24 for 24
Top Diversity and Inclusion Words & Phrases for 2024

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This guide is a small sample of the content from the Language & Dictionary Guide in the Everyday Inclusion App.

With over 1,300 Inclusion Nudges (and counting!) the Everyday Inclusion solution creates a Rhythm of Inclusion for individuals, leaders, and groups operationalizing inclusion for real behavior and culture change.

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"This app helps drive knowledge by giving people what they can do daily that is impactful - small, everyday actions."
Dawn Higgins, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Nestle-Purina North America

"We really do want to build a culture of belonging and inclusion. The team at Everyday Inclusion has made it easy to use their solution to help us accomplish that."
Shannon Simon, AVP Learning & Development Arch Insurance

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EVERYDAY INCLUSION

Important Language for Belonging in 2024

1

Ableism
Discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities in favor of able-bodied people. Practices and attitudes that assume an ideal body and mind.

2

African American / Black
This is very much up to the individual, so we're going to lead with the reminder to ask. Individuals may identify as African, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latino or other. Black and African American are not always interchangeable. Some people prefer the term black because they do not identify as African and/or American. Use the term preferred by the group or individual. Do not say "the blacks." And never, ever, ever "negro" the "n-word" or "colored."

3

Ageism
Prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age. A system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions that stereotype and discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. Example: not believing someone over a certain age can learn new technology or skills. Research shows mid-40's is when people begin to experience this type of ageism.

4

Ally
A person who supports a group other than their own (gender, LGBTQ+, physical attributes and abilities, religion, etc.) They take risks and action on the behalf of others. Allies acknowledge systematic inequalities and advantages and invest in learning more. Ally = Action. Ally is both a noun and a verb. It is a role you play and most importantly the daily actions that you take. Allies are defined by their actions more than anything else. A great question to ask is "What have I done today to support people from marginalized groups?" Who can be an ally? Everyone. Each of us are a part of a dominant group.

5

Antisemitism
Hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted this working definition in 2016: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

6

Autism
a bio-neurological developmental disability, generally appearing before the age of 3, that impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

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Belonging

The sense of psychological safety that you can be your authentic self without fear of judgment. A sense of fitting in or meshing and feeling like you are an important member of a group. Feeling that your authentic self is welcomed and celebrated so you can thrive. People who "belong" feel comfortable expressing ideas, sharing experiences, contributing to a group, and making mistakes just like the people around them.

8

Code Switching

Modifying your language, behavior, appearance, etc. to adapt to different sociocultural norms. The holistic process of assessing a situation and presenting ourselves in the way that we deem most appropriate for the given context. For example, speaking in a language or dialect that is more socially approved, how you dress or your hairstyle, what you eat. People from underrepresented groups often use this skill as a survival tactic to navigate everyday life. The pressure to conform can be stressful, alienating, and damaging. When an environment is inclusive people should not need to code switch.

9

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Deaf refers to an individual with very little or no functional hearing and who often uses sign language to communicate. Hard of Hearing refers to an individual who has a mild-to-moderate hearing loss who may communicate through sign language, spoken language, or both. Hearing Impaired, used to describe an individual with any degree of hearing loss, is a term offensive to many deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals- they prefer not to be labeled "impaired" as people. Use a lowercase "d" to refer to audiological status and the use a capital "D" when referring to the culture and community of Deaf people.

10

Disability

Describe functional limitations that affect one or more of the major life activities, including walking, lifting, learning and breathing. Various laws define disability differently. it is best to use language that refers to the person first and the disability second. For example: "The actor, who has a disability" as opposed to "the disabled actor." Use the person's specific condition if you can. Don't say, "the disabled" in the same way that you wouldn't say "the Asians." Use terms like "the disability community" instead.

11

Diversity

The range of our differences, including things like race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, cognitive abilities, religious beliefs, national origin. It's everything that makes us unique – seen and unseen. Diversity is about variety, both individual and as a part of a group/socially.

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Dominant Group/Majority Group

The group that generally holds the most power in society and in the workplace. For example, in the U.S. the majority group is white, heterosexual, cisgender, male, non-disabled.

