



EMPATHY  
Strategies for Inclusive Excellence  
WORKBOOK

Part of the E.Q.U.I.T.A.B.L.E. Series

Samantha Winterberg, Ed.D

# WELCOME

*Hi There!*

In this transformative journey to decode the equity matrix and develop cultural humility, we delve into the profound power of empathy as a corner stone for true inclusion. Empathy bridges understanding and fosters connections that dismantle barriers and nurture authentic, inclusive spaces.

The principles explored in this workbook are relative to all people, and are particularly critical to cultivate just treatment of marginalized individuals, and allyship with those less advantaged individuals.

Through targeted exercises and reflections, this workbook guides you in cultivating empathy, thereby amplifying its role in championing equity. As we navigate the pages ahead, let empathy be the compass that guides us toward a human-centric world where every identity is not just acknowledged but also embraced.

I invite you to join me on this journey to unlock the transformative power of education and build a more just and equitable world for all.

*Samantha Winterberg, Ed.D*



## ABOUT ME

For too long, systemic inequalities have created barriers to opportunity and well-being. As a psychologist and educator, I believe that education is the single most powerful tool to dismantle these barriers and create a more equitable world. Mental health should not be a privilege for some, and unattainable for those less privileged or oppressed. Let's amplify diverse voices and experiences that are often marginalized or silenced.

# E.Q.U.I.T.A.B.L.E.



The E.Q.U.I.T.A.B.L.E. framework presented in the *The Queer are Here| Fostering LGBTQ+ Equity in Higher Education* and in the companion *Resource Manual*, explores nine constructs vital to achieve educational equity.

Each workbook in this *Strategies for Inclusive Excellence Series* focuses on one construct.

Interconnectedness shapes our lives, fosters resilience, empathy, and a sense of belonging.

The collective strength of communities, relationships, and shared experiences plays a pivotal role in cultivating the educational frontiers ahead.

- 01 Within these pages you will be introduced to evidence-based research on the power of empathy and the role it plays in supporting equitable practices, policies, and protections. External links and resources will allow you to further explore your empathy levels, biases, and emotional intelligence.
- 02 Case studies and scenarios offer you opportunities to think critically about perceptions and behaviors that enhance or stifle empathy. Exploring how empathy impacts beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors can expand cultural sensitivity.
- 03 Engagement activities are interspersed to foster deeper understanding of key concepts. These can aid you in synthesizing the information so it is relevant to your personal and professional environments.
- 04 Journal pages located on the back side of each page allow space to customize your learning and teaching notes. Space is available at the end of the workbook to organize your lesson plans and develop your *Empathy Strategy for Inclusive Excellence*!

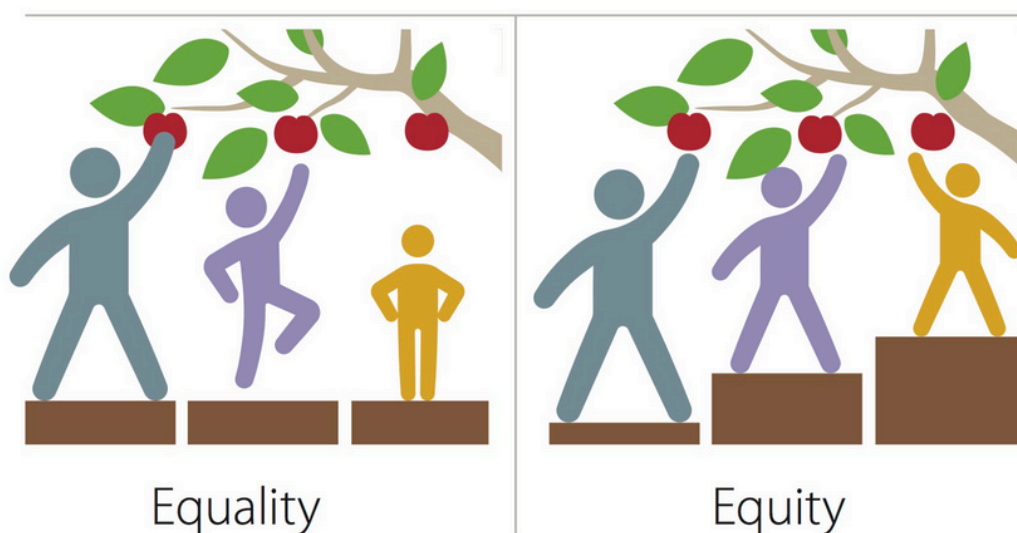
### Key Points:

