DEI Working Vocabulary

DIVERSITY

Refers to the wide range of identities. This includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, industry sector, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, physical ability, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives & values. An organization is considered diverse when it not only mirrors the society in which it operates but when its inclusion efforts also address the causes of disparities.

EQUITY

The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. In practice, it ensures everyone is given equal opportunity to thrive. This means that resources may be divided and shared unequally to make sure that each person can access an opportunity. Equity is therefore not the same thing as equality. Equity seeks to balance disparities.

INCLUSION

The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. Inclusion is not merely tolerating or accommodating differences. It's about actively valuing and honoring differences.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us.

SYSTEMIC RACISM

Refers to the complex interactions of large scale societal systems, practices, ideologies, and programs that produce and perpetuate inequities for racial minorities. By understanding why, how, and what of systemic racism, our organizations can begin to reinforce systems change.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. Through an increasing awareness of unconscious bias, individuals can marry one's way of thinking with their conscious values.

DEI Working Vocabulary

Board DEI Policy

Sample Board Diversity Policy by Lena Eisenstein, September 16, 2020; BoardEffect

_____ (name of nonprofit organization) is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment where all board members, staff, volunteers and donors feel respected and valued regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability, education, socio-economic status, or any other identity label.

- We're committed to being nondiscriminatory, and providing equal opportunities for employment, volunteering, and advancement in all areas of our organizational life.
- We're committed to modeling diversity, inclusion, and equity and maintaining fair and equal treatment for all.
- We respect the value that diverse life experiences bring to our board and leadership and we strive to listen to their views.

Board DEI Statement

Sample Board DEI Statement, December 20, 2021; Board Development Systems

Board Development Systems, dba, BoardBuild is committed to acknowledging and valuing the uniqueness of every stakeholder and to creating an environment in which all individuals' strengths and abilities are included, developed and valued. All stakeholders share in the responsibility for creating this environment and are expected to demonstrate mutual respect and acceptance. We believe that by respecting individuality we will enhance communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills, thereby improving overall organizational productivity and performance. We also believe if our directors, officers and employees mirror the diverse make-up of our community, we will be able to better understand, and more effectively respond to, community needs. We strive for excellence in our ability to create an inclusive, respectful, considerate and equitable environment for all through leadership, policies, and practices.

Areas of the business that are positively impacted by board diversity:

PROFITABILITY

There is a strong business case for both gender diversity and ethnic and cultural diversity in leadership. According to McKinsey & Company, the most diverse companies are now more likely than ever to outperform and ultimately drive more profit than their less diverse peers. In fact, the top quartile of ethnic and culturally diverse companies are 33% more likely to outperform on EBIT margin with inclusive workplaces outperforming S&P 500 stock performance by four times. The research shows that diverse populations aren't the only ones who benefit from diversity and inclusion; every 1% increase in gender and ethnic diversity yields a respective 3% and 9% increase in sales revenue.

RESILIENCE

The social sector is facing extraordinary levels of change at an accelerating pace. Responding to rapid external change in a period of disruption can be challenging for the most experienced leaders, but when executed well, adapting and implementing organizational transformation can be a catalyst for future growth. A board reflective of diverse skill sets will have the tools and vision to adapt to rapid change. Now is the time to develop strategies that address systemic inequities, build resilience into our systems, and embrace change management.

INNOVATION

Simply put, a diverse and inclusive team creates more innovative ideas and solutions. The more diverse teams are, the more likely they are to draw inspiration from different life experiences and environments. Nonprofits need creative and innovative ideas that can only come from a diverse group of individuals who are committed to organizations' missions and are prepared to lead. Diverse life experiences and viewpoints among board members positively impact organizational performance and the ability to adapt, with problem-solving, innovation, creativity, recruitment potential, and financial strength all elevating as a result.

Key questions to explore in developing your business case:

1 *What strategic leadership is needed to advance DEI?*

Governance is about providing strategic leadership to a nonprofit and includes the functions of setting direction, making policy, strategy decisions, overseeing and monitoring organizational performance, and ensuring overall accountability.

