

ENGAGE ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (ADEI) IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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Introduction to ADEI

- “The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Our organization will continue advocating for programs and dialogue rooted in justice as they are aligned with our profession’s code of ethics on anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-discriminatory practices and policies” (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matters, 2023).
- Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice (CSWE, 2022)

Objectives & Outcomes

Learning Objectives:

- Review the components involved in Competency 3: ADEI
- Develop Cultural Humility and Inquisitiveness
- Apply Anti-Discriminatory and Anti-Oppressive Practices
- Promote Equity and Advocacy in Social Work

Expected Outcomes:

- Enhance Empathetic Engagement
- Implement Inclusive Practice
- Become Advocacy and Change Agents

Diversity

“...more than race and ethnicity, includes the sociocultural experiences of people inclusive of, but not limited to national origin, color, social class, religious and spiritual beliefs, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, and physical or mental disabilities” (NASW, 2015, p.9).



Equity

...is the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair. The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021).



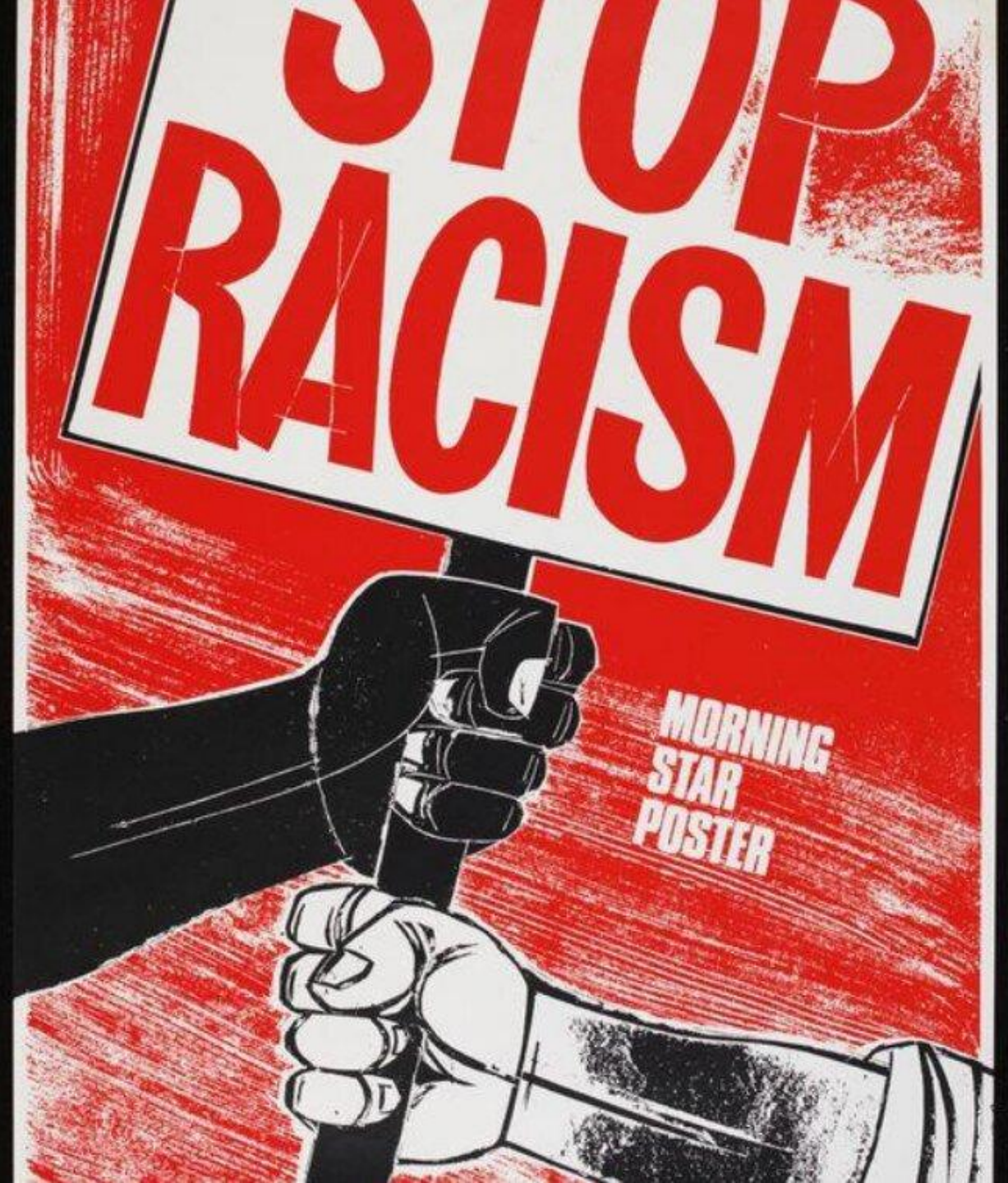
Inclusion

...is used to describe the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity -- in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (e.g., intellectual, social, cultural, geographic) with which individuals might connect (Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement, n.d.).



Anti-Racism

“Anti-racism is defined as uplifting the innate humanity and individuality of Black, Latin A/O/X, Indigenous, Asian and Pacific Islander, and other People of Color; demonstrating best practices in diversity, equity and inclusion; and taking conscious and deliberate actions to ensure equal opportunities for all people and communities. Anti-racism requires active resistance to and dismantling of the system of racism to obtain racial equity” (NASW Anti-Racism Statement, 2022).



Historical Perspective...

“The field of DEI in the United States originated in the 1960s during the height of the civil rights movement. The Civil Rights Act itself outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, required equal access to public places and employment, and enforced desegregation of schools and the right to vote.

The Civil Rights Act was a watershed moment in our country’s history.

Research tells us that DEI programs continue to have a positive economic impact on society. They result in improved health care outcomes, greater educational attainment, higher employee morale, and foster a sense of connection and community. Like the Civil Rights Act, modern DEI programs highlight social injustices and seek to provide solutions that both address harm done to marginalized people, while creating innovative pathways to success for everyone” (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matters, 2023).

