KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES
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THE WELCOMING WORKPLACE

INTEGRATING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION INTO WORKSPACES

WELCOME

This toolkit has been designed to provide the resources to discuss equity, diversity, and inclusion, what they mean and why they are necessary inside the work environment. This toolkit aims to dismantle stigmas, explain biases, and generate safe spaces for experiential learning opportunities for Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) and non-IBPOC community members. The toolkit encourages creative engagement between all members of any given work environment, and hopefully, it will increase the representation of diverse role models. The resources used to create this toolkit have been carefully selected to try and help those interested in developing equitable learning environments that foster personal growth and improving relationships. The resources will be presented in a way that's accessible, entertaining, interactive, and non-threatening; they are not intended as a substitute for hiring an EDI consultant or to developing diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism policies, but rather as an introductory and inspiring way to get oriented to fundamental principles.

This toolkit is not intended to be a one-time training piece; anyone is not expected to become a professional on the topics shared after finishing the overall content.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Kamloops Immigrant Services would like to acknowledge that the geographical scope of this toolkit was made within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Secwepemc Nation, Nlaka'pamux Nation, and Syilx tmixʷ (Okanagan) Nation.

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MODULE I

CORE DEFINITIONS

When defining terms within the framework of what we know as "EDI" (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion), we must understand that the words will be defined through different scopes, but they shall maintain a core definition. EDI fails to include the term Accessibility in its title. This toolkit aims to provide an introductory piece into what accessibility is and how it fits within the EDI framework for work environments.
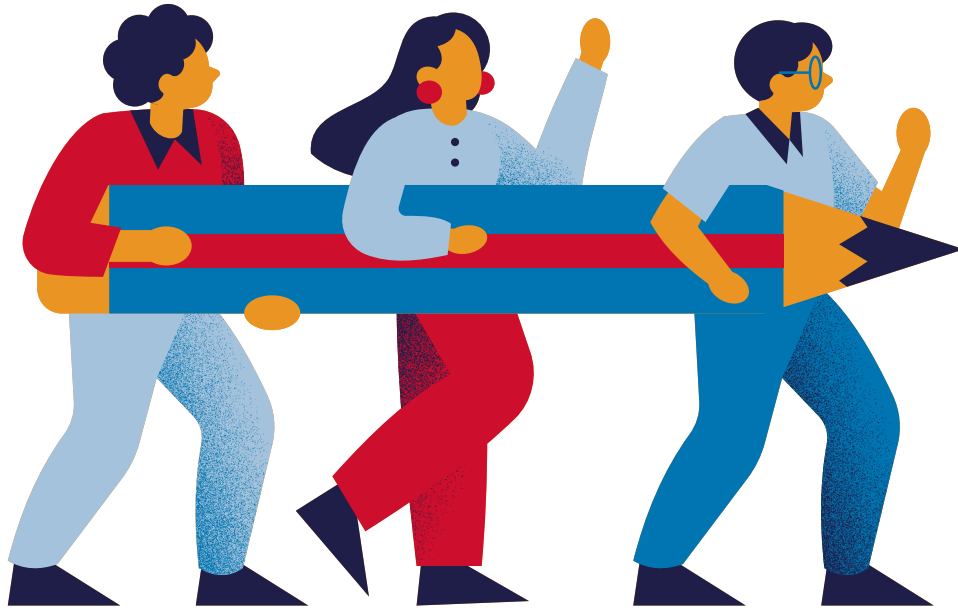
EQUITY

Equity can be defined as a core value that aims to provide exact and equal opportunities based on the needs required to achieve an objective in each environment to a group of people that might've been undeserved, marginalized, and underrepresented historically and continues to be. It is the starting point when trying to remove barriers within a given work environment. [1]

CONTEXT

In any work environment, equity is achieved by observing the power, access, opportunities, approaches, outcomes, and overall impacts on the employees' mental and physical areas. Once marked, the creation of opportunities that give employees a chance to practice a task with no need to overcompensate for racial, ethnic, or physical abilities and understanding that each employee has a unique journey with or without being part of a historically underserved marginalized and underrepresented ethnic group or community. [2]

QUICK NOTE

Equity should not be an excuse to push back or delay the progressive development of diverse work environments. Equity differs from equality. Equity assesses the differences in each employee and tries to provide each with the resources needed to complete an objective. Equality offers the same resources and opportunities to each employee despite any challenges they might have. [5]