2 *What governance policies are needed to advance DEI?*

Governing boards are responsible for setting policy for management, assigning oversight of the policy to Board Committees and delegating the responsibility for implementation of the policy to an Executive Director.

(3) Does your board reflect the full diversity of the communities?

Remember diversity refers to the wide range of identities including race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives & values. This question entails not only the current board make-up but the pipeline also.

(4) Does your board welcome and engage diverse members?

Board diversity is more than optics or the appearance of diversity. The value and efforts of inclusion is what connects diverse board members with the communities and interests they represent. An inclusive board culture welcomes and celebrates differences and ensures that all board members are equally engaged and equitably invested, sharing power and responsibility for the organization's mission and the board's work.
Leadership in all sectors, reflective of varied life experiences and of the community they represent, can better identify resources, establish collaborative partnerships, and optimally advocate for their respective mission.

Quantitative Assessment

Sample quantitative assessment questions by DEI Consultants

At the beginning of your survey, inform participants that the survey is anonymous, meaning you will not share the identity of those responding and will only share the results you capture.

DEMOGRAPHIC
Initial survey questions should include questions to capture demographic data, such as:
- Gender Identity
- Preferred pronouns
- Age
- Race and Ethnicity
- Employment status (part time vs full time or contract labor)
- Time with organization
- Highest level of education
- Whether they are caregivers (to parents or children)
- Living with a disability
- English as their first language

Quantitative Assessment
Sample quantitative assessment questions by DEI Consultants

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Gather quantitative data using a 1 to 10 scale, with 1 being of very little importance and 10 being very important. For example:
- How important is diversity for your nonprofit?
- How knowledgeable are you of practices that promote and support diversity at your nonprofit?
- How motivated are you to learn/increase skills in promoting and supporting diversity in your nonprofit?

You can also ask questions with yes/no/unsure answer options. For example:
- Have you ever participated in a diversity awareness program before?
- Has the Board created diversity initiatives that have been shared throughout the organization?

Qualitative Assessment
Sample qualitative assessment questions by DEI Consultants

At the beginning of your survey, inform participants that the survey is anonymous, meaning you will not share the identity of those responding and will only share the results you capture.

Use questions with the following options: Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

- People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected, valued and treated fairly on the Board.
- I am comfortable talking about my background and lived experiences with other Board members.
- Board members feel comfortable with the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs.
- My lived experiences are acknowledged and valued when shared with the Board.
- Leadership is responsive to addressing concerns about Board member interactions.
- Our Board is committed to, and supports, diversity, equity and inclusion.
- I feel our staff leadership is prepared to effectively manage a culturally diverse nonprofit community.
- My perspectives are respected and considered in the Board decision-making process.
- The Board Chair encourages those with different ideas and opinions to speak up.
- On the Board/Committee, we are able to have discussions on difficult/uncomfortable topics.

Ground Rules

Common ground rules can include:

- We listen and we are present as fully as possible. Suspend the temptation to rehearse what you will say and listen to the speaker. Put your cell phone aside. Resist the urge to text and respond to emails while in a board meeting.
- We speak our truth in ways that respect other people's truth: Our views of reality may be different. Refrain from interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak using "I" statements.
- We identify our assumptions. By identifying our assumptions, we can set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities. Taking this a step further, we practice claiming our assumptions aloud thus opening the conversation to respectful dialogue.
- We suspend our judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to the other and to ourselves more fully and thus our perspectives, decisions and actions are more informed.
- We ask honest, open questions instead of advising each other, we learn to listen deeply & ask questions.

Ground Rules

Common ground rules can include:

- We turn to wonder when the going gets rough: If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself, "I wonder what brought her to this belief?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?"
- This is a discussion, not a debate. The purpose is not to win an argument, but to hear many points of view and explore many options and solutions.
- One person speaks at a time. Refrain from side conversations. Pay attention to the person speaking. If you think you will forget an idea that comes to mind, write it down. Do not interrupt the speaker. During virtual meetings use the icons to signify you would like a turn to speak.
- We seek to identify and appreciate the pros and cons of every option, not just those you prefer. Be willing to carefully and objectively examine all views in order to enrich your understanding of the issue using the lens of others.
- Seek first to understand, not to be understood. Ask questions to seek clarification when you don't understand the meaning of someone's comments.
- Honor privacy and confidentiality. What is said in the meetings, stays in the meetings. The minutes will reflect decisions made and actions taken, but will not "call out" anyone for their comments or perspectives. Information can and should be shared for transparency. But, the identity of speakers should not be revealed unless agreed upon on each individual basis.

