

Getting Started with DEI

LWV Montana DEI Committee

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Anne Harris, Barb Harris

(Actively welcoming new members!)

Agenda

- Introductions
- Definitions and truths
- Land acknowledgements
- Inclusive meetings
- Pronouns
- Q&A and next steps



What is diversity?

Typically, diversity refers to factors like:

- Gender identity
- Ethnicity identity
- Geographic location
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Education
- Religion
- Language
- Race identity
- Ability status
- Socio-economic status
- Employment status

What is diversity?

But don't forget about factors like:

- Personal experience
- Professional experience
- Ideas
- Approaches
- Skills
- Background



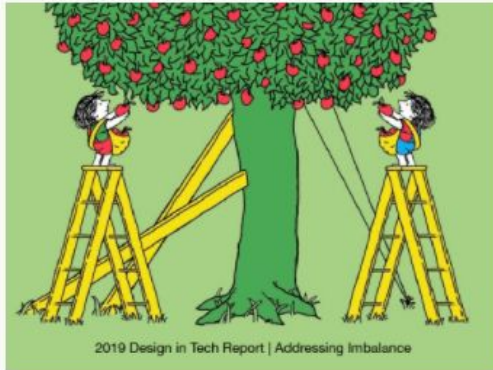
INEQUALITY



EQUALITY



EQUITY



JUSTICE

Source: MPH@GW, the George Washington University online Master of Public Health program



Inclusion is the act of including people and groups in activities from which they have been historically excluded or marginalized—and making sure that those people have the same access and opportunities as others.



Truths

- Inclusion isn't just right—it's smart
- We are not “experts”
- This universe is constantly evolving
- Making mistakes is part of the work

Land acknowledgments

Why & How

Natalya DeRobertis-Theye
LWV Montana, DEI Committee

Definition

A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

Northwestern University

Why?

“To communicate solidarity with the injustices experienced by Indigenous people.”

Summer Wilkie, *High Country News*

Why?

To recognize the land is an expression of **gratitude and appreciation** to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

Northwestern University

How?

- **Start with self reflection.**
- **Do your homework.**
- **Use appropriate language.**
- **Use past, present, and future tenses.**
- **Take the perspective of an Indigenous person.**

How?

- **Don't put this work on an Indigenous person.**
- **Build real relationships, over time.**
- **Compensate Indigenous people when appropriate.**
- **Don't expect an exact "formula"**
- **Take the perspective of an Indigenous person.**

Remember

Acknowledge that a statement is not sufficient. It must be coupled with **action**.

Example:

“The land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, comprised of the descendants of indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands and heal from historical trauma.”

UC Santa Cruz

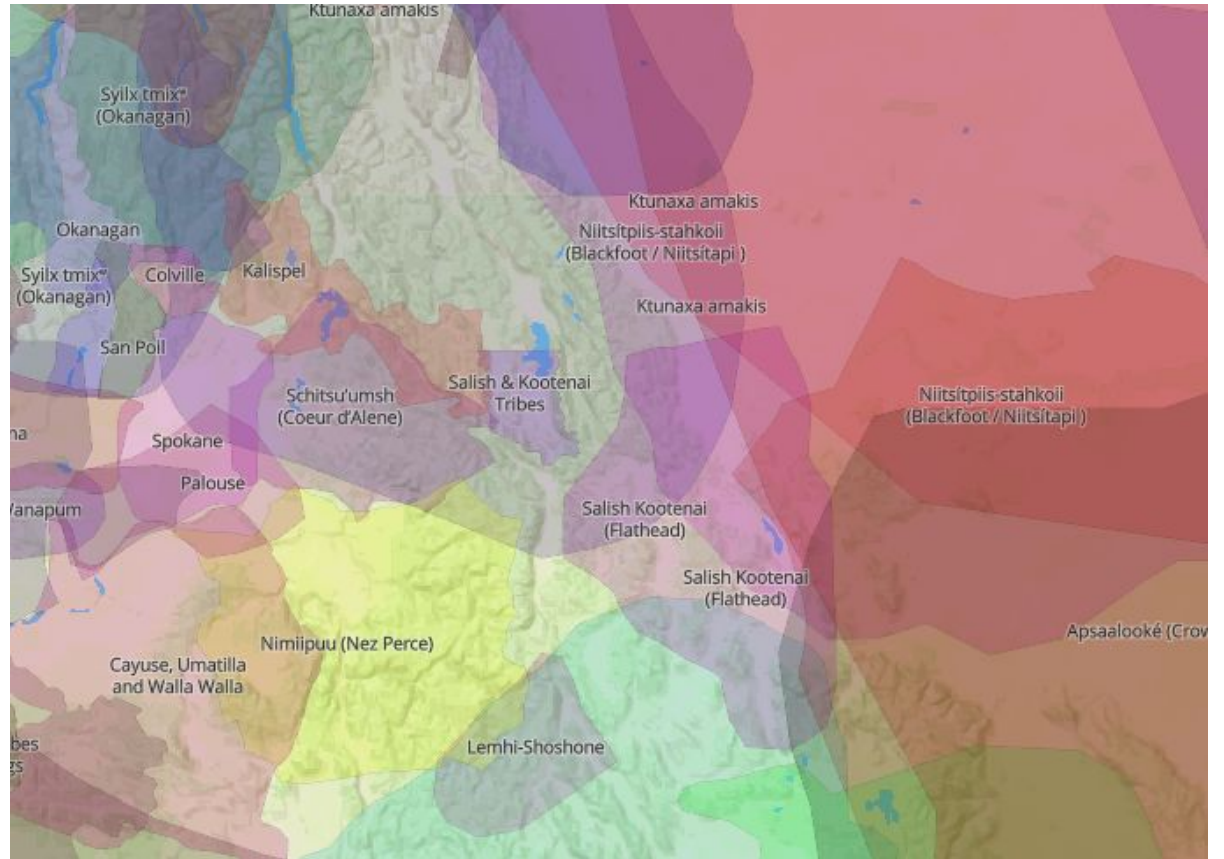
Example:

As you enjoy a film with us, we encourage you to reflect on the land on which you are on, and who are the traditional keepers.