What is systemic/structural inequity and racism?

What is anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices?

How do we promote equity and advocacy in social work?

What can we do?

Systemic Inequalities...

“Systemic and/or structural inequity: Institutionally created and reinforced privilege for some groups of people and a lack of privilege and access to resources by others (for example, in law, policies, business practices, access to education, health care, banking, and housing).

Systemic and/or structural racism: Racial bias inherent in institutions and society; includes compounding and cumulative effects and the systemic disadvantaging of people of color along with the systemic privileging of White people” (Porter et al., 2023)

Anti-discriminatory and Anti-oppressive Practices

- Social workers should engage in lifelong learning about diverse cultures, identities, and experiences, including understanding historical and systemic inequalities that affect their clients.
- Adopt an inclusive approach that recognizes and validates the identities, experiences, and strengths of all clients. This includes using affirming language, ensuring accessible services, and creating safe spaces where clients feel valued and understood.
- Empower clients by involving them in decision-making processes and respecting their autonomy and expertise in their own lives.

Promote equity and advocacy in social work

Social workers play a critical role in advocating for social change and justice. This involves challenging and seeking to change laws, policies, and practices that discriminate against or oppress certain groups. Social workers can engage in advocacy by participating in or organizing campaigns, lobbying policymakers, and collaborating with community organizations to address social inequalities.

What Can We Do?

- Dedicate yourself to learning about structures of inequity.
- Talk with others (colleagues, peers, etc.).
- Internalize, don't personalize.
- Evaluate your organization or agency.
- Dedicate resources for DEI work.
- Critically assess the culture of your organization.

(Porter et al., 2023)

What is cultural humility? Is it the same as cultural competence? How do you develop it?

Cultural Humility and Inquisitiveness

Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection and lifelong learning that involves recognizing and challenging power imbalances for respectful partnerships and acknowledging one's own cultural biases. Cultural inquisitiveness implies a desire to ask questions with the right intentions: to learn. Competence implies there is a point at which one achieves completion.

We don't know what we don't know!

- Flight or fight reactions to new situations are a normal human instinct.
- Observe infants: they naturally cling to a caregiver when faced with the unfamiliar as they learn and adapt.
- Embrace this same mindset: just be **WILLING** to learn and grow in new experiences, just like a child.

How do I Become Willing to Adopt New Perspectives?