Challenges

Here are some common challenges to inclusive Board/committee meetings:

- Lack of inclusive facilitation - It is essential that the Board or committee chair be adept at ensuring all participants have equal opportunities to contribute their perspectives. This can sometimes be achieved by giving time limits for each input on a subject. No hogging the mic. The facilitator must make sure the participants adhere to the ground rules for open and disciplined dialogue. Go-arounds can ensure that everyone speaks up.
- Unconscious bias can subvert opinions presented - Inequitable values placed on the voices of introverts, women, people of color or remote participants who sometimes struggle to be heard can derail inclusiveness.
- Fear and lack of trust in the authenticity of the empowerment space - The groundwork has not been done to encourage relationship building among participants and ensuring that all feel their perspectives are welcomed and respected. It is very important to note that everyone's voice matters. Not everyone will see the value or relevance of DEI the same. The intent is to create a space together where each can listen, speak and learn respectfully.

Challenges

Here are some common challenges to inclusive Board/committee meetings:

- Someone feeling "harmed" in a conversation - It is important to have agreements on how to deal with unintended consequences of someone feeling offended at a meeting. Healing must occur either during the meeting or at a specific future time. Mediation might be needed. We must own our outcomes and not just our intent.
- Lack of consideration for dietary needs of the Board - It's important to consider the dietary needs of all Board members to ensure an inclusive, safe, and fair environment.
- Groupthink or when cohesiveness is viewed as more important than individual contribution or healthy dissent - Groupthink is detrimental to good decision-making. If the meeting appears to be headed in that direction, encourage constructive dissent. Present an opposite perspective as in "what if".

DEI Committee Best Practices

DEI Committee Best Practices by Rise MIT

Six key factors that can make or break a DEI Committee's ability to be impactful:

1) Membership: A DEIC must consist of equally-empowered members who represent the range of stakeholders in the organization. This helps engage a diverse range of identities, experiences & interests. Membership should be limited so it is not so large that it becomes unproductive. Also, there should be inclusion of or regular consultation with someone with tailored DEI expertise.

2) Transparency: The DEI Committee must operate with complete internal and external transparency. Transparency is crucial for any effort combating racism, sexism, & other forms of marginalization or unintended exclusion. Transparency also affirms that the Committee is accountable to the rest of the organization and prevents the committee from stagnating. On occasion, sensitive issues might arise that require committee attention. For example, if a complaint has surfaced regarding harassing behavior by an employee or leader, the committee should anonymize or omit specific details as needed in any reporting or minutes that might be shared more widely. In these cases, confidentiality must be observed. DEICs should share their meeting minutes, regular progress reports and get organization-wide input.

DEI Committee Best Practices

DEI Committee Best Practices by Rise MIT

Six key factors that can make or break a DEI Committee's ability to be impactful:

3) Accountability is defined as "an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions." The committee must be able and willing to address root problems with targeted responses, not just surface issues with band-aid solutions. It must be sufficiently empowered to implement their initiatives meaningfully and successfully, and must be continually backed with the necessary resources to execute them with the promised rigor and speed.

4) Priorities: A DEIC must set priorities that are explicitly and narrowly scoped. Without a proper definition of committee objectives and priorities, DEICs can become derailed. Diversity encompasses an array of experiences and concepts. A DEIC must consider where the organization is along the DEI journey in order to determine what action steps it should promote. For example, if all Board members don't accept the positive impact of DEI on the organization, trying to have conversations regarding new member recruitment of diverse representatives is premature. As one DEIC put it, not having focus caused the committee to "grab at all the shiny objects" of DEI possibilities without building a foundation to start their journey.

