

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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Introduction

Having an understanding of what is meant by 'Equality/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion' is important in informing how you will interact with clients, staff and fellow volunteers in your pro bono project. Although it's likely that your pro bono supervisor or coordinator will lead on EDI for your project, it's important that you consider your behaviours in relation to EDI.

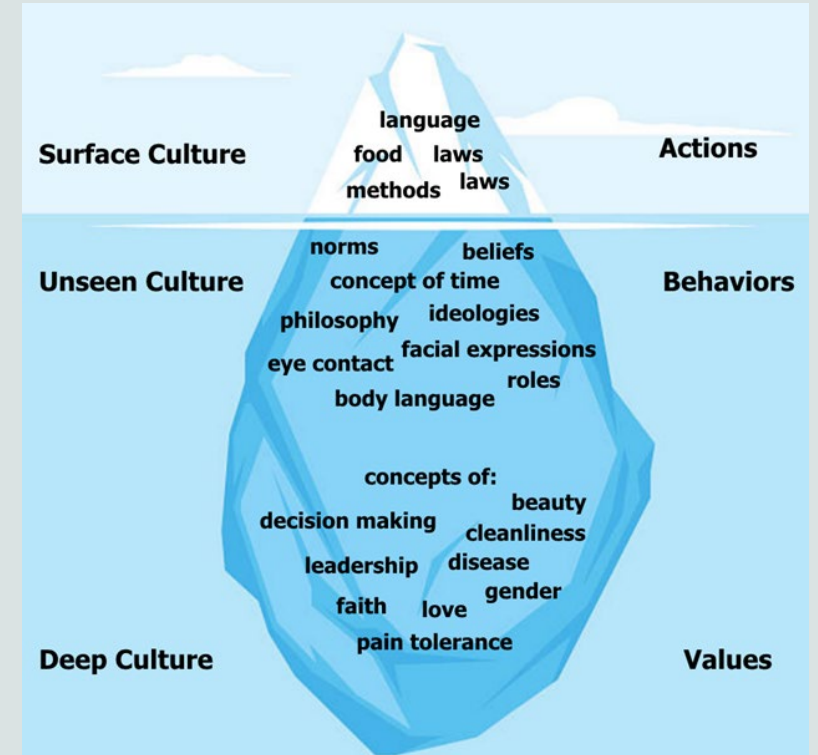
So what does it mean?

- 'Diversity' refers to the differences between people in any given group.
- Equality means that everyone should have access to the same resources and opportunities, regardless of who they are.
- Equity, meanwhile, recognises that some people may need to be provided with more or different resources in order to have access to the same opportunities as others.
- Inclusion refers to the way that people from diverse backgrounds experience a service, and what the service does to understand this and ensure that everyone can participate in it fully.



Some important things

The 'Iceberg model' of culture states that whilst we can observe some aspects of a person's culture, such as dress, language and food, there is a much greater proportion, such as beliefs, values, and social norms, that are not visible.



Some important things

We all experience ‘unconscious* biases’, which are automatic judgements we make about new people, often based on superficial things. These biases can lead unwittingly to negative assumptions. We will often form preferences for people who are similar to us, whilst discriminating against people we perceive as different to us.

*or ‘Implicit’.

Some examples

- Differences in communication needs. You will often come across people with English as a second language and may need to work with interpreters to overcome this.
- Religious differences. Be aware of potential differences in norms about interacting with members of other sexes e.g.: with shaking hands, or sharing personal details. Be aware of significant events in religious calendars; for example, during Ramadan it's important to be aware that Muslim colleagues and clients may be more tired, may need to rest during the day, may be less able to do manual labour etc...
- Cultural differences. Cultures differ hugely in the way that they consider morality, crime, punishment and justice.
- Differences in physical ability. Clients and colleagues with physical disabilities may need adjustments made when attending appointments, for example ramps, doors being opened for them, more space in corridors and appointment rooms to manoeuvre etc...

Some examples

- Neurodiversities. People with Autism, ADHD or other neurodiversities may have different communication needs than neurotypical people. For example, neurodiverse people may struggle to understand phrases that aren't literal, such as idioms or sarcasm.
- Socioeconomic differences. Remember that people have vastly different budgets and resources. For example, if signposting to another service, consider how the client might get there and whether they are able to afford bus and train fares.
- Educational differences. Do not assume that everyone has the same level of education. Approximately 17% of British adults have very poor literacy- that expected of 5-7 year olds.
- Gender and gender identity. Be conscious that some clients may be more comfortable with volunteers of a certain gender, and respect this. It is also important to remember and respect given names and pronouns.
- Differences in family make up. Avoid making assumptions about marital status and the genders of partners or spouses. Similarly, do not necessarily assume that all a client's children are their biological children.

Further Information:

LawWorks' 'Working With Vulnerable Clients' series:
[Working with vulnerable clients series | LawWorks](#)

General resources- www.edibasics.com

Unconscious bias:

[https://www.simplypsychology.org/implicit-bias.html#:~:text=Very%20common,%20as%20everyon
e%20holds%20unconscious%20biases%20to%20some
%20degree](https://www.simplypsychology.org/implicit-bias.html#:~:text=Very%20common,%20as%20everyon,e%20holds%20unconscious%20biases%20to%20some%20degree)

Implicit bias in the justice system talk: [Highlights: Judges Explore Implicit Bias \(youtube.com\)](#)

Thank you for
watching