Equity & Inclusion Shared Terminology

The terminology around diversity, equity and inclusion is broad and still growing. Therefore, a common vocabulary to avoid misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or ableist language is needed at MacPhail. Words often have different meanings; depending on lived experiences words might hold different meanings for different people. The purpose of the DEI Shared Terminology is to create a living document around equitable and inclusive practices providing a starter guide framework that is constantly evolving to support terminology as a resource to all employees and students at MacPhail.

Person-first Language vs Identity-first Language

Disability is a natural part of the human experience, an aspect of human diversity like other areas of human variation, and at MacPhail, we value and respect our employees and students' self-identity. Depending on one's self-identity, they may prefer to use people-first language. People-first language places the emphasis on the person instead of on the disability when discussing most intellectual and developmental disabilities. For example, instead of saying "Down syndrome person," it is preferable to say, "person with Down syndrome."

Another perspective is for one is identity-first language. Identity-first language emphasizes that the disability plays a role in who the person is and reinforces disability as a positive cultural identifier. Identity-first language is generally preferred by self-advocates in the autistic, deaf, and blind communities. It is important to note that whether a person with a disability prefers people-first or identity-first language is not universal.

Terms:

Ally Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

Allyship A strategy to achieve and DEI outcome whereby people possessing socially advantaged identities utilize those advantaged identities to create change.

Belonging The extent to which people feel part of a larger whole in a group setting.

Bias A form of prejudice that results from our tendency and needs to classify individuals into categories.

Bigot A person who is obstinately devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices and intolerant towards other diverse social groups.

BIPOC An acronym used to refer to Black, Indigenous, and (other) People of Color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.

BBIA Stands for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian people, and is an identifier used to describe the different racially minoritized communities. Each community that comprises BBIA experiences degrees of marginalization differently, but are united by experiences of trauma, violence, and discrimination because of their shared lived experience of being a part of the non-dominant, centered culture in the United States.

Centering Putting yourself- your experiences, identity, viewpoint, opinions- in the middle of the dialogue or issue. It marginalizes, dismisses, invalidates, and erases BIPOC/BBIA voices.

Cisgender A term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.

Color Blind The belief that everyone should be treated "equally" without respect to societal, economic, historical, racial, or other difference. No differences are seen or acknowledged; everyone is the same.

Colonize Appropriate a place or domain for one's own use.

Cultural Appropriation The non-consensual/misappropriation use of cultural elements for commodification or profit purposes – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. — often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the original culture.

Decolonize The active and intentional process of unlearning values, beliefs, and conceptions that have caused physical, emotional, or mental harm to people through colonization. It requires a recognition of systems of oppression.

Disability Physical or mental impairment that affects a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Diverse Describes a quality of a group. A singular person or object cannot be diverse. Referring to an individual as "diverse" will often cause that person to feel less-than or tokenized. When we refer to individual people of color, members of the LGBTQIA community, people with disabilities, and women as "diverse," we are demonstrating that what matters to us about them is not who they are or the skills they possess, but that they are something other than a straight, white, able, cisgender person.

Diversity Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. A broad term that includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

Discrimination The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favor one group over others on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion, and other categories.

Equity The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist in the provision of adequate opportunities to all groups.

Equity-Minded The capacity-built perspective of thinking exhibited by individuals/ organizations who intentionally challenge the patterns of inequity for historically excluded and marginalized populations in the arts sector.

Gender Identity Distinct from the term "sexual orientation," refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Gender Non-conforming An individual whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

Harassment The use of comments or actions that can be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, and unwelcome.

Identity First Language Identity-first language emphasizes that the disability plays a role in who the person is and reinforces disability as a positive cultural identifier.

Implicit Bias Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.

Inclusion The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

Inclusion (evolved definition) Is the achievement of an environment that all stakeholders, especially underserved and marginalized populations, trust to be respectful and accountable. Inclusion is achieved through actions that explicitly counter present-day and historical inequities and meet the unique needs of all populations.

Institutional Racism Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on racial discrimination.