- **Equity as a Completing Element:** While diversity and inclusion set the stage by acknowledging and embracing differences, equity ensures that those differences are not just acknowledged but actively addressed to achieve fairness and justice.
- **Systemic Change:** Equity involves examining and challenging systemic structures and policies to create an environment where everyone has equal opportunities and outcomes, irrespective of their background.
- **Interconnected Goals:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are interconnected and reinforce each other. An equitable approach strengthens inclusion, which, in turn, supports a diverse and thriving community.

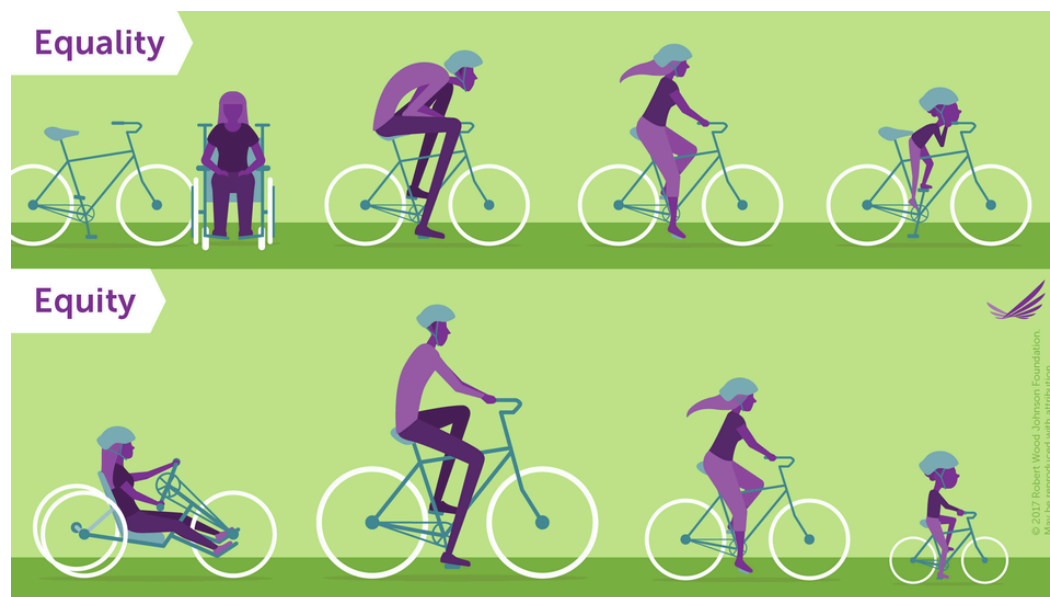
### Tangential Relationship:

- Diversity and inclusion create the foundation for equity by recognizing and valuing differences and fostering an inclusive environment.
- Equity addresses the disparities that may exist within diverse groups, aiming to level the playing field and eliminate systemic barriers.

In summary, within the DEI matrix, equity serves as a vital element that complements diversity and inclusion efforts. It emphasizes the need for systemic change to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, has an equal chance to succeed and thrive within an inclusive environment.



File:Equality vs Equity.png. (2023, August 8). Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 02:13, December 13, 2023 from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Equality\\_vs\\_Equity.png&oldid=791304591](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Equality_vs_Equity.png&oldid=791304591).



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## Equality vs Equity

Equality and equity are not the same. The difference between equity and equality lies in their approaches to fairness. Equality aims to treat everyone the same, providing identical resources or opportunities to all, regardless of individual needs. On the other hand, equity recognizes that individuals have diverse needs and strives to distribute resources or opportunities proportionally, addressing specific circumstances to achieve a more just outcome.

While equality emphasizes sameness, equity focuses on ensuring everyone has what they need to attain a comparable level of success or well-being, acknowledging and addressing systemic disadvantages that certain groups may face.

- Equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems, and increases in supports for positive health outcomes as reported by those who have been targeted.
- Equality assumes that all people have access to the same opportunities and advantages, whereas equity acknowledges that access to resources varies among individuals and aims to distribute resources to achieve equal results.
- Equity is not always equal because the circumstances of the individuals differ vastly, creating a need for more resources for some people, usually the historically more disadvantaged minorities.
- When resources are distributed equally to everyone, sometimes, equity is sacrificed.

In the pursuit of equity, we must embrace inclusive practices and respect for diversity. Imagine an environment where every voice is heard, every perspective valued, and every individual empowered.

Equity is not a one-size-fits-all solution; it is about recognizing and celebrating our differences. Inclusion ensures everyone has a seat at the table, contributing their unique strengths. It is a commitment to dismantling barriers and fostering a culture where diversity is not just acknowledged but embraced.

By respecting and championing diversity, we pave the way for genuine equity—a place where each person, regardless of background, has equal opportunities to thrive and contribute meaningfully.



## How is Diversity related to Equity?

Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”<sup>1</sup>

When we hear the word diversity, we often think it relates to race and culture, but diversity refers to varying or differing states of being and that could mean diverse perspectives, diverse experiences, or diverse preferences. Diversity should be recognized and respected. Equity is possible when diversity is appreciated. Differing experiences and knowledge add value when brainstorming or problem solving. Justice is the social and political concept of fairness and equality.

1. Stewart, D.- L. (2017, April 4). Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think (essay). Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-one-you-think-essay>

Lack of respect or understanding of diverse cultural traditions can also stifle equity.



**Scenario:** Accommodating Faith to Create Equity

Approximately 25% of the world population is Muslim and the U.S. Muslim population is expected to be over 8 million by 2050.<sup>1</sup> Still, many Western policies do not accommodate religious practices. For example, sports organizations often lack inclusive policies that address the customary spiritual and dietary practices of Muslims. This might include pausing for prayer five times per day or offering meals void of pork. Lack of support can hinder the ability to balance athletic pursuits with personal, religious, and cultural priorities.

Efforts should be made to promote inclusion and representation of Muslims in all sectors of society. This includes supporting Muslim traditions and ensuring that Muslims have equal access to opportunities and resources. Building bridges between different faith communities is crucial for promoting tolerance and mutual respect. Muslims may be subjected to religious profiling which can infringe on their privacy and civil liberties. This can create a climate of fear and distrust.

Interfaith dialogue can help to dispel stereotypes and promote understanding of diverse religions and cultures. Muslim athletes may not be denied access to play because of their faith but refusing to recognize and respect the specificities of faith stifles equity. Access is not enough.



**Reflective Journaling:** Can you think of another example where diversity is not promoted, respected, or enforced? What do you believe the barriers might be?

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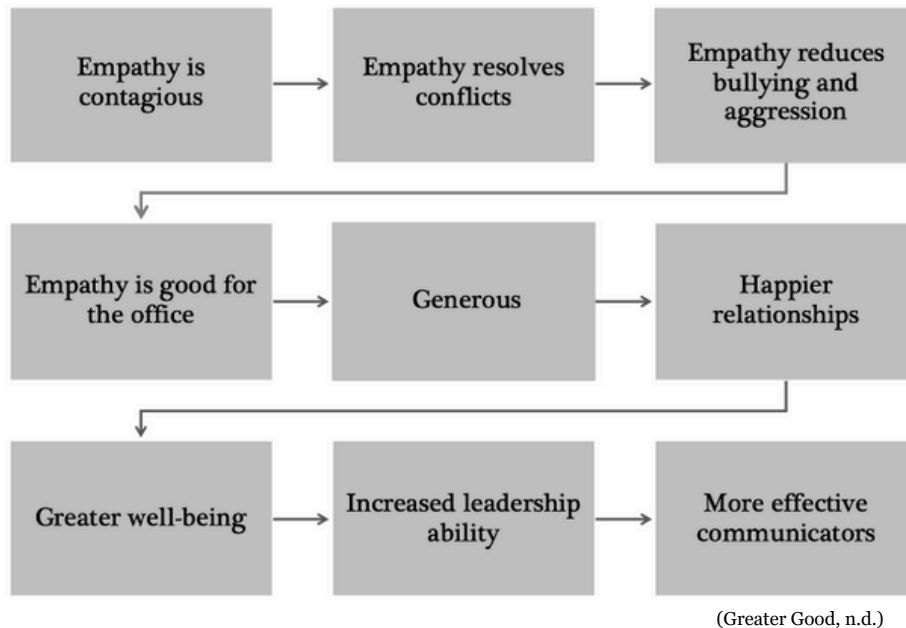
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1. Mohamed, B. (2018, January 3). New estimates show U.S. Muslim population continues to grow. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/>



