



AAPI or API

“Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders” or “Asian-Pacific Americans”. This label has widespread usage across educational and political contexts and was intended to cast off the derogatory “oriental” term in the 1960s. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders share a number of intersecting histories and issues. Still, it can be considered reductive or tough to relate to and unions and groups may prefer different terminology.

Ableism

Dominant attitudes in society that assume there is an ideal body and mind, leading to discriminatory behaviours toward people who differ from this norm.

Accessibility

The design, development or state of physical or digital environments, resources and services that are easy to reach, enter, use, see, etc. for all users.

Ace

Ace is an umbrella term used to describe a variation in levels of romantic and/or sexual attraction, including a lack of attraction.

Affinity bias

The tendency to connect with people who look and seem most like ourselves.

Affinity groups

A group of people who share the same interest or purpose such as gender, age, religion, race or sexual orientation.

Affirmative action

The practice / policy of favouring individuals belonging to groups known to have been discriminated against previously.

Ageism

Stereotyping and discriminating against individuals on the basis of their age.

Ally

Ally is a term used for people who support a social group other than their own, by acknowledging disadvantage and oppression, taking action on the behalf of others.

Allyship

Allyship is using your position of privilege to make a more inclusive workplace.

Asexual

Refers to a person who doesn't experience sexual attraction.

Atheism

Disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods.

Attribution error

Using a false assumption to explain someone's behaviours.

B

Behavioural diversity

Behavioural Diversity relates to personal experiences that help shape our world view to be more open-minded and accepting of others who are different than us.

Bi

An attraction towards more than one gender. Bi people may also describe themselves as bisexual, pansexual, bi-curious, queer, and other non-monosexual identities.

Bi-cultural

Bicultural identity is the condition of being oneself regarding the combination of two cultures.

Bias

Systematic patterns where our brains stray from rationality in judgment which can result in attitudes for or against a person, group or concept especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Biphobia

A person with fear of or antipathy toward bisexuals and bisexuality.

Black

A broad term for all people with ethnic origins in the African continent. Less commonly this term is used to refer to all people around the world who are not of white European descent. Note that we encourage capitalizing Black (when you're talking about race) — this is consistent with usage for other ethnic groups like Asian, Arab, Latinx. In the US, the term Black or Black American is typically preferred over African-American for two reasons: it better describes folks who are many generations removed from African ancestors and don't identify with Africa, and the term African-American has been criticized by some for being an overly politically correct alternative or even a euphemism for Black.

BME or BAME

An acronym that stands for black [and Asian] & minority ethnic. Though generally accepted, as with people of colour (see below), there's been some pushback to these terms in recent years for being too reductionist and too inclusive. By reductionist we mean it reduces the nuanced and complex experiences of an individual to an overly simplistic, broad term.

Butch

Refers to a person with an overtly/stereotypically masculine or masculine-acting woman. Often used to denote the dominant role in a lesbian relationship.

**C****Cisgender or Cis**

Refers to a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Often used by the allies, who by using this term recognize that trans people exist and matter.

Cognitive diversity

Cognitive diversity accounts for differences in our perspective and the way we process information.

Confirmation bias

Seeking out or only noticing information that reinforces our existing beliefs.

Conscious prejudice

Preconceived, usually negative, feelings towards people based solely on their group membership, like religion, race, ethnicity or age.

Corporate social responsibility

Practicing good corporate citizenship by going beyond profit maximization to make a positive impact on communities and societies.

Cover

An action where an individual intentionally downplays or omits disclosure of known stigmatized identity to fit in with the dominant culture.

Creative abrasion

A culture and a practice where ideas are productively challenged. It's about having heated, yet healthy, arguments to generate a portfolio of alternative ideas.

Culture fit

Individual attitudes, values, behaviours, and beliefs being in line with the core values and culture of an organization.

**D****Deadnaming**

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. Often associated with trans people who have changed their name.

DEI

An acronym that stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diaspora

A scattered population which originated from a different geographical area.

