

A-Z OF D&I

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**

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Improving the world through engineering

A-Z OF D&I

A

ALLY

Stemming from the Latin word 'to bind to'; being an ally simply means that we choose to join forces with another individual or group for greater equality and inclusion for everyone. This can be inside of work and outside in our personal lives.

B

BELONGING

Means having an affinity with a place or situation. At work that means that we feel that we belong in the jobs that we do and the teams we work in and feel comfortable to be ourselves at work.

C

CISGENDER

Refers to those of us who's gender identity matches that which we are assigned at birth. Many people in the world are not cisgender, meaning they do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, there are many variations of gender identity, such as Transgender and Non-Binary, amongst many others.

D

DISABILITY

A disability is a term used to describe a continuing condition that restricts typical everyday activities. Disabilities can be visible, such as a person who uses a wheelchair or an individual with Downs Syndrome. There are also individuals whose disability is non-visible, such as autism or hearing loss.

E

EQUITY

Refers to something that is fair and just. In inclusion it refers to the idea that no one person is more or less advantaged than another person, in education, work, healthcare etc. regardless of their background or who they identify as.

F

FEMINIST

A feminist is someone who supports equal rights for men and women and work to create a level playing field for all women, this includes trans and non-binary women. Anyone from any gender identity can be a feminist.

G

GROUPTHINK

This is a way of working that means the majority decision not only tends to define what is done at work, but also discourages creativity, individual responsibility, unchallenged and poor-quality decision making.

H

HOMOGENEOUS

Simply put this means 'the same as', when looking through an inclusion lens, this can mean that everyone looks, works and behaves in the same way, meaning there is a lack of diversity of thought and therefore less innovation and skill building.

I

INCLUSION

This refers to the act of being or feeling included. At work this means working in an environment where all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, allowing them to successfully continue to do the work they are employed to do.

J

JUSTICE

At work this refers to a concept of ethics where the way in which people behave and systems/processes are set up, enable a fair and balanced way for everyone to work, regardless of background or identity.

K

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is the most important way to increase awareness around other people's lived experiences and allows us to see things from other people's perspectives. In the inclusion world knowledge is power, so increasing our knowledge creates more inclusion.

L

LISTENING

To gain knowledge we must listen to other people. Listening is a skill that is something to continuously work on and can be achieved to a high standard by asking questions and listening to the answer without thinking about responding.

M

MICROAGRESSIONS

The everyday slights and exclusions that people from marginalised groups experience, such as a woman speaking up in a meeting, only to be talked over by her male colleagues or a White woman clutching her bag tighter when walking past a Black man.

N

NEURODIVERSITY

Meaning the variations in the human brain where sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions differ from person to person. These include Autism and ADHD amongst many others. 'Neurotypical' refers to an individual who is not on the neurodiversity spectrum and are within the typical range of human neurology.

O

OPRESSION

A state of being subjected to unfair and unjust treatment at an individual or systematic level. An example of this is when a specific social group is denied access to the same education, healthcare, housing or working rights as other groups.

P

PRIVILEGE

Simply put is a special right or advantage that an individual or group (usually the majority group) are granted over another individual or group (usually the minority group).

Q

QUEER

A term used by individuals wanting to reject the wider societies sexuality or gender 'norms' (e.g. those who are heterosexual or cisgender). Previously used as a slur against those from the LGBTQI+ world, it has now been adopted by many from the community as a positive umbrella term.

R

RACE

Defined as a 'category of humankind that shares a certain distinctive physical trait' such as skin colour, eye shape etc.

S

SAFE SPACE

An environment where people feel comfortable to share, be authentically them, confident to challenge non-inclusive behaviours of others AND feel comfortable being challenged on their own non-inclusive actions.

T

TRANSITIONING

The steps an individual take, to live in the gender they identify with; this can include hormone therapy and/or surgery amongst other things. Not every trans person want to or have access to everything they need to transition.

U

UNDERREPRESENTATION

Refers to groups within society that are disproportionately represented. At work for example there could be a lot less women than men, even though in the UK the population is 51% women. Or in a senior meeting where only 1% of attendees are from an ethnic minority background, however, almost 20% of the population are from ethnic minorities backgrounds.

V

VIRTUE SIGNALLING

Is the action of publicly expressing an opinion or sentiment that demonstrates an individual's good character, however, oftentimes this is not backed up with actions.

W

WOKE

A word heard a lot when discussing human rights; meaning 'awake' and being aware of and attentive to important facts and issues, particularly around race inequality. There is a rich history of the word woke and it can sometimes be taken out of context and used in a derogatory way to undermine the work that people are doing with social justice.

X

XENOPHOBIA

This refers to a dislike of or a prejudice against people from other countries, which fuels unfounded claims such as believing Polish people are taking British jobs away from British people.

Y

YOU

You are the single point of difference when it comes to everyone at work feeling like they belong, without you, inclusion cannot happen.

Z

GEN Z

'Gen Z' are the generation born between 1997 and 2015, so they are the young workers in each organisation (and those that will be coming into the workforce soon). As a general rule, 'Gen Z' are twice as likely as other age groups to care about issues of inequality and want to work with organisations that are operating in societies best interests when it comes to social justice and equity.

There are many more words, phrases and things to learn when looking at how to be more inclusive, so this is just a start. Words are power, so why not spend some time looking online and further into some of these words to understand the history of how they came to be and how you can support greater inclusivity at the IMechE.

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