

Clear communication helps avoid misunderstandings, while being respectful creates an environment where everyone feels valued.

Video Course Session 11

Effective Communication on DEI Topics

When we grasp these concepts, we're better equipped to promote fairness, respect and understanding in all our interactions.

Objectives

- Definitions/Terms
 - Foundational
 - Bias
 - Race and Ethnicity
 - Gender Identity
 - Disability
- Commonly used Terms

Foundational Terms

Diversity-Diversity is about embracing our differences, whether it's race, gender, age, or background.

Equality-Equality means everyone gets the same treatment and opportunities, no matter what.

Equity-Equity, though, goes deeper. It's about recognizing that not everyone starts from the same place and giving people what they need to reach the same goals.

- Distinction Between Equity and Equality
 - Equality is like giving everyone the same-size shoes, regardless of their needs.
 - But equity? It's about giving everyone the shoes that fit them best, so they can walk comfortably and reach their full potential.

Inclusion-it's about creating an environment where everyone feels valued and respected, where all voices are heard and included.

- Inclusion, equity, and equality—they're all part of building a fair and welcoming space where everyone can thrive."

Bias Terms

Bias-Bias is when our brains make quick judgments or preferences about people or situations without us even realizing it.

- **Conscious Bias**-Conscious bias is when we're aware of our biases—like preferring one person over another because of their background or appearance.
- **Unconscious Bias**-Unconscious bias, though, is sneakier. It's when our brains make snap judgments without us even knowing, based on stereotypes or past experiences. Understanding these differences helps us become more aware of our own biases and how they can influence our decisions and interactions.

Microaggressions-They're those little digs or slights—whether intentional or not—that can really sting.

- It's like when someone makes a comment that seems harmless on the surface but carries a deeper, hurtful meaning.
For example, asking a person of color where they're 'really' from, implying they don't belong.
- Microaggressions chip away at a person's sense of belonging and worth, leaving them feeling misunderstood, marginalized, and even invisible. Over time, they can erode trust and create divides within communities. It's like a thousand paper cuts—each one might not seem like much on its own, but together, they can really hurt.

Race and Ethnicity Terms

Antiracism-It's all about actively opposing racism and promoting racial equity.

BIPOC-Which stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, encompassing marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

Ethnicity-Refers to cultural and linguistic traits shared by a particular social group.

Understanding these terms helps us navigate discussions about race and ethnicity with clarity and sensitivity.

People of Color (POC)-Is a term used primarily in the United States to describe individuals who are not White.

Prejudice-Is when we form negative beliefs or attitudes about someone without any real basis.

Race-refers to a set of physical traits that categorize people into different social groups.

Understanding these terms helps us navigate conversations about race and prejudice with clarity and empathy.

Racism-Racism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that oppress people of color and benefit the dominant group.

Racial Equity-Racial equity is when resources and opportunities are distributed fairly, regardless of race.

Social Justice-Creating a society where everyone has equal access to resources and opportunities.

Understanding these terms helps us recognize and address the inequalities and injustices that exist in our world

Systemic Racism-refers to the ways in which racism is ingrained in the structures and institutions of society, leading to disparities in opportunities and outcomes based on race.

Undocumented-refers to a person living in a country without legal citizenship status.

Understanding these terms helps us grasp the complexities of racism and immigration issues and work towards creating a more just and inclusive society for all.

Gender Identity Terms

Cisgender-Refers to individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gay-Refers to a person who is attracted to people of the same sex, often used to describe men attracted to other men.

Gender-Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for individuals based on their sex.

Understanding these terms helps us navigate discussions about gender identity and sexual orientation with clarity and respect.

Gender Identity-Refers to a person's internal sense of their own gender, which may be male, female, a blend of both, or neither.

Heteronormativity-Is the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm or default sexual orientation, marginalizing other orientations.

Lesbian-Refers to a woman who is romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

Understanding these terms helps us navigate discussions about gender identity and sexual orientation with sensitivity and respect.