Disability

A physical or mental condition that limits movements, senses, activities or emotions.

Discrimination

Different from prejudice, discrimination is the behaviour or action (usually negative) against a certain individual or group based on their shared characteristics.

Diversity

Diversity refers not only to innate diversity (like race, age, gender, etc.), but also behavioural diversity like cultural fluency and cross-functional knowledge.

Dominant Culture

A cultural practice that is dominant within a particular political, social or economic entity, in which multiple cultures are present. It may refer to a language, religion/ritual, social value and/or social custom.



Emotional tax

The combination of being on guard to protect against bias, feeling different at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity, and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work.

Employee Resource Group

A largely voluntary, employee-led group that promotes a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational goals and objectives.

Equality

Treating everyone the same way while assuming that everyone starts out on equal footing with equal opportunities.

Equity

Working toward fair outcomes for people or groups by treating them in ways that address their unique barriers.

Ethnic groups

The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a shared cultural tradition.

Ethnocentrism

The tendency to believe that your own ethnic group is centrally important and measure all others using the standards and customs of your own.



Femme

Femme is a term used in LGBT community to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically feminine way.

Gay

Refers to a man who is attracted to men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality – some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. NB: though homosexual is a perfectly acceptable word, it has a medical connotation, so gay or lesbian is preferred.

Gender

Gender is a social and cultural construct of “female” and “male”. Although our sense of gender can align with our assigned sex, it goes well beyond chromosomes.

Gender dysphoria

Gender dysphoria often occurs in transgender or genderqueer people. Gender dysphoria is often used to describe when a person feels uncomfortable identifying as the gender they were born with, and feeling distress with their gender identity.

Gender expression

How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.

Gender identity

Gender identity is personal: it's how we see and define ourselves.

Gender privilege

Gender privilege usually refers to male privilege, meaning a set of privileges granted to men on the basis of their gender.

Gender reassignment

See Transitioning.

Genderqueer

Someone who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.

Groupthink

The practice of thinking or making decisions as a group in a way that discourages creativity or individual responsibility.

GSD

Acronym for Gender and Sexual Diversity.



H

Hepeating

A situation where a man appropriates or repeats a woman's comments or ideas and then is praised for them being his own.

Heterosexual privilege

'Straight' privilege and cis-gendered privilege is the receiving of advantages that are favourably granted to someone solely because of their heterosexual orientation or the gender they identify with.

Heterosexual/Straight

A person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex. Also referred to as straight.

Homophobia

A strong dislike or fear of homosexual people. See Homosexual.

Homosexual

Refers to a person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex. Also see Gay, Lesbian, Bi.



I

Inclusion

Inclusion is the result of welcoming, respecting, supporting, involving, valuing and empowering those around you equally.

Inclusive Leader

A form of leadership that intentionally welcomes and incorporates the contributions of all stakeholders within an organization to encourage teams to voice different perspectives, discuss difference of opinion, and inform the overall business strategy.

In-group bias

The tendency to respond more positively to people from our in-groups than we do to people from our outgroups.

Innate diversity

Innate Diversity is the range of differences in people like gender, age, race, physical ability and sexuality. It also includes differences in the way we think and process information.

Intersectionality

Having multiple identities that intersect like gender, race, and sexual orientation, which sometimes can offer advantages in some ways, but disadvantages in other ways.

Intersex

The term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological characteristics do not fit within traditional societal assumptions about what it means to be male or female.

Imposter Syndrome

A psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud".



L

Lesbian

Refers to a woman who is attracted to women. NB: some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Lesbophobia

The fear or dislike of someone because they are or are perceived to be a lesbian.

LGBTQ+/LGBTQI

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning (or queer), intersex + other gender variants. This is the most inclusive, all-encompassing term for the gay community, including those with non-cis gender identities.

LGBTQIA

LGBTQIA is an acronym and refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual or allied.



M

Mansplain

Mansplain is a combination of two words – “man” and “explain”. Mansplaining refers to a man explaining something to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing.