- *Active Listening*: Listen to UNDERSTAND, not just RESPOND to diversity training.
- *Self-Reflection*: Be HONEST with yourself and reflect on your own attitudes and beliefs about difference. Challenge your preconceived notions and stereotypes.
- *Dialogue*: Talking honestly about it helps and promotes understanding and empathy.
- *Continued Learning*: Engage in ongoing education and learning.
- *Commitment to Change*: Take action to implement what is learned!

Why Should I Be Willing to Adopt New Perspectives?

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

- Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

(NASW Code of Ethics, 2022)

Bias & Microaggressions

- How do you define implicit and/or unconscious bias?
- What are microaggressions?
- We will explore implicit bias and microaggressions that impact three groups commonly subjected to discrimination:
 - Racial and Ethnic Minorities
 - Individuals of Diverse Gender Identities and Sexual Orientations
 - People across Different Age-Groups
- Pre-test (see ICA 4 handout and slides: 19-23)

So, what do we mean by Bias and Microaggressions...

■ Implicit Biases:

- “Prejudice or stereotype an individual may hold about a particular group of people that they aren’t fully aware of” (Reiner, 2023).
- Assumptions we develop in early childhood and our environment
- Personal, limited experiences (Well, my uncle Bob...)
- Stereotypes or prejudices that result from limited exposure to people who are different than ourselves.
- Stereotypes or prejudices reinforced in media: television, films, advertisements

■ **Microaggressions:** “...an often unintentional, indirect, and subtle form of discrimination against a member of a marginalized community...either verbal or nonverbal” (DLCV, 2023).

Questions 1 & 2

Implicit Bias Definition

What is implicit bias?

- A) A fully conscious decision to discriminate based on race
- B) An unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group
- C) A lack of interest in cultural differences
- D) The explicit decision to act with prejudice

Racial Microaggressions

Which of the following is an example of a racial microaggression?

- A) Asking a person of color if they speak English because of their accent
- B) Complimenting someone on their shoes
- C) Discussing the weather with a colleague
- D) Thanking someone for holding the door open

Questions 3 & 4

Gender Bias in Leadership

True or False:

Saying, "Men are naturally better leaders than women," is an example of implicit bias.

Sexual Orientation Bias in Professional Competence

How might someone's implicit bias about sexual orientation manifest at work?

- A) Believing a person's sexual orientation has no impact on their work performance
- B) Assuming a gay colleague is less competent than a straight colleague
- C) Allocating tasks equally regardless of sexual orientation
- D) Promoting the most qualified person for a job

Questions 5 & 6

Generational Microaggressions

What is a common microaggression younger employees might face?

- A) "You're too young to understand this."
- B) "Please help me with this task."
- C) "You have a lot of experience; please share your insights."
- D) "I appreciate your enthusiasm."

Microaggressions in Communication

Which statement is a microaggression related to gender or sexual orientation?

- A) "I'm surprised how well you handled that project for a woman."
- B) "Good morning, everyone!"
- C) "Can you please email me the report?"
- D) "Let's have a meeting to discuss this further."

Questions 7 & 8

Cultural Humility vs. Competence

True or False:

Cultural humility involves an ongoing process of self-exploration and lifelong learning about one's own and other cultures, while cultural competence implies a final state of knowledge about a culture.

Understanding Intersectionality

What does intersectionality help us understand?

- A) The crossing of major roads in urban planning
- B) The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender
- C) The way traffic flows in a busy city
- D) The intersection between two distinct musical genres

Questions 9 & 10

In-group Favoritism

What is in-group favoritism?

- A) Preferring people who do not belong to one's own social group
- B) Treating all groups equally without any bias
- C) A bias toward members of one's own group
- D) Favoritism shown towards people from rival groups

Allyship Actions

True or False:

Confronting a microaggression observed in the workplace and supporting the affected colleague is an example of allyship.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities

