

Identity and Inclusion

Understanding identity and intersectionality

As peer workers, we work with and serve individuals from diverse backgrounds and identities, both biological and social. People differ in so many ways - in their genetic make-up, sociocultural backgrounds, attitudes, the way they speak, listen, learn, behave, act and react. Each person has a unique combination of these factors that make them different from others and forms each person's unique identity. People have a tendency to sort other people into groups based on how similar they are to themselves using one or more of the constructs of identity. As peer workers, it is important for us to be equipped with the ability to create a safe and inclusive environment for all, regardless of their race, gender identity, country of origin, and background.

Intersectionality refers to the way that our complex identities and group membership overlap to form our whole selves. These identities work together to shape each person's societal and cultural lived and living experience. Society either uplifts or oppresses individuals on the basis of facets of their identities.

Understanding gender identity

Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases, it can even be all or nothing. Gender is a fluid concept.



Gender identity

Refers to the psychological sense of yourself. It is how you think of yourself based on how much you align with what you understand to be the options for gender.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation who you are physically, spiritually and emotionally attracted to based on their sex and gender in relation to your own.

Expression

Expression - The ways you present gender, through your actions, clothing, demeanor, and more. Your outward-facing self, and how that's interpreted by others.

Sex

Comprised of things like physical organs, genitals, chromosomes, hormones, body hair, and more.

Religion/
Beliefs

Sexual
orientation

Gender

Religion/
Beliefs

Culture

Ethnicity

Disabilities

