



JEDI DEFINITIONS

WEBB Advisory Group LLC
Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Terms and Definitions

DEI Definitions

Sometimes it feels like understanding justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) is complicated. What we hear on television and social media often leads to confusion. And the terminology seems ever-changing. Consequently, it can be easier to avoid the subject of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion unless necessary.

I will tell you that to begin any great change it is necessary to know exactly what you mean. The WEBB Advisory Group has prepared a list of the most consistent terminology to use when having conversation around these issues.

So, how do you become a JEDI? A warrior for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion? It starts with understanding exactly what those words mean. As we strengthen our understanding through learning, we learn to identify key issues, frame questions, and create organizational environments based on understanding.

JUSTICE– JUSTICE IS ABOUT EMPATHY AND RESPECT. IT IS NOT JUST INCLUSIVE OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS. JUSTICE ENSURES THAT EVERY SINGLE PERSON IS TREATED WITH RESPECT, KINDNESS, FAIRNESS, RESPECT AND EMPATHY. IT IS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE HUMANITY THAT WE ALL SHARE.

EQUITY - EQUITY ENSURES ACCESS TO FAIR AND JUST PRACTICES AND POLICIES SO THAT THOSE WITH DIFFERENCES CAN THRIVE. EQUITY IS DIFFERENT THAN EQUALITY IN THAT EQUALITY IMPLIES TREATING EVERYONE AS IF THEIR EXPERIENCES ARE EXACTLY THE SAME. BEING EQUITABLE MEANS ACKNOWLEDGING AND ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNDERREPRESENTED AND HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED.

DIVERSITY - DIVERSITY REFERS TO THE PRESENCE OF HUMAN DIFFERENCE, SOCIAL IDENTITIES, AND SOCIAL GROUP DIFFERENCES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO RACE, ETHNICITY, CREED, COLOR, SEX, GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL IDENTITY, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, LANGUAGE, CULTURE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY, AGE, AND (DIS)ABILITY.

INCLUSION - INCLUSION REFERS TO A WORKPLACE CULTURE WHERE ALL MEMBERS ARE AND FEEL RESPECTED, HAVE A SENSE OF BELONGING, AND ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE AND ACHIEVE TO THEIR POTENTIAL. ORGANIZATIONS CAN BE BOTH DIVERSE AND NON-INCLUSIVE AT THE SAME TIME, THUS A SUSTAINED PRACTICE OF CREATING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS AND MUST INCLUDE THE PREMISE THAT ALL VOICES ARE WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED.

Working Definitions

This list is not intended to be exhaustive of every word and term used at work and conversations about justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

These are basic working definitions to be used as a reference to help move your organization forward.

A

Ability: Power or capacity to do or act physically, mentally, legally, morally, financially, etc.

Access: Creating the necessary conditions so that individuals and organizations desiring to, and who are eligible to, can use our services, facilities, programs, and employment opportunities.

Ally: A person of one social identity group who stands up in support of members of another group: typically, member of dominant identity advocating and supporting a marginalized group.



Ally in action

B

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 their own opinions and prejudices and is intolerant towards other diverse social groups.

BIPoC: An acronym used to refer to black, Indigenous and 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.

Bisexual: A sexual orientation in which a person has the potential to feel physically and emotionally attracted to more than one gender

C

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity (and often gender expression) matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Colorblindness: The process by which a person attempts to ignore the existence of race or skin color in service of seeing past race and just seeing the person. This deemphasizing of race, however, ignores the real, lived experience of people of color in the US and ignores their experience.

Culture: Is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Cultural Appropriation: The non-consensual/misappropriate 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 context of its original culture.

Cultural Competence: Refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four components: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) Cross cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period.

D

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: A physical, mental, or cognitive impairment or condition that requires special accommodations to ensure programmatic and physical access.

Diversity: Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among all individuals; including but not limited to race, color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, veteran status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, genetic information and learning styles. A diverse group, community, or organization is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.

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



E

Ethnicity: A social construct which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Equality: Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access that may or may not result in equitable outcomes.

Equity: Is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff, 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 equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

G

Gay: A common and acceptable word for male homosexuals but used for both genders.

Gender: The socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles a particular sex performs.

Gender Identity: Refers to the internal perception of one's gender; how a person labels themselves. Gender is not what is between your legs; it is between your ears. There are countless ways in which people may identify themselves.

Gender Expression: The way that someone outwardly displays their gender through style, demeanor, and social behavior.

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.

H

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

I

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 involvement, environments, and empowerment in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate with equal access to opportunities and resources embrace differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

Institutional Racism: The ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on race.

Indigenous: A person or group of people whose culture, identity, and often spirituality is rooted in a particular place.

Intercultural competence: Is the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions.

Intersectionality: Refers to the interconnected nature of identity such as race, class and gender, and the interdependent systems of power and privilege that result from the interconnectedness. For example, a heterosexual black female-identified person may experience power and privilege differently than a queer black female-identified person or a heterosexual white female-identified person. A salient quote on intersectionality is Audre Lorde's quote "There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

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



O

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.

P

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.).

People of Color: A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latinx and Native American backgrounds, as opposed to the collective “White”.

Power: Ability to control, coerce or influence people based on privilege identities. Power may be positional and provide access to social, political, and economic resources.

Power-over: Used in discriminatory and oppressive way. Having power over others and therefore domination and control over others (e.g., through coercion and violence).

Power-with: Shared with all people in struggles for liberation and equality. Using or exercising one’s power to work with others equitably, for example, in a social movement.

Prejudice: A preconceived judgement or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment and can be rooted in stereotypes, that denies the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized.

Privilege: Exclusive access or access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group. Any unearned benefit, right or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identities. The access to resources a person has, consciously or not consciously, by virtue of being part of a dominant group in society. It is the freedom from stress, anxiety, fear, or harm related to your identity

Q

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 characteristics: "A zone of possibilities."

R

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

S

Safe Space: An environment where everyone feels comfortable in expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.

Sexual Orientation: The type of attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to.

Social Construct: An idea that appears to be natural and obvious to people who accept it but may or may not represent reality.

Social Justice: A form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompass a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.

Socioeconomic status: The amount of money you earn in wages each month or year. This can change rapidly.

Stereotypes (versus Generalizations): Stereotypes refer to the widely held, oversimplified ideas we hold about a person based on their identity. Usually, stereotypes are based on assumptions, popular opinion, or misinformation, are generally negative, are sweeping and simple, and are often characterized by words such as "always" and "never." Generalizations, on the other hand, are based on observable experiences within a community, are not necessarily negative, are helpful and intended to guide people in their actions, are complex, and are often qualified by words such as "often," "sometimes," and "may."

Systemic Racism: Conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, and prejudice that impact different groups.

System of Oppression: Refers to systems of power in society that advantage certain groups over others, and include ideologies such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. (collectively "the isms").

I

Tokenism: Presence without meaningful participation. A superficial invitation to participate in a group without giving a person real opportunity to make meaningful change.

Transgender: A person whose gender identity (and sometimes expression) does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to various ways that people transgress gender norms.



U

Unconscious Bias: An implicit association, whether about people, places, or situations, which are often based on mistaken, inaccurate, or incomplete information and include the personal histories we bring to the situation.

W

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.

Workplace Inclusion: An atmosphere where all employees belong, contribute, and can thrive. Requires deliberate and intentional action.

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

Colors of Resistance. Definitions for the Revolution.

Cram, R. H. (2002). Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook.

Equity and Inclusion. Glossary. UC Davis.

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