Gender Bias-Refers to behaviors that favor one gender over another, often based on societal stereotypes or norms. It's when we make assumptions or treat people differently because of their gender.

Gender Expression-On the other hand, is how someone outwardly presents their gender to the world through their clothing, hairstyle, behavior, or other characteristics.

Understanding these terms helps us recognize and challenge biases and create more inclusive environments where everyone can express their gender freely.

LGBTQ+ Is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning individuals. It's used as an inclusive term to represent diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

LGBTQIA-is an extension of this acronym, adding Intersex and Asexual and/or Ally to the list of identities represented.

Understanding these terms helps us recognize and affirm the diversity of experiences within the LGBTQ+ community.

Misgendering is the act of referring to someone using language (such as pronouns or terms) that does not align with their gender identity. This often occurs when someone is referred to using the incorrect pronouns (e.g., referring to a transgender woman as "he" instead of "she") or when they are addressed by a gendered term (e.g., calling a nonbinary person "sir" or "ma'am" when they do not use those terms).

Non-binary refers to individuals whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female.

Pronouns are the words used to refer to someone in place of their name, such as 'he/him,' 'she/her,' or 'they/them.'

Queer is an inclusive term used to describe diverse sexual orientations and gender identities that are not exclusively heterosexual or cisgender.

Understanding these terms helps us respect and affirm people's gender identities and use language that reflects their identity accurately."

Sex Assigned at Birth-Refers to the designation of a person as male, female, or intersex based on physical characteristics such as genitalia, chromosomes, and reproductive organs.

Sexual Orientation-The pattern of romantic, emotional, or sexual attraction to others based on their gender.

Transgender-Is a umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Two-spirit- Is a contemporary umbrella term used by some Indigenous peoples in North America to describe individuals who embody both masculine and feminine qualities or who fulfill distinct gender roles within their communities.

Disability Terms

Disability-Disability refers to a physical or mental impairment that may limit a person's ability to perform certain tasks or activities.

Neurodiversity-On the other hand, recognizes and celebrates the natural variation in human brain function and behavior. It encompasses conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and others.

Understanding these terms helps us acknowledge the diversity of human experience and support individuals with differing abilities.

Commonly Used DEI Terms in Disaster Behavioral Health

Cultural Competency-Cultural competency is the ability to interact effectively and respectfully with people from different cultural backgrounds, acknowledging and valuing their unique perspectives and experiences.

Environmental Justice-is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or income, in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws and policies. Understanding these terms helps us navigate diverse cultural contexts and advocate for equitable environmental practices.

Environmental Racism-refers to the disproportionate exposure of minority and marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, to environmental hazards, pollution, and other detrimental environmental factors. This can include siting of hazardous waste facilities, industrial pollution, and lack of access to clean air and water in these communities due to systemic discrimination and unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens.

Intersectionality-a concept introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, highlights the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, and sexuality, and how they overlap and intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. In the context of environmental justice, intersectionality recognizes that individuals and communities may face multiple forms of oppression simultaneously, leading to compounded vulnerabilities and unequal access to environmental resources and protections.

Underserved-refers to individuals or communities that lack access to essential resources or services, often due to economic, social, or geographical factors. This term is commonly used in contexts such as healthcare, education, and social services to describe populations with unmet needs or limited access to support.

Underrepresented-refers to groups or individuals who are inadequately represented or reflected in a particular context, such as a profession, organization, or decision-making body. This lack of representation can stem from various factors, including historical exclusion, systemic biases, and unequal opportunities for participation.

“DEI language is always evolving, just like our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's important to recognize that what's considered appropriate language today might change tomorrow. That's why we need to stay open-minded and keep learning and adapting as we go. Embracing this dynamic nature ensures that our communication remains relevant and respectful to everyone.”

Continue learning and incorporating DEI principles
into your work and interactions.

Sources

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-planners/diversity-equity-inclusion/key-dei-terms>

Session x—Review Questions – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

1. What is the difference between equity and equality?
2. What are microaggressions?
3. Why is it important to accommodate diverse abilities and learning styles?
4. What are some barriers that underserved populations face?