DEI Committee Best Practices

DEI Committee Best Practices by Rise MIT

Six key factors that can make or break a DEI Committee's ability to be impactful:

5) Timeline: Once priorities are set, the DEIC must commence with discussion, planning, and execution of change in a timely manner. A well thought out and action-oriented timeline is crucial to maintaining buy-in from the larger organization. Act deliberately and with a sense of urgency.

6) Consideration of existing work, recommendations, and expertise: One crucial way to decrease the timeline for change is to build off of existing initiatives and recommendations. It is important to note that when outlining its priorities, a DEIC does not have to (and should not) start from scratch. It should review existing policies, procedures and inclusive practices to determine what the organization has undertaken that embraces differences. It can also assess where the Board and organization is situated in the DEI journey using the assessment tools from Module 2. Based on the results of such assessments, the DEIC is well-informed to recommend action steps that benefit the organization.

Key Practices

Key practice #6:

Once this commitment is incorporated into your nonprofit, all stakeholders will need facilitated engagements and educational opportunities to experience how to incorporate DEI best practices into their daily habits. In service of establishing and nurturing a culture of inclusion, training of Board members, staff and other stakeholders should include such topics as:

- Small group guidelines and norms for inclusive dialogues
- Implicit bias
- Working vocabulary for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion
- Identifying and effectively addressing microaggressions
- Cultural humility
- Intersectionality – who we are and how our identities intersect

Key Practices

DEI efforts should not be siloed, but should engage the whole organization and system. If you choose to pilot a particular area or department, due to resource limitations or experimenting with program design, it is important to be transparent about your rationale, objectives, process and timeliness of moving beyond the pilot project. Stakeholders will want to know that this commitment is not window dressing, but a concerted plan to advance inclusive communities throughout your organization.

Board Member Orientation

Many orientations try to cover more material than is possible to absorb in one meeting. Many nonprofit boards divide onboarding into two sections. The first section includes information regarding Board members roles and responsibilities. The second orientation covers legal and fiscal responsibilities of the Board.

Key components of orienting new Board members regarding roles and responsibilities while also providing for inclusive practices can include:

- Nonprofit's statement of mission, vision, and values
- DEI statements
- Board member job description and expectations
- Board member agreements
- Board roster and list of committees, their charters, and who serves on them
- Bios of current board members and key staff
- Calendar of meetings for the year ahead
- Bylaws and certificate of incorporation

Board Member Orientation

Documents that are more representative of governance functioning can be distributed to be reviewed at a second orientation, at the first board meeting with new members, or through the mentor program.

- Policies (or board resolutions) relating to the board's role to review the CEO/executive director's compensation
- Annual report or other document that lists the donors/grantmakers that support the nonprofit
- Recent financial reports and audited financials
- Whistleblower policy
- Conflict of interest policy and questionnaire
- Board travel reimbursement policy and form to use to request reimbursement

Equity

There are 4 levels where equity comes into play: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural/systemic.

1) On the personal level, it should be the aspiration of your organization to provide educational opportunities to all stakeholders in order to promote the equitable treatment of all regardless of race, gender, age, ability, etc.

2) On the interpersonal level Boards and leadership of nonprofits should foster relationships between stakeholders that embrace these differences. Educational opportunities might include training on unconscious/implicit bias and microaggressions. Engaging stakeholders with exercises that help them identify their various identities and reflect on how those identities affect how they move through relationships and life is also helpful. (See Social Identity wheel). Having Board members and staff learn skills on how to have challenging, sometimes uncomfortable, conversations across differences is also essential.

Equity

3) On the Institutional level, it is imperative for Boards and leadership to identify, analyze and rectify any unfair policies and practices within the nonprofit. Evaluation of inequitable opportunities for all stakeholders is also a best practice to eliminate the possibility of your institution reinforcing inequities. An example of this would be food banks that offer drive through food pickup. Potential recipients without cars would have difficulties arranging to pick up food supplies. For more equitable food distribution, such a nonprofit should consider other methods of delivering food.

4) Structural/systemic inequities involve institutional and public policies that work across communities to provide some social identities with advantages while disadvantaging other groups. Nonprofits must acknowledge how these structural inequities affect those within their service delivery communities, especially with regards to the limited opportunities of some groups being able to access resources to better their lives.

