:** Someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as female.

**Trigger:** Something that forces you to relive a trauma.

**Trigger Warning:** A statement that someone is about to experience challenging material that could potentially be disturbing (graphic, racially-insensitive, sexually explicit, etc.).

**Two or More Races:** "Two or more races" refers to combinations of two or more of the following race categories:

- White
- African American or Black
- American Indian or Native American and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Some other race

**Understanding Differences:** Understanding differences is the awareness and acceptance of differences among and between people both on an interpersonal and personal level. It encompasses myriad dimensions such as race, sex, age, thinking style, religion, sexual orientation, professional degrees, and functionality. This can also refer to organizations and systems (for example, field offices versus headquarters). The objective is to enhance interpersonal or inter-functional relationships.

**Undocumented Immigrant:** Anyone residing in any given country without legal documentation. It includes people who entered the U.S. without inspection and proper permission from the government, and those who entered with a legal visa that is no longer valid.

**Values:** Values are our subjective reactions to the world around us. They guide and mold our options and behavior. Values have three important characteristics. First, values are developed early in life and are very resistant to change. Values develop out of our direct experiences with people who are important to us, particularly our parents. Values rise not out of what people tell us, but as a result how they behave toward us and others. Second, values define what is right and what is wrong. Notice that values do not involve external, outside standards to tell right or wrong; rather, wrong, good or bad are intrinsic. Third, values themselves cannot be proved correct or incorrect, valid or invalid, right or wrong. If a statement can be proven true or false, then it cannot be a value. Values tell what we should believe, regardless of any evidence or lack thereof.

**Valuing Differences:** Refers to systemic, organizational and personal development work (not a program) that focuses on all employees, clients, customers, and investors feeling valued (not just tolerated).

**Veteran:** A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

**Veteran Owned Business:** A company that is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by a Veteran.

**Victim-Blaming:** When the victim of a crime or harmful act is held fully or partially responsible for it. If you hear someone questioning what a victim could have done to prevent a crime, that's victim-blaming, and it makes it harder for people to come forward and report abuse.



## Glossary of Key Terms

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**White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “White” or as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish.

**White Fragility:** The disbelieving defensiveness that white people exhibit when their ideas about race and racism are challenged—and particularly when they feel implicated in white supremacy.

**Woke:** Rooted in Black activist culture, it means you're educated and aware, especially about injustice.

**Woman Business Enterprise (WBE)** — a business that is at least 51 percent owned/operated/ controlled by a non-minority woman.

**Women Of Color:** A term to unite women from marginalized communities of color who have experienced oppression. It could include women of African, Asian, Latin or Native American descent.

**Yes Means Yes:** A paradigm shift in the way we look at rape, moving beyond "no means no" toward the idea that consent must be explicit.

**⚡:** Not just a mathematical symbol anymore, but a denotation of everything on the gender and sexuality spectrum that letters and words cannot yet describe.