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to the differences that are part of any given person or community. Variety can be seen through race, age, nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, physical and mental abilities, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic status. **1** **2** **3**

CONTEXT

Diversity in a work environment tries to highlight all the differences that make each employee unique. One can say that there could be two kinds of diversity within any given work environment, one that focuses on underserved, underrepresented and marginalized communities and the second category that looks at the diverse skills and experiences (either empirical or academic based) each employee has and how they contribute to each work cohort. This toolkit will focus mainly on the first category, given that it is usually the one most employers or work environments need more ability to understand and develop. **1** **2** **3**

QUICK NOTE

A common misconception is that with the development and promotion of diversity, inclusivity is attached to it. It is very common for diversity to exist while inequity and exclusiveness continue to be prevalent.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is seen as a wide variety of practices, actions, rules, or norms that promotes, embrace, and encourage the participation of underserved, underrepresented, marginalized communities and those from visible majorities. Inclusion tries to provide a sense of belonging to those members from historically underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized communities. Overall, an inclusive environment shall offer anyone a welcoming, safe, dignified, and fair space. [1] [4]

CONTEXT

A work environment that provides its employees with the opportunities to feel part of a more extensive community, despite their differences, is one to be called inclusive. It is an oversimplification; however, it is necessary to mention that no single path will lead to an inclusive environment. In an inclusive environment, you want employees to feel respected, confident, and valued and feel they can thrive in any way that suits them best. Usually, inclusive spaces provide a better satisfaction rate from employees and customers. [1] [3] [4]

MODULE 2

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

This toolkit has adapted two styles of self-assessment tools for your organization to utilize. The first assessment tool has a personal approach, it is expected for managers, coordinators, and/or employers themselves to go through each statement and answer them as accurate as they can. The second assessment tool is aimed at being used as a team. Either you include managers only or have employees and management do this together; you can decide how the tool is utilized.

1 Personal Self-Assessment Tool

Instructions:

This self-assessment tool is designed to help you evaluate your organization's current EDI awareness and practice level. Please rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means strongly disagree, and 10 means strongly agree. After completing the assessment, review your scores and identify areas of strength and improvement.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

STATEMENT	1 - 10
Our organization has a written EDI policy communicated to all employees and stakeholders.	
Our recruitment and hiring practices ensure diversity in our workforce.	
Our organization provides ongoing training and education on EDI topics for all employees.	
We actively seek out and engage with diverse communities and perspectives.	
Our policies and practices are inclusive of all individuals, regardless of their identity or background.	
Our organization clearly plans to advance EDI in our workplace and the broader community.	
We regularly evaluate and monitor our practices to ensure they align with EDI principles.	
We have established partnerships and collaborations with organizations that prioritize EDI.	
We have a formal process for addressing and resolving complaints related to discrimination, harassment, or exclusion.	
We regularly collect and analyze data on our EDI practices to identify areas for improvement.	

Assessment tool adapted from: the RP group.

Scoring:

Add your scores for each question and divide by 10 to get your average score.

Interpreting Your Scores:

1-4: Your organization may focus less on EDI practices and may need to take action to increase awareness and implementation.

 5-8: Your organization has some awareness and implementation of EDI practices, but there may be room for improvement.

 9-10: Your organization is committed to EDI practices and has strong awareness and implementation.

2 TEAM-BASED SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Instructions:

For the guiding questions under each framework component in the detailed assessment, reflect on and document the current standing/progress, any planned next steps (with timelines), and resources needed for the effort being assessed.

Once the guiding questions are answered, discuss among team members where the program, process, practice, or policy stands in relation to the Equity Framework for advancing equity and collectively answer the final question about the team's overall assessment of the program, process, practice, or policy.

Enter the items from the self-assessment under the Next steps or areas of focus and Support and resources needed in the action plan. Add information on the timeline and person/group(s) responsible.

Assessment tool adapted from: the RP group.

Equity-Minded is a perspective or lens underpinning the operations of the organization that centers on recognizing and redressing systems of oppression in its policies, practices, and actions. This area is about self-reflection, examining and prioritizing who is/has been most directly impacted.

Component and Guided Questions	Current standing/progress	Next steps and/or supports
Try to consider and prioritize groups that have been historically marginalized.	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:
Address or redress past or current practices, processes, and systems that produced inequities.	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:
What would contribute to a culture enabling growth and improvements focused on equity?	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:
Use language, process, or practice open and welcoming to all groups.	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:

Adapted from uOttowa.