"We have to acknowledge the cultural advantages of different identity groups."
Doyin Richards, TeDX presenter and antiracism author and activist

"Don't tell me what you think I need, let me tell you what I need."

Cathy Holt, DEI Consultants, Adjunct Professor Women and Gender Studies, Texas Christian University

Gender Identity

Boards and organizations may consider adopting the use of pronouns when addressing members and service recipients. Allowing each person to identify the pronouns they prefer affirms their gender identity, shows respect for themselves, and fosters inclusion. Common pronouns include:

- first person singular I, me
- first person plural - we, us
- second person singular or plural - you
- third person singular - she/her, he/him, they/them
- third person plural (they/them)

For grammarians, using they/them as a singular pronoun can take some time to feel comfortable. As the adage goes, "practice makes perfect". If needed, Board and staff should incorporate pronoun training into their educational curriculum.

Gender Identity

As a practice, Boards and nonprofits can make it the norm to ask someone for their pronouns and include them in any identifiers such as nameplates at meetings, on staff nametags, or in any client intake documents. Also, "they" is now recognized as singular in most grammar style guides such as AP Stylebook, etc. Using appropriate pronouns can also makes someone feel comfortable and respected.

The Board and leadership should also review documents for gender neutral language and references. Rather than "manning a booth" how about "staffing a booth"? Rather than striving to provide maternity leave within your organization, the newer norm is to provide family leave to accommodate all parents. Acknowledging and welcoming non-binary genders and using a gender lens increases inclusion and promotes equity within your nonprofit.

Racial Equity

A Board responsibility is to use a racial equity lens to recognize the connection between race, mission, vision and values as it impacts relationships, workplace and service delivery. Leadership should also focus on Board and staff knowledge about biases and racism and the impact on the organization. Having policies that educate Board and staff on biases and discrimination diminish the chances of individuals bringing those to the interpersonal spaces. Creating protected space for authentic and critical discussions between the majority and underrepresented members allows for these groups to learn from each other. It also lifts up the voices of those who might be hesitant to share a different perspective. Providing opportunities for cultural exchanges enriches relationship building and organizational functioning. Many organizations will rely on a facilitator skilled in leading these intentional dialogues to maximize outcomes. These conversations often focus on identifying shared values in order to reach a common understanding, while also celebrating differences.

Racial Equity

Using a racial equity lens also means evaluating service programs based on structural impediments. For example, redlining (flagging communities of color as hazardous financial investment areas) has historically lowered property values in communities of color. These lower property values have resulted in public schools that are poorly resourced. Often these under-funded schools are technologically limited and are forced to hire less experienced teachers. A nonprofit that provides after school services will have to understand the systemic issues that are affecting these clients. This structural inequity will impact services needed in these communitie

Class, Ability, Age

CLASSISM

Classism is the act of assigning value or ability to a person based on their socioeconomic class or economic status. Like with other isms, stereotypes and assumptions create a hierarchy of status based on income levels. Classist bias can include individual attitudes and behaviors, and/or systems of policies and practices that benefit those of the upper class at the expense of the lower class.

These attitudes can play out on nonprofit Boards when more power and voice is given to those who can provide financial resources to a non-profit. Defining the value of someone's participation or input on their socioeconomic status perpetrates the mythical norm that those with money have more to offer than those without. However, Board member value should be based on skills and connections someone has to offer. Equating value with money is limiting to an organization.

Class bias also impacts attitudes about clients and potential partners. Assuming someone needs your nonprofit services because their poverty is a result of lower educational levels could influence programs initiatives and expected outcomes.

Class, Ability, Age

DIFFERENTLY ABLED

The UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines differently abled individuals as "people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

Although about 1 in 4 American adults have some sort of disability, their issues are often the least addressed. In lumping all people with disabilities into one category we are negating the variety of challenges they face on a daily basis. Addressing accessibility issues goes beyond mobility, but should also consider other accommodations to promote full participation of differently abled people. Such accommodations might include using video captions for digital meetings or presentations for hearing impaired, or providing documents in large print for sight impaired.

