



DEI TOOLKIT

FOR AAMFT WORKGROUPS

Created by the AAMFT Diversity, Equity,
Inclusivity Oversight Committee

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DEI Glossary of Terms

Accessibility: The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.¹

Anti-Racism: The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for political, economic, and social life changes.²

Belonging: An innate human need to belong to something larger than ourselves. As an action, belonging welcomes, supports, respects, and allows people to bring all of who they are to the space.³

Bias: Any act or behavior that is a violation of the AAMFT Code of Ethics and reasonably believed to be motivated by a consideration (real or perceived) of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, veteran status, pregnancy, or any other protected classification.⁴

Community Engagement: Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification: "Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."⁵

Cultural Humility: The ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person.⁶

Discrimination: "The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories. In the United States the law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees' sincerely held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business."²

Diversity: Diversity is the understanding that everyone is unique and the voluntary acceptance of all complex characteristics that make one individual or group different from another and therefore valuable.

- A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.
- It is important to note that many activists and thinkers critique diversity alone as a strategy. Often when people talk about diversity, they are thinking only of the "non-dominant" groups.²

Equality: Everyone gets the same thing and same amount of things (i.e., sameness = fairness). Assumes no differences in starting point or obstacles in getting to the same end goal.⁷

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Equity: Everyone gets what they need (i.e., fairness = responsive). Achieving equity requires ensuring that those most impacted by a system of injustice are the face of the solution.⁷

Equity Minded Competency: Equity-mindedness is the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student, staff, or faculty outcomes.⁸

Imposter Syndrome: The internal denying of an ability, the worth or the value oneself can bring to an organization, group, or position/role.⁹

Inclusive Excellence: Creating and maintaining a standard of quality and equity that empowers and positively promotes each individual's talents, integrity, and dignity, and, in turn, allows one to reach their fullest and most authentic potential and capabilities.¹⁰

Intersectionality: Exposing one's multiple identities to help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression.¹¹

Harassment: Any unwelcomed, unsolicited, and offensive conduct that is severe or pervasive and tends to injure, degrade, disgrace, or show hostility toward a person because of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, gender expression/identity, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by law. For purposes of applying this policy, "sexual" harassment includes conduct that is of a sexual nature or related to a person's gender and may include persons of the same sex.¹²

Microaggression: The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.¹³

Multiple Cultural Fluency: Understanding multiple needs from multiple perspectives for creating inclusive excellence. Individuals have a different set of learned/acquired cultural fluencies that are often determined by their social identities and lived experiences.¹⁴

Oppression: The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:

- the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others,
 - the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them),
 - genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and
 - members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.
- Oppression = Power + Prejudice²

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Racism: Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

- Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power
- Racism = a system of advantage based on race
- Racism = a system of oppression based on race
- Racism = a white supremacy system²

Stereotype Threat: A phenomenon that occurs when there is the opportunity or perceived opportunity for an individual to satisfy or confirm a negative stereotype of a group of which they are a member.¹⁵

Transformative Change: A process through which who we are is changed so deeply that our very ways of perceiving, thinking, reflecting, and meaning-making about ourselves, our institution, and our organizations shift. Our emotions become more alive and expressive. Our relationships and connectedness to and within our communities shift. The way we show up shifts. We let go of legacy solutions and find the courage to completely shift the equilibrium of our organization and create something new.¹⁶

Unconscious Bias: A series of unintended preferences amongst people groups that are formed by our social experiences. These preferences act as social filters that aid in our assessments and eventually our judgements of others. This is also often called implicit bias.¹⁷

Universal Design: The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.¹⁸

White Supremacy: The ideology that assigns value, morality, goodness, and humanity to white people groups while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and undeserving. White supremacy is ever-present in our institutional and cultural assumptions and refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantages and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not.²

What is DEI?

Diversity refers to the representation or composition of various social identity groups in a work group, organization, or community.

Equity involves providing resources according to the need to help diverse populations achieve their highest state of health and other functioning.

Inclusion strives for an environment that offers affirmation, celebration, and appreciation of different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences.

From <https://www.apa.org/topics/equity-diversity-inclusion>

Why does it matter to AAMFT?

AAMFT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Statement

“Diversity is a reality of life reflected in the broadest spectrum of the many different ways that individuals identify and exist in the world. Inclusion is acknowledging and appreciating the reality and value of our diversity, intentionally enlisting and engaging the spectrum of different identities and experiences and also respecting what each person brings to the organization.

“We acknowledge that societal power structures, tensions, and complexities related to diversity contribute to disparities in power, control, influence, status, privilege, and opportunities among individuals and groups. Therefore, our commitment to inclusion involves the continuous identification and effective elimination of barriers to access to association roles, resources, and relationships, and to creation of systems of excellence that promote equity for all.

“It is a core value in AAMFT to support, promote, and protect diversity, to value all individuals and groups as free from prejudice and oppression as possible, and to foster a climate where equity and mutual respect are intrinsic.

“By appreciating the importance of inclusion, we acknowledge that the collective and individual talents, skills, and perspectives of members, constituent groups, and partners foster a culture of belonging, collaborative practice, innovation, and mutual respect.

“Diversity of thought and inclusion of new ideas and perspectives can help us increase creativity, generate new ideas, enhance problem solving, and increase flexibility, productivity, and effectiveness.”

From: https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/About_AAMFT/DI_Statement.aspx

Why does DEI matter to you and your workgroup?

Every workgroup can embed DEI as a core value given our work touches marginalized communities and our profession aims to be accessible and diverse to meet the urgent needs of our communities.

Write a DEI vision statement for your unit.