Cultural Humility is the ability to reflect critically upon and acknowledge our own biases, perspectives, shortcomings, and limitations of our expertise as part of the process of learning and building the capacity to improve our community and the communities we serve, honouring the work, voice, and perspectives of those who have an experience with our institutions.

Identify our biases, perspectives, positionality, shortcomings, limitations, and how they influence practice.	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:
Incorporate multiple voices and perspectives into practice (e.g., processes, products), including those outside the area of expertise or historically marginalized groups.	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:

Adapted from uOttowa.

Distributive Leadership (DL) is an equity-minded approach to leadership. DL is a collective commitment to lead and implement change, unified by a shared vision. It welcomes a variety of perspectives and leadership potential. It is not limited to one person or position, ensuring those impacted by implementing the vision are valued, included, and empowered to enforce change within their roles.

Provide opportunities to engage new individuals who may have access to resources and serve as a subject matter expert to help advance the work?	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:
Empower all those involved to lead/implement change?	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:
Include ample opportunities for deliberating and implementing a unified vision?	Success and progress:	Next steps or areas of focus:
	Challenges and barriers:	Support and resources needed:

MODULE 3

EDI IMPLEMENTATION

As explained before, equity aims to provide opportunities in each environment to a group of historically undeserved, marginalized, and underrepresented people, including those from visible majorities.**15** However, on average, work spaces are embracing the idea of equality, or the ability to provide the same resources and opportunities to all employees. Although this is a step in the right direction, there is a need to highlight equitable work spaces and what they should look like. Implementing equity inside work environments is about understanding how can actions taken by an employer can exclude or discriminate against workers or job applicants.**7** Ultimately, we should be able to encounter welcoming environments that allow employees to participate and engage in their daily duties without the fear of being treated differently. **7**

Highlighting the equity

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Highlighting the importance of equity is necessary. Promoting equitable work spaces, allowing members of different communities from either visible or invisible minorities to be part of the labour market, helps dismantle those barriers that were historically attached to them. **7**

Throughout the toolkit, we will discuss three specific areas for any company that should be shaped to fit some of the most basic EDI values. Recruitment, Retention, and Accommodation must be observed and modified to provide members of either visible or invisible communities a fair, safe, and fulfilling experience. Each area will bring some recommendations that are considered necessary and should be adapted to each work environment as needed.

In a recent release, the BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner discusses equity within workspaces.**8** Their documents highlight some key factors that encourage the construction or reinforcement of equitable environments. It is also necessary to highlight that the following recommendations could be used as alternating points for each work environment's journey.

INNOVATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

EQUITABLE SPACES GENERATE NEW PERSPECTIVES

Equitable spaces generate new perspectives or open their doors to previously excluded ideas. New or excluded ideas can allow the company to adapt and redevelop stagnant policies. It also allows the company to make well-informed long-term decisions that will influence the longevity of the company's public reputation. **9**

STAFF CAN BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE

Staff can become more productive and influence others in the same work environment to improve their overall sense of community and productivity. Research shows that work environments that try to improve their spaces through equitable and diverse bound policies tend to have higher annual revenues than those with little to no diversity and equitable policies. **10**

STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO INCREASED INNOVATION

Fair employment practices, participative leadership, top management support for equity, and open and accessible communication practices. These are just some examples of the different structural changes employers could make at the start of their journey. Companies were found to have better performance and increased innovation when these changes were already in place during their annual evaluations. **10**

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES TO REDUCE STRESS LEVELS

Alternative work schedules can be a great way to attract diverse talent and boost the sense of an equitable environment. More recent trends have brought the idea of flexible work schedules to try and lower stress levels. However, this change has also shown improvement in staff retention over time. It is also necessary to mention that most managers see alternative work schedules as a reward for some staff who perform better than average. A great way to implement it is through inclusive planning sessions that could develop a sense of respect, appreciation, and open communication channels. **11**

RACIAL EQUITY IMPROVES THE OVERALL FEELING OF FAIRNESS AND SAFETY

Racial equity aims to provide the resources needed to eradicate racial disparities. Racial equity is a major essential component of embracing the continuous practices of developing and changing policies, procedures, and systems that could target members of the IBPOC community. Racial equity will also improve the overall feeling of fairness and safety, which could enhance the staff's diverse talent. **12**

THREE KEY AREAS TO THINK ABOUT:

RECRUITING:

Recruiting is the start of any employee's journey into the company. Some considerations can go towards understanding if the recruiting process, through job postings and interview settings, can accommodate people from different ethnic groups, races, visible and invisible abilities, and other diverse features. Remember that building a stable, diverse work environment will feed into the development of better equitable policies.