Mentor

A mentor supports and guides you in your professional world either within or outside your organization.

Microadvantages

Microadvantages are facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice and choice of words that are even more subtle than micro-affirmations, but equally as important in making a person feel appreciated and valued.

Micro affirmations

Micro affirmations are subtle acknowledgments of a person's importance and accomplishments, which creates a feeling of being valued and a sense of belonging.

Microaggression

Microaggressions are seemingly harmless but impactful everyday slights and exclusions that negatively highlight an individual's Otherness.

Multiracial, mixed heritage, dual heritage, mixed-race, mixed-ethnicity – or simply “mixed”

Terms describing a person who has parentage or ancestors from more than one ethnic and/or racial group. Some people can get confused between interracial and biracial. An individual can be described as biracial if their heritage is mixed; interracial, on the other hand, is used to describe relationships or interactions between individuals from different racial groups.



N

Neurodiverse

Neurodiversity describes the spread of neurological differences (learning and developmental difficulties, ADHD and Autism are examples).

Non-binary

Refers to a person who doesn't identify as only male or only female, or who identifies as both.



O

Oppression

A state of being subject to unjust treatment or control either at the individual level or systematic level.

Outgroup bias

The tendency to view people from outside our own group as less similar and, as a result, have negative biases against them.



P

Pan

Refers to a person who's romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.

People of colour (PoC)

An all-encompassing term for non-white people.

Prejudice

Refers to the (conscious or unconscious, positive or negative) attitudes and feelings one has towards an individual or group of individuals based on certain traits.

Privilege

One or a set of unearned benefits given to people owing to their membership in a specific social group relating to aspects of their identity. Those aspects can include race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and religion, as well as privilege related to wealth and class.

Pronoun

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation – for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender-neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety, term coined and defined by Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, is a belief that you will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.



Q

Queer

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it.



R

Racism

Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.



S

Sex

Sex is the biological category (female or male) given at birth based on physical characteristics, i.e. chromosomes and genitalia.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is interpersonal: it's who we're romantically, emotionally, and/or physically attracted to.

Socioeconomic privilege

One or a set of advantages held by a person or group owing to their experience and their individual or family's social and economic status.

Sponsor

A sponsor is a powerful internal advocate who looks after your interests, helps connects you to leaders and special projects, and amplifies your amazing work to other senior people in your business.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are cognitive representations of how members of a group are similar to one another and different from other groups. Importantly, people can be aware of the stereotypes they hold.

Stereotype threat

A situational predicament in which people are or feel themselves to be at risk of conforming to stereotypes about their social group.

Straight

Refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to someone of the opposite sex.



T

Trans or transgender

Refers to a person whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may also describe themselves as gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, two-spirit, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois. NB: some people use the term transsexual, which is old medical terminology but trans or transgender is typically preferred.

Transitioning

The steps a trans person takes to live in the gender with which they identify. For some it could involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

Transphobia

The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.

Transsexual

This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.



U

Unconscious bias

Deep-seated assumptions we make about people who are different than us without even realizing it – usually called implicit bias or unconscious bias.

Underrepresented groups

Refers to a group whose members are disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group, and who may regard themselves as recipients of collective discrimination.



W

White privilege

The unquestioned and unearned set of advantages and benefits bestowed on people solely because they are white. Often people with this privilege can be unaware of it as these privileges are perpetuated systemically across institutions including in the law, work, medicine, and more.

White supremacy

White supremacy or white supremacism is the racist belief that white people are superior to people of other races and therefore should be dominant over them.

Workplace inclusion

An atmosphere where all employees belong, contribute and can thrive. It requires deliberate and intentional action.



X

Xenophobia

Dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries.



Z

Zero sum game

The idea that if one person gains something, another person loses something. When doing D&I work, sometimes dominant groups believe that an organization helps make underrepresented groups feel more included, they lose power, influence, and clout.



REFERENCES



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