# Empathy



Do you know how much EMPATHY you have? Empathy is finite, and usually connected to people we are closest to rather than strangers. When depleted of empathy, we can experience compassion fatigue. Empathy can be replenished and redirected. Our capacity for empathy can determine how we manage situations, especially when we want to be more inclusive and respect diversity.

The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, created the EMPATHY QUIZ containing 28 questions. The quiz is free. You will receive an empathy score plus feedback interpreting this score and tips for strengthening your empathy skills. The link is below. You can also search for the Greater Good Science Center Empathy Quiz where you can log in to record your results and retest as often as you want.

## Empathy Quiz

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take\\_quiz/empathy](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/empathy)

1. Greater Good in Action (n.d.).

[https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/36\\_questions\\_for\\_increasing\\_closeness?\\_ga=2.74253392.312878720.1691248760-148349795.1691248760](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/36_questions_for_increasing_closeness?_ga=2.74253392.312878720.1691248760-148349795.1691248760)





### **Scenario:** Bridging Empathy Gaps for Workplace Equity

In a bustling tech company, Team WebLaunch, the lack of empathy among co-workers is undermining the pursuit of workplace equity. June, a seasoned project manager, has noticed a growing disconnect between team members. Collaboration is strained, and there's a palpable lack of understanding about the diverse experiences within the team.

June assigns a critical project to two team members, Kia and Tony. Kia is navigating the challenges of being a working parent, while Tony is contending with the unique demands of managing a chronic health condition. As deadlines approach, tensions rise. Kia feels unsupported and judged for occasional flexibility, while Tony senses resentment for unexpected medical leaves.

The lack of empathy exacerbates workplace inequity. Misunderstandings lead to biased assumptions, affecting performance evaluations and opportunities for professional growth. The team's collective well-being suffers, and trust erodes, whereby hindering collaboration and innovation.



**Reflective Journaling:** Reflect on your work, school, or social environments. Can you list three situations where more empathy was needed or where empathy was observed?

1 .

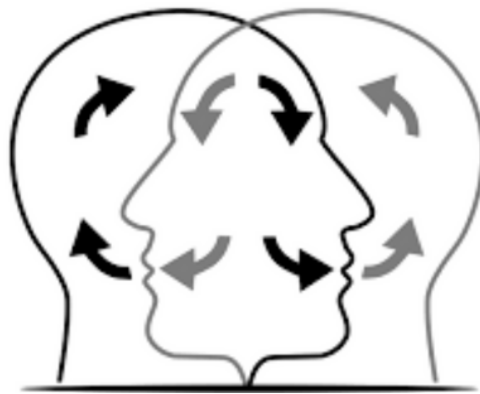
2 .

3 .

### **Building Trust and Relationships:**

Trust is a fundamental aspect of equity. Empathy contributes to building trust by demonstrating a genuine concern for the well-being of others. Trustworthy relationships are essential for implementing and sustaining equitable practices.

In summary, empathy is necessary for equity as it fosters a deep understanding of diverse perspectives, promotes inclusive environments, and encourages tailored solutions to address individual needs. By cultivating empathy, individuals and institutions can contribute to a more equitable and just society.



### **Let's Check Our Understanding**

**Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the appropriate word from the list: equity, diversity, justice, inclusion, empathy.**

1. Achieving \_\_\_\_\_ in the workplace involves recognizing and valuing the differences among employees, fostering a culture of respect for all backgrounds and perspectives.
2. The principle of \_\_\_\_\_ ensures that everyone has fair and equal opportunities, regardless of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the act of understanding and sharing the feelings of others, creating a connection that goes beyond mere tolerance.
4. A commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ means actively working to eliminate discrimination and create a sense of belonging for everyone.
5. The pursuit of social \_\_\_\_\_ involves addressing systemic issues and promoting fairness in the distribution of resources and opportunities.

# Empathy

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.