- You can find more information about better practices to improve the hiring process at IRCC's Employer's Roadmap.

RETENTION

Once an employee has been considered for a job position, the employer must focus on retention. This will look different depending on each company's economic situation and job flexibility. Salary and flexible schedules are some of the best ways to guarantee employee satisfaction. Other solutions can include opening communication channels and improving leadership relationships.

- You can find more information about better practices to improve retention at IRCC's Employer's Roadmap.

ACCOMODATIONS

Most companies have developed policies that apply to all employees equally. Policies written in neutral wording often promote equality but cannot support equitable responses to employees requiring different accommodations. Approaching an employee that could need accommodations requires empathy and an open communications channel. Not only will that ensure that the employee feels safe and respected, but it could help develop a better relationship between employer and employee. Modifying furniture, architecture, job responsibilities, job policies, and schedules are some examples of accommodations that each employee should be able to access.

- You can find more information about better practices to implement and develop employee accommodations in the Employment Equity toolkit.

MODULE 4

DIVERSITY – DIVERSIFYING TALENT

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to the differences that are part of any given person or community. Diversity can be seen through race, age, nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, physical and mental abilities, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic status.[1] [2] [3] Diversity is a primary contributing factor to innovation and performance improvement at a company.[10]

CONTEXT

Something worth mentioning is that diversity is closely tied to discrimination and usually lacks inclusion. Even if the work environment had an above-average percentage of diverse talent, bias toward visible and invisible minorities can still occur. Given that incidents of discrimination can lead to difficulty maintaining normal levels of diversity, some resources have been made available in this section to provide examples of successful diverse environments that tackle discrimination.[3]

QUICK NOTE

Millennials and Gen Z generations are thought to be the most diverse in recent history, according to a report found in CNN Money.

RESOURCES

1 [Women in tech](#)

2 [Age and gender discrimination](#)

3 [Talent with non-traditional experience](#)

4 [Unconscious bias in the hiring process](#)

Did you know?

The 2021 Canada Census report shows that immigrants represent approximately 10% of the total population in Kamloops and the Thompson Nicola Regional District. Increased immigration to smaller and semi-rural communities has increased and is expected to increase exponentially in the coming years.

A 2015 Statistics Canada study on "International students who become permanent residents in Canada" reports that 25% of international students transition to permanent residence status. IRCC data said there were 5,310 study permit holders in Kamloops in 2018. This is a 248% increase since 2015, representing a significant potential source of additional immigration to our area.

NOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT
DIVERSITY CONTINUES TO CHANGE
THE WAY OUR COMMUNITIES THRIVE

IT IS TIME TO FIND WAYS TO EMBRACE
THOSE CHANGES AT WORK; THIS IS WHAT
THAT COULD LOOK LIKE:

GOALS: MEASURE THEM, CREATE THEM, AND GAIN FEEDBACK.

Data is key. It is necessary to create policies and goals that can be assessed at the start and throughout a detailed timeline. Having reasonable, concrete, and well-informed goals, you can create work plans that will give you the feedback needed to improve even more.[13]

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): KPIs are measurable targets that align with organizational goals and objectives. They provide a quantitative way to track progress and performance.

- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) Goals: SMART goals are a widely used framework for setting and measuring goals in a work environment.

OPEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS: THE BEST FRIEND OF FEEDBACK

Everyone communicates. Not everyone is open to communicating effectively. And very few people stop to listen and act upon what they receive. Once you have developed well-informed goals, you must also plan how staff will expect to give you feedback. The feedback you receive will help you learn and understand the path each employee follows. **13**

- Encourage Feedback and Open Dialogue: Foster a culture of continuous feedback and open dialogue where employees are encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns.

- Provide Training and Development: Offer training and development programs to enhance employees' communication skills, including active listening, empathy, conflict resolution, and assertiveness.