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Gender

The external, socially constructed rules, roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for women and men. It is different than 'sex', which is the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. It is different than 'sexual orientation', which is who you are attracted to. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviors – including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities and workplaces. When individuals or groups do not "fit" established gender norms they often face stigma, discriminatory practices, or social exclusion. Be aware that there are gender identities that do not necessarily fit into binary male or female sex categories.

14

Gender Neutral Pronouns

A pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed. Some languages, such as English, do not have a gender neutral or third gender pronoun available. The binary "he / she" in English does not leave room for other gender identities. 'They/them' are third-person pronouns that are gender neutral. If you're not sure which pronoun to use, you use the person's name and share your own pronouns to make them feel comfortable sharing if they choose.

15

Hispanic / Latino / Latinx/ Latine

Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably though they actually mean two different things. Hispanic refers to people who speak Spanish and/or are descended from Spanish-speaking populations. Latino/Latinx/Latine refers to people who are from or descended from people from Latin America. Since Hispanic refers to what language people speak or that their ancestors spoke, it refers to an element of culture. Latino/Latinx/Latine is a term that refers to geography. People who identify as Hispanic, or Latino/Latinx/Latine may be of any race.

16

Invisible Diversity

Diversity we usually do not see when we meet and interact with others. For example: disability, religion, class, age, regionalism, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and national origin.

17

Islam

Islam began with the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca (modern-day Saudi Arabia) approximately 570-632 AD, with followers known as Muslims. Islam means "submission to the will of God"; the central idea of the Islamic faith is surrendering to the will of God. Muslims believe that there is only One God and the Arabic word for God is Allah. There are over 70 Islamic sects, with the majority being Sunnis or Shi'ites. According to Muslims, God sent several prophets including Jesus, Moses and Abraham to humankind to teach them how to live according to His law, and that the final Prophet was Muhammad. Muslims base their laws on the holy book the Qur'an (often spelled Koran in English) and the Sunnah, which is the practical example of Prophet Muhammad. The Five Pillars of Islam: declaration of faith, prayer, giving to charity, fasting, pilgrimage.

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18

Islamophobia
Fear of and hostility toward Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia can lead to hate speech, hate crimes and social and political discrimination. It can be used to rationalize policies such as mass surveillance, incarceration and can influence political policy. Islamophobia can take the form of fearful attitudes towards, and avoidance of, Muslims and Islam.

19

LGBTQ+
This is the acronym most commonly used to stand for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community. The acronym can vary in a number of ways, including LGBT, GLBT and GLB, LGBTQ, LGBTQ+ LGBTQIA+ Q can stand for queer and also questioning, A for asexual and I for Intersex. The + symbol to denote everything on the gender and sexuality spectrum that letters and words cannot yet describe. It is more common to see "LGBTI" (for intersex) in Europe.

20

Microaggression
The tiny, casual, almost imperceptible insults and degradation often felt by any marginalized group. They are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to the target person or group. Examples include consistently mispronouncing a person's name, confusing a person of a certain ethnicity with another person of the same ethnicity.

21

Queer
A fluid term with numerous meanings. It is commonly used to describe sexual orientation and/or gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to heterosexual norms. The term is often used to refer to the general LGBTQ+ community. It can be either a positive or a negative term, depending on context.

22

Social Class / Class
A division of a society based on social and economic status. A group of people within a society who possess the same socioeconomic status. Class is an often-overlooked element of diversity. In the U.S. class is typically broken up into five social classes: upper, upper-middle, middle, working and lower. These labels used in popular language and by researchers.

23

Sponsor
Someone in a position of power who uses their influence to advocate on your behalf. A sponsor could be your boss or anyone who's in a position to influence others and who knows you well enough to put their reputation on the line for you. Sponsors take a direct role in your advancement, position you to earn raises and promotions, and use their connections to help you advance and succeed. While mentors offer advice and support, sponsors use their social capital and credibility to advocate for the person they are sponsoring.

24

Unconscious Bias / Implicit Bias
Learned stereotypes that are automatic, unintentional, deeply engrained, universal, and able to influence behavior. 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.