Intersectionality A social construct that recognizes the fluid diversity of identities that a person can hold such as gender, race, class, religion, professional status, marital status, socioeconomic status, etc.

"Isms" A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group. For example, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobism), etc.

Lived Experience Knowledge gained from first-hand life experience rather than second-hand or from formal education. Lived experience holds certain weight and context that cannot be taught.

LGBTQIA An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.

Marginalized/Minoritized/Disadvantaged/Underserved Populations A group sharing an identity, experience, or attribute that has lesser power and endures greater hardship in an environment because of those identities, experiences, or attributes. Individuals may be a part of multiple such groups, as well as privileged groups, simultaneously. The concept is often used to conceptualize key constituents.

Microaggression The verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, insults, or belittlement, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon discriminatory belief systems.

Multicultural Competency A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world, and an openness to learn from them.

Oppression The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures.

Organizational Culture The underlying beliefs, assumptions, values, expectations, and ways of thinking and doing that drive the behavior of people with an organization. The concept is often used to conceptualize and describe teams, groups, and organizations, as well as inform strategy.

Patriarchy Actions and beliefs that prioritizes masculinity. Patriarchy is practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society (jobs and positions of power given to men in government, policy, criminal justice, etc.) while also influencing how we interact with one another interpersonally (gender expectations, sexual dynamics, space-taking, etc.).

Person-first language Puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is. PFL uses phrases such as "person with a disability, "individuals with disabilities," and "children with disabilities," as opposed to phrases that identify people based solely on their disability, such as "the disabled."

Person of Color (POC) A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latinx, and Native American backgrounds; as opposed to the collective "White".

Positionality The various identities (race, gender, citizenship, sexual orientation, etc.) a single person holds that, when combined, affect the way they view the world and their perception of their placement in it. Positionality dictates how a person negotiates social movement within the society in which they live.

Prejudice An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment and can be rooted in stereotypes that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Privileged/Majoritized/Advantaged/Overserved Population A group sharing an identity, experience, or attribute that has greater power and endures lesser hardship in an environment because of those identities, experience, or attributes. Individuals may be a part of multiple such groups, as well as marginalized groups, simultaneously. The concept is often used to conceptualize key constituents.

Privilege Exclusive access or availability to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group.

Queer An umbrella term that can refer to anyone who transgresses society's view of gender or sexuality. The definitional indeterminacy of the word Queer, its elasticity, is one of its constituent characteristics: "A zone of possibilities."

Race A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time.

Representational Parity Means that historically excluded and marginalized populations are represented equally to the dominant culture.

Safe Space Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.

Sexual orientation An individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Social Justice Social justice constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and society as a whole.

Stereotype A form of generalization rooted in blanket beliefs and false assumptions, a product of processes of categorization that can result in a prejudiced attitude, uncritical judgment, and intentional or unintentional discrimination. Stereo- types are typically negative, based on little information that does not recognize individualism and personal agency.

Structural Inequality Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws, and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination, it is referred to as systemic or structural racism.

System of Oppression Conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice, and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups. Sometimes is used to refer to systemic racism.

Tokenism Presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group without giving this person a real opportunity to speak for her/himself.

Whiteness (not the same as "white people") Race is a construct that is not the same in all societies. Race is not biologically real but has real world implications. In the US, whiteness has been historically constructed as having certain rights, benefits, access, property (people as property), and the right to exclude others from spaces. The most mainstream experiences associated with whiteness have been treated as default in our society (ethnocentrism). Whiteness shows up in all aspects of our society.

White Supremacy A power system structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as white, whether consciously or subconsciously determined; and who feel superior to those of other racial/ethnic identities.

Avoiding Ableist Language

Purpose Disability metaphors are abounded in our culture, and they exist almost entirely as pejoratives. As Rachel Cohen-Rottenberg wrote on *DisabilityandRepresentation.com*, "If a culture's language is full of pejorative metaphors about a group of people, that culture is not going to see those people as fully entitled to the same inclusion as people in a more favored group." This handout's primary purpose is to serve as a reference for linguistic microaggressions and every day, casual ableism.