DIVERSITY GOALS REQUIRE A TEAM EFFORT

Reaching diversity goals isn't just a job the boss has to accomplish; it involves everyone. Everyone must be accountable and ready to hear things that will challenge their beliefs or values.[13]
Learning about personal biases in a work environment is crucial for creating an inclusive and diverse workplace where all employees are treated with respect and fairness. We provide you with some resources on this later in the module.

LEARN YOUR BIASES

Learning about biases, specifically "unconscious bias," can be very sensitive and personal. Each and every one of us has some unconscious bias. However, only a few can recognize them and work towards eradicating them as much as possible. Unconscious bias is often seen as prejudice or judgement towards a person to favour or negatively impact them. Usually, the most common unconscious biases are socioeconomic factors, sexual identity, gender, personality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, visible disabilities, invisible disabilities, age, and many more. [1415]

Want to learn about it?
You can certify yourself with the FREE Unconscious Bias Training by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)

SOME EXTRA IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT:

01 Food is a great way to introduce others to new cultures. Have a monthly dish rotation and encourage underrepresented groups to participate.

02 Find alternative ways to celebrate holidays and events from underrepresented groups. Make sure to include everyone in the planning process. **14**

03 Make sure everyone is aware of and understands the EDI policies.

04 Involve other diverse community members in the company's internal diversity-related events. A great way to do this is to bring a public speaker and discuss EDI from different perspectives. **14**

05 Encourage staff participation in public events that foster diverse and inclusive environments. **14**

06 Movie nights, book clubs, or other team-building exercises can help create stronger bonds between staff. **14**

MODULE 5

INCLUSION – THE KEY TO DIVERSITY

INCLUSION

As you learn in the last module, diversity refers to the differences that are part of any given person or community. However, a diverse environment does not mean that it is inclusive. It is a common misconception that employees will immediately feel included when they enter a diverse space. What does inclusion look like, then? Inclusion is often seen as the practice of providing all the opportunities and resources to marginalized and often underrepresented groups with a sense of belonging.

A Harvard Business review states that developing, implementing and gathering data around workplace inclusivity is relatively tricky. **16** Not only can these topics be considered hard to explain and understand, but also it is hard to measure how "inclusive" any workplace is due to the subjectivity of the answer. A sense of community or belonging is a personal feeling that derives from the collective values and goals set by those in leadership positions.

Diversity is not a goal but an inclusive environment's outcome. Just hiring new diverse talent will not solve the lack of diversity in a company. Remember that once you have created reasonable and measurable goals and implemented open and safe communication channels, you will waste resources once you hire diverse talent. They leave because they don't feel included or welcomed. This is a crucial section; retention of diverse talent is the goal, and one innovative way to do this is through storytelling and collective bonding. Often, employees get introduced into a job environment, but some time passes, and they never truly get to know their co-workers. 13

"The key to employee retention is not about having the most diverse environment, but one that's inclusive and provides a sense of security." Harvard Business Review

TRENDING INCLUSIVE IDEAS

01 **Develop diversity briefings.**

Each month or each major holiday or cultural event occurs, have employees explain the importance of a given event. This helps with cultural and historical understanding and could also foster stronger interpersonal relationships.

02 **Happy Lunch Hour.**

Lunch hours can be a great space and time for staff to build a stronger sense of community. Board games, cultural games, video games, and storytelling circles are some examples of collective experiences.

03 **The privilege walk**

For larger groups or very diverse staff, the privilege walk is a great way to raise awareness of what privilege looks like and how others perceive it. **17**

04 **Build an optimal inclusion policy.**

This one might sound redundant, but ensuring you don't under-include members in essential meetings is a concern to always have in mind. But also, ensure you're not over-including staff in meetings and having them waste time while they could be doing their own tasks. The easiest way to ensure this is avoided as much as possible is to educate leaders and managers to assess the needs of each meeting and who is genuinely required to participate.

Did you know?

83% of millennials are actively engaged at work when they believe their organization's culture is inclusive. (Deloitte)

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- [Harvard Implicit Association Tests](#)

- [The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resource Guide by the Society for Human Resource Management](#)

- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources by the United Nations](#)

- [Inclusive Design Toolkit by the University of Cambridge](#)

- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit by the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#)

- [The Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) by the Government of Canada](#)

SOME PODCASTS TO LISTEN

- Diverse Minds by the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion

- All-In by the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship

- Mindful Inclusion by the Mental Health Commission of Canada

- Black Tea by The Onyx Initiative

- Unapologetically Asian by the Toronto Star

RESOURCES

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