- The statement should include 3 items: 1) reference AAMFT’s mission and DEI statement, 2) a call-out to specific underrepresented groups in society and culture you aim to engage/impact as a workgroup, and 3) high level examples of DEI efforts underway within your workgroup.
- Example:

The TINIGIN of AAMFT is dedicated to supporting and growing the practice of relational, systemic, and justice-oriented healing throughout our community. We seek to build an MFT community of belonging that embraces diversity, fosters understanding, and promotes relationships within and between the many ways we show up in the world. Our vision is consistent with the mission of AAMFT and its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of systemic family therapy.

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Embedding DEI in Your Workgroup

Embedding DEI across your workgroups structure, activities, and culture is an intentional practice. This section offers three areas to focus on — conduct a self-assessment of leaders and the organization overall; identify structural ways to embed and empower DEI; and utilize reflective questions in decision making conversations.

Conduct a DEI self-assessment

- Assessment of individual leaders:
 - DEI self-assessment: <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/deib-explorer/activities>
 - Implicit bias test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Assessment of organizations:
 - DEI Spectrum Tool: <https://mmt.org/news/understanding-meyers-dei-spectrum-tool>
 - Health Justice and Racial Equity Organizational Self-Assessment: <https://www.thepraxisproject.org/resource/2020/principles-self-assessment>
 - Culturally Effective Organizations Framework ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT©: <https://equitynh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Culturally-Effective-Organizations-Framework-ORGANIZATIONAL-ASSESSMENT-1.pdf>

How to embed DEI in your workgroup structure and operations

- Identify positions on the leadership group for DEI representatives. Consider qualifications for this position and how to empower them with voting rights, a small budget, or other ways to leverage their influence and expertise during decision making.
- Identify and actively recruit leadership from underrepresented groups in your community.
- Create an equity review process for policy and activities of your workgroup.
- More ideas can be generated by engaging with fellow TIN/GIN leaders, leadership of the DEIOC of AAMFT, and reviewing recommendations being summarized by leading scholars in DEI and systems.
 - Example external resource:
<https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/5-ways-to-embed-dei-practices>
<https://hbr.org/2020/06/is-your-company-actually-fighting-racism-or-just-talking-about-it>

How to embed DEI in all decision making

- Ask the VIBE reflection questions at decision making times — <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/equality-inclusion-and-diversity/decision-making-for-equity-applying-the-vibe-framework-for-more-equitable-outcomes/>
- Reference to the AAMFT DEI Lens provided by the DEIOC

Practicing Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is “the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person”.¹⁹ Cultural humility is a practice, not a destination. Research is identifying 4 core practices associated with those with levels of cultural humility: 1) an orientation turned towards those who are culturally different; 2) ability to emotionally regulate and be relationally mindful; 3) accurate and ongoing self-critique of cultural biases, blind spots, and growth areas; and 4) use of respectful communication and dialogue. If we are practicing cultural humility, we can strive to mitigate bias and microaggressions while promoting belonging with people every day in our professional and personal communities.

Each area is briefly described below.

An orientation turned towards those who are culturally different^{19, 22}

- Demonstrates openness and curiosity about the unfamiliar.
- Centers the experiences of those from marginalized groups.
- Desire to host: What does this person/group or community need to feel a sense of belonging based on their identity and context? What is my role in this?
- Mitigates barriers to turning towards, namely, bias and microaggressions.

Emotion regulation and relational mindfulness to mitigate bias and create enduring social bonds^{20, 21}

- Bias (i.e., racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, etc.) lives in the body as reaction and emotion²³ and is managed through emotion regulation and mindfulness skills.
- Relational mindfulness is practiced for considering the self in relationship to the other, maintaining a low focus on the self, and imagining the mind and experiences of the other^{20, 21}.
- Emotion regulation and mindfulness increase compassion for the self and others²⁴.

Accurate, ongoing self-critique of cultural biases, blind spots, and growth^{19, 20, 21, 22}

- Takes account of growth areas connected to culture without self-shaming or becoming a savior for marginalized groups.
- Moves through difficult dialogue and painful realizations towards self-accountability.
- Seeks to remove the arbitrary binary of the personal / professional (the self of the therapist).

Respectful communication and dialogue^{19, 22}

- Cultivate psychological safety of all members, especially those with marginalized identities and backgrounds. What is psychological safety and how to create it: <https://www.apa.org/topics/healthy-workplaces/psychological-safety>
- Practices key communication skills for showing respect and care — for example, practice pronouncing someone's name correctly and try to get it right, use correct pronouns and name, say thank you when corrected by others, center the experiences and emotions of the harmed, resist asking irrelevant and invasive questions about someone's body and/or culture.

Creating a Diverse and Vibrant Community

- Leadership practices and models cultural humility for cultivating belonging of all members.
- Consider how and who you are inviting to events explicitly and implicitly. Some questions to consider:
 - Who is featured as speakers in terms of racial and gender diversity?
 - What topics are being addressed? What topics are not?
 - How well do your group demographics match the population you are drawing from?
 - How racially homogenous is your leadership?
 - What special invitations have you made to folks who are different than you?
 - Have you surveyed the population about engagement with your network?

Resources for continued reading and development on cultivating community:

Birdsong, M. (2020). *How we show up: Reclaiming family, friendship, and community*. Hachette UK.

Nyamway, L. (2022). *Leading with cultural humility: 12 inclusive practices to manage biases, promote equity, and cultivate cultures of belonging*. Bold Impact Group LLC.

Parker, P. (2020). *The art of gathering: How we meet and why it matters*. Penguin.

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