

# UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

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## DEI MISSION STATEMENT

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Office is committed to promoting the values of inclusion throughout the SCA. This office will identify opportunities for improvement, develop trainings for Kingdom Officers, conduct a comprehensive policy review, promote accountability based on our core values, and support our existing processes to address inequitable actions including discrimination and bullying. The DEI Officer will facilitate the necessary conversations and decision-making that can lead to a more equitable and inclusive SCA.

## Notes

## Me



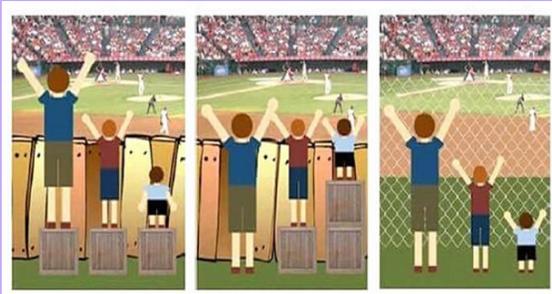
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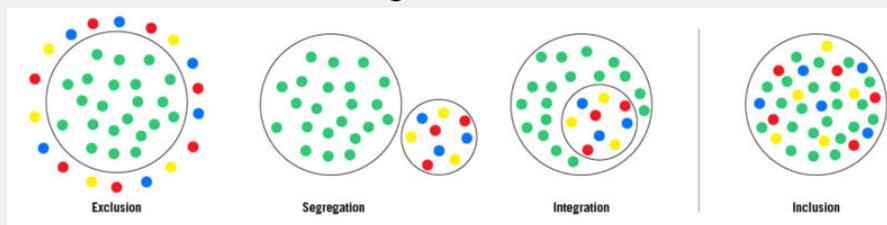
# DEFINITIONS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Put simply, **diversity** is the presence of those who belong to different social groups and have different group identities. Some social groups/group identities are things people can see easily (like race, physical disability, or assumed gender), while other social group identities are internalized and are not always easy to see (like a disability, socioeconomic status, or education level).



**Equity** is about fairness, meaning equal access to opportunities in your organization for everyone, regardless of social group.

**Inclusion** is about who you welcome and value. Inclusion speaks more to those with different identities being respected, expected, and integrated into an organization.



**Inclusive Excellence** is the recognition that the success of the SCA is dependent on how well it values, engages and includes the rich diversity in membership.

# PRIVILEGE

"Privilege, particularly white or male privilege, is hard to see for those of us who were born with access to power and resources. It is very visible for those to whom privilege was not granted. Furthermore, the subject is extremely difficult to talk about because many white people don't feel powerful or as if they have privileges others do not. It is sort of like asking fish to notice water or birds to discuss air."

- Francis E. Kendall, Ph.D., 2002

Privilege: Unearned access to resources (social power) that are only readily available to some people because of their social group membership; an advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by one societal group above and beyond the common advantage of all other groups. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it.

Social Power: Access to resources that enhance one's chances of getting what one needs in order to lead a comfortable, productive and safe life.

## UNPACKING THE INVISIBLE KNAPSACK (IN BRIEF)

Full text by Peggy McIntosh

"My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will."

- "I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented."
- "I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair."
- "I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection."



# MITIGATING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

"We naturally assign people into various social categories divided by salient and chronically accessible traits, such as age, gender, race, and role. And just as we might have implicit cognitions that help us walk and drive, we have implicit social cognitions that guide our thinking about social categories. Where do these schemas come from? They come from our experiences with other people, some of them direct (i.e., real-world encounters) but most of them vicarious (i.e., relayed to us through stories, books, movies, media, and culture).. Though our shorthand schemas of people may be helpful in some situations, they also can lead to discriminatory behaviors if we are not careful."

-Jerry Kang, *Implicit Bias, a Primer for Courts* (2009)

Also called implicit bias, unconscious bias is a mental model or shortcut that we aren't aware we have. Decades of science tells us that unconscious bias operates in our brain at a very subtle level, below our awareness or perception. These biases help us make sense of the huge amount of information that we process each day, and are based partly in human biology and partly on life lessons.

Our brains are designed to assess verbal and visual cues to create shortcuts as we assess people and their capabilities. However, if we are not vigilant, it is possible that we will allow our bias to structure our opinions on a person or group of people.

- Implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- Implicit and explicit biases are related but distinct mental constructs. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other.
- The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that favor our own ingroup, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup.
- Implicit biases are malleable. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.



Interrupt bias through:

- **AWARENESS**
- **KNOWLEDGE**
- **SKILLS**
- **ACTION**



# MICRO-AGGRESSIONS AND MICRO-INEQUITIES



In 1973 Mary Rowe working for the President and Chancellor at MIT, coined the notion of micro-inequities, which she defined as “apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator, which occur wherever people are perceived to be ‘different.’ ”

Generally speaking, a micro-inequity is a slight that demeans or marginalizes the recipient, while a micro-aggression is an act that stereotypes or denigrates the recipient. These terms are often used interchangeably, however.

The following statements have all been reported or witnessed:

*"You don't look Jewish."*

*"He is Christian, but very open-minded."*

*"It's great you don't have any accent!"*

*"Your hair is so nice, I didn't know it could be like that. I thought it was a wig."*

*"How can I help you? Oh, you're here for the SCA event?"*

*"I never would have guessed you were gay."*

*"You have a lot of energy for an old guy."*

*"If you want to research your heritage, you could portray a slave."*

Remember: unlike many other forms of discrimination, the perpetrator of a microaggression may or may not be aware of the harmful effects of their behavior. Often, the comments occur as a result of unconscious bias, or may even be intended as a compliment. We must be aware, therefore, of how our statements may be interpreted, despite our best intentions.