Barren Refers to people who are infertile and carries sexist connotations as well as ableist ones.

Blind to _____ / turn a blind eye to _____ / blinded by ignorance/bigotry/etc. Refers to Blind people or people with visual impairments.

Bound to a wheelchair (wheelchair bound) Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Confined to a wheelchair Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Crazy Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Cretin Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Cripple/Crippled (by _____) Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Daft Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Deaf-Mute Refers to Deaf people or people with hearing impairments.

Deaf to _____ / turn a deaf ear to _____ / etc. Refers to Deaf people or people with hearing impairments.

Derp (also **herp-derp** and variations) Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Diffability Can refer to any person with a disability.

Differently abled Can refer to any person with a disability.

Dumb Refers to Deaf people or people with hearing impairments, people with speech impairments, or people with linguistic or communication disorders or disabilities.

Feeble-Minded Refers to people with mental, psychiatric, intellectual, or developmental disabilities.

Handicap(ped) Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Handicapable Usually refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities but can also mean any person with a disability.

Harelip Refers to people with cleft-lip palette or similar facial deformities.

Hearing-Impaired Refers to d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Idiot(ic) Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Imbecile Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Insane or **Insanity** Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Lame Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Loony/Loony Bin Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Lunatic Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Madhouse/Mad/Madman Refers to an institution housing people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Maniac Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Mental/Mental Case Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Mental Defective Refers to people with mental, psychiatric, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities.

Mongoloid Refers to people with intellectual disabilities and specifically Down Syndrome. Derives from a double whammy of racism AND ableism, from the belief that people with Down Syndrome look like people from Mongolia.

Moron(ic) Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Nuts Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Psycho Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Psychopath(ic) Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Psycho(tic) Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Retard(ed)/[anything]-tard Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

[you belong on the] Short-bus/ that's short-bus material/etc. Refers to people with intellectual, learning, or other mental disabilities.

Simpleton Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Spaz(zed) Refers to people with cerebral palsy or similar neurological disabilities.

Specially Abled Can refer to any person with a disability.

Special Needs Usually refers to people with learning, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, but can mean any person with a disability.

Stupid Refers to people with intellectual disabilities (i.e., "in a stupor").

Suffers from _____
Can refer to any person with a disability.

Wacko/Whacko Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Suggested words to use instead:

Asinine
Bad
Bleak
Boring
Bullish
Callous
Careless
Confusing
Contemptible
Coward
Dense
Devoid or _____ Disgusting
Dull
Enraged
Evil
Extremist
Furious
Gross
Half-hearted
Horrible
Ignoramus
Ignorant
Impolite
Incomprehensible
Inconsiderate
Inconsistent
Infuriating
Insensible
Irrational
Jerk
Lacking in _____
Livid
Mean
Nasty
Nefarious
Nonsense
Nonsensical
Obtuse
Outrageous
Overwrought
Paradoxical
Pathetic
Petulant
Putrid
Rage-inducing
Reckless
Ridiculous
Rude
Scornful

Self-contradictory
Shameful
Solipsistic
Spurious
Terrible
Tyrannical
Unbelievable
Unconscionable
Unheard of
Uninspired
Unoriginal
Unthinkable
Unthinking
Useless
Vapid
Vile
Vomit-inducing
Without any _____ whatsoever
Wretched

For describing people with disabilities/disabled people in general:
Disabled
Has a disability
With a disability
With a chronic health condition/Has a chronic health condition
Neuroatypical
Neurodivergent

For describing people on the autism spectrum:
On the Autism Spectrum
Autistic
With autism (if preferred by individual)

For describing people with intellectual disabilities:
With an intellectual disability
Has an intellectual disability
With a cognitive disability
Has a cognitive disability

For describing people with sensory disabilities or impairments:
Blind
Low vision
Deaf
Hard of hearing

For describing people with physical or mobility disabilities:
With a physical disability
With a mobility disability
Uses a wheelchair
Uses crutches
Uses a cane
Uses a walker
Has (specific condition here)

The terms contained in this glossary have been reproduced from the following resources:

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