The International Wildlife Film Festival and The Roxy Theater are located on the traditional territory of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille people, and we honor the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

Roxy Theater in Missoula

Resources



<https://native-land.ca/>

Further reading

Northwestern University:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/native-american-and-indigenous-peoples/about/Land%20Acknowledgement.html>

Native Governance Center:

<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

High Country News:

<https://www.hcn.org/issues/53.5/indigenous-affairs-perspective-so-you-want-to-acknowledge-the-land>

Inclusive meetings

Why & How

Marilyn Klein and Roxanne Klingensmith
LWV Montana, DEI Committee

Definition

In an inclusive meeting everyone gets a chance to contribute and all voices have equal weight.

The Facilitator helps people prepare by sharing the plan in advance and takes care to minimize interruptions during the meeting resulting in a better outcome for all.

Why?

If we want to become a more diverse inclusive culture at LWV, we can start by making sure our meetings are including everyone in attendance.

We want to come together to discuss ideas and make decisions but especially make sure everyone is heard.

A healthy Democracy is one in which a commitment is made for all to have an equal impact and an opportunity to express ideas.

How?

1. **Everyone should feel safe at our meetings.** One way we might do this is have a chart with points we want to remember for each meeting.

Examples might be:

- Respect
- Zero tolerance to interrupting another member
- Be ready to share
- Be ready to listen
- No dominance of one person's viewpoint

How?

2. **Seat in a circle so everyone is equal.**
3. **Invite a person to speak who has not contributed.**
4. **DEI committee member greets all members** (becomes eyes, ears, and heart) and makes sure all new members are introduced and welcomed.
5. **Ask our individual Leagues if we are committed to DEI**

Examples

- 1. Introduce all new members or new attendees**
- 2. Recap all actions to see if anyone else wants to contribute**
- 3. Review chart before each meeting**

Further reading

Harvard Business Review:

<https://hbr.org/2019/09/to-build-an-inclusive-culture-start-with-inclusive-meetings>

Forbes:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2019/05/28/how-to-lead-inclusive-meetings/?sh=8d69984ffede>

Gender Pronouns

Why & How

Bonnie Lorenzen
LWV Montana, DEI Committee
Pronouns: she/her/hers

What are the pronouns?



1	2	3	4	5
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself

An important move towards inclusivity

“Why must our lives be organized by the legal and bureaucratic binary system that relegates everyone to one of two categories based originally on genitalia observed at birth?”

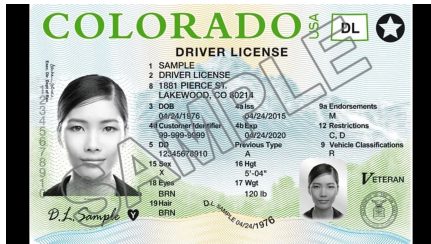
Barbara Risman
Professor of Sociology
University of Illinois, Chicago

- Social affirmation
 - Depression, suicide rate & emotional turmoil that is tied to lack of social affirmation and acceptance.
 - Research supports the positive effect of social affirmation on depression and suicide rates
- Challenges norm that you can assume a person's gender based on appearance
- Implicit invitation for others to volunteer their gender pronouns
- Facilitates accurate pronoun usage
- ~30% teens/young adults know someone who uses gender neutral pronouns

How?

Nationally

- Gender X bills
 - Driver's license, birth certificate, passports, airlines
- Many states have implemented without legislative action
- Use of Mx.



Locally

- Pronoun stickers
 - make available at events
- Introduce yourself with your pronouns:
 - 'Hello, my name is _____. I use _____ pronouns. I am _____.'
- Add your pronouns to your e-mail signature
- Support/oppose legislation related to gender identity
 - SB280 -- Court order to change gender
 - SB215 -- Religious Freedom Restoration Act
 - Allows individuals in positions of power to refuse to use chosen gender pronoun



Need some practice?

UWM LGBTQ+ Resource Center offers this link to help you make your pronoun usage earn an A+!

<https://pronouns.minus18.org.au/>

Pronouns-- A How To Guide

Subject: ¹ laughed at the notion of a gender binary.

Object: They tried to convince ² that asexuality does not exist.

Possessive: ³ favorite color is unknown.

Possessive Pronoun: The pronoun card is ⁴.

Reflexive: ¹ think(s) highly of ⁵.

The pronoun list on the reverse is not an exhaustive list.
It is good practice to ask which pronouns a person uses.

© 2011, 2016 UW-Milwaukee LGBT Resource Center

Further reading

University of Wisconsin Milwaukee LGBTQ+ Resource Center:

<https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>

New York Times article - Gender Pronoun policy development at Harvard:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/05/learning/nonbinary-gender-pronouns-colleges-universities.html>

New York Times article - Non-binary identification:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/us/nonbinary-drivers-licenses.html>