Statistically, Boards of human service agencies are more likely to have people with disabilities as members. However, board opportunities are not as likely in community organizations that are not disability specific. Once again, unconscious bias is often at play in creating barriers for differently abled people to serve on Boards. Incorporating ability into DEI policies for Board member recruitment and staffing is shown to increase the inclusion of differently abled people.

Their perspectives on navigating the challenges of everyday life add value to any nonprofit organization. Disabled people often face barriers which complicate their activities of daily living. They have to creatively problem-solve to find other ways to get around, through, or over those barriers. They also have to be determined and persistent in dealing with their challenges to get through activities most abled people don't think twice about. These attributes combined with problem-solving skills are valuable assets to a Board or organization.

Class, Ability, Age
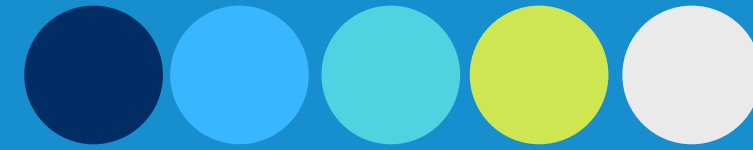
AGEISM

Assumptions and stereotypes about different age workers abound in the media and workplaces. Judgements about your knowledge and value are often made based on age. Currently, there are 5 generations actively participating in our communities and workforce (see chart). As with other equity concepts, intergenerational equity means that all, regardless of age, should have equitable access to economic, social, cultural, and environmental resources to thrive. It also means that all age groups have lived experiences that will shape their perceptions of the world. Each generation sees the world differently based on their experiences and brings insights into what works for them.

Boards should seek to have multi-generations as members. Each brings a unique perspective based on their take on the world and the issues they face. For example, an organization that works with teen suicide prevention should have at least one teen representative on their Board to provide valuable insights into services needed.

However, interacting with people from other generations can create tension due to the lack of respect for someone from a different generation. To mitigate such strain, consider making teams or pairing people of different age groups and facilitate their learning from each other. Organizations should take time to support leadership and staff in understanding the advantages of working with intergenerations.

Age diversity, and the accompanying different ways of thinking, lead to more creativity and innovation. A common example would be the ability of younger people to navigate technology and social media to expand messaging capabilities of an organization.

Systemic Racism

There are many strategies for confronting systemic racism. Questions to explore include:

- Does your Board have the tools to discuss race, power, and privilege, and are they willing to listen to the voices of others?
- Is it part of the Board and nonprofit culture to have conversations about race?
- Are Board members willing to reflect on their own biases and how these might be impacting their nonprofit role?
- Does your organization provide opportunities to learn about bias and systemic racism as professional development?
- Do leadership competencies in your organization include the benefits of having the perspectives of people of color that might reflect their lived experiences?
- Does the community served have any voice in determining the resources needed and how they are allocated?
- Does your Board and leadership understand how systemic racism affects the service community?
- Does your organization view community service as deficit based (only looks at the problems) or asset based (looks at what is right with a community like untapped resources and capacities that can be used in improving community issues)?

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism addresses systems and practices that contribute to health disparities, inequities in education and the wealth gap.

A study at Princeton University in 2016 showed that 40% of first and second year medical students believed that Blacks had thicker skin than Whites and felt less pain. Such biases significantly impacted the care disparities based on these racial biases. (Racial bias in pain assessment and treatment recommendations, and false beliefs about biological differences between blacks and whites, Kelly M. Hoffman, Sophie Trawalter, Jordan R. Axt, and M. Norman Oliver).

Another series of studies showed that Black boys and girls are suspended and/or expelled at much higher rates for similar infractions than their White counterparts. In general, In some school districts Black students have been suspended on a discretionary basis for natural hair or dress code issues – most of these policies are based on White social norms that negate other forms of cultural expression.

This module was created in partnership Cathy Holt and Estrus Tucker of DEI Consultants.

DEI Consultants, LLC, is a Fort Worth, TX based Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training and consulting firm whose mission is to put companies in a position to create more proactive, innovative, and humane workplaces.