- **Color Blindness:** Asserting that one does not see race or that race does not matter, which ignores the significance of racial identity and the realities of racism, ultimately undermining racial equity.
 - **Cultural Bias:** The tendency to interpret and judge people's behaviors by the standards of one's own culture, often leading to misinterpretation and negative stereotyping of behaviors associated with other racial groups.
 - **Stereotype Threat:** The fear among members of a racial group that their behavior can confirm stereotypes about their race, which can hinder their performance in various activities.
 - **Out-group Homogeneity Effect:** Perceiving members of an out-group as more similar to each other than they really are can lead to oversimplified and generalized perceptions of individuals based on their race.
1. Asking a person of color, "Where are you really from?" This implies that the person is not a true citizen or does not belong in the country, despite their response.
 2. Saying to a Black person, "You're so articulate." This statement suggests surprise that a Black person can speak clearly and intelligently, reinforcing a stereotype of intellectual inferiority.
 3. Touching a Black person's hair without permission or making unsolicited comments about it. This objectifies the individual and treats their physical characteristics as exotic or abnormal.
 4. Mistaking a person of a certain race for a service worker. This assumption is based on stereotypes that pigeonhole people of certain races into subservient roles.
 5. Saying, "I don't see color," or "We're all human." While potentially well-intentioned, this statement denies the significance of race and the reality of racism, effectively dismissing the experiences of those who face racial discrimination.

Individuals of Diverse Gender Identities and Sexual Orientations

- **Heteronormativity:** The assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality, which marginalizes and erases LGBTQ+ experiences and identities.
 - **Maternal Bias:** The assumption that women will or should prioritize motherhood over their careers, often leading to discrimination in hiring, promotion, and pay.
 - **Transgender Bias:** Holding prejudiced beliefs or attitudes towards individuals who do not conform to societal gender norms, often manifesting in discrimination or exclusion.
 - **Double Bind:** The dilemma faced by women and LGBTQ+ individuals in leadership, where displaying traditionally masculine traits leads to being labeled as too aggressive while showing femininity can be seen as too soft.
1. Referring to women as "girls" in professional settings. This diminishes their status and competence by infantilizing adult women.
 2. Assuming a woman in a leadership position is the assistant or secretary. This reflects and reinforces stereotypes about gender roles and positions of authority.
 3. Asking a gay couple, "Who's the man/woman in the relationship?" This imposes heterosexual norms on same-sex relationships and undermines their validity.
 4. Using the term "gay" as an insult or to describe something negatively. This perpetuates the idea that being gay is undesirable or inferior.
 5. Misgendering or deliberately using the wrong pronouns for transgender or non-binary individuals. This invalidates their identity and can contribute to feelings of alienation and dysphoria.

People across Different Age-Groups

- **Overgeneralization:** Applying broad generational labels (e.g., Baby Boomers, Millennials, Gen Z) that do not account for the diversity within each age group.
 - **Digital Native Bias:** Assuming younger generations are inherently more skilled with technology, while older generations are technologically inept.
 - **Reverse Ageism:** Discrimination against younger individuals, assuming they lack the experience or maturity to contribute effectively.
 - **Innovation Resistance Bias:** Assuming that older generations resist change or innovation, overlooking their potential contributions to adapting and implementing new ideas.
 - **Nostalgia Bias:** Assuming that what worked in the past will work in the present or future, discounting new ideas or approaches favored by younger generations.
1. Saying to an older employee, "Wow, you're so good with technology for your age!" This expresses surprise that someone older can be tech-savvy, reinforcing age and technological competence stereotypes.
 2. Telling a younger worker, "You're too young to understand." This dismisses their perspectives or experiences purely based on age, undermining their contributions.
 3. Assuming only young people can be innovative or have fresh ideas. This overlooks the value of experience and the potential for creativity across all ages.
 4. Joking about millennials being entitled or lazy. Such comments stereotype an entire generation based on the behaviors of a few, dismissing their individual efforts and circumstances.
 5. Commenting to an older person, "You don't act your age." While possibly intended as a compliment, it suggests there's a specific way people should think, behave, or appear based on their age, which can feel limiting or judgmental.

Social Work Commitment

“NASW is committed to confronting the harm that our profession has caused and continues to perpetuate by acknowledging, apologizing, educating, and creating safer spaces for honest reflection and courageous conversations about oppression and racism. As an organization, we recognize the importance of becoming a trauma and resiliency-informed profession that promotes principles of justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Our association will advocate with the cultural humility to advance our profession by challenging it to do better and, ensure we remain vigil to our past and rooted firmly in a future of justice and belonging for all” (NASW Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and the Social Work Profession, 2022).

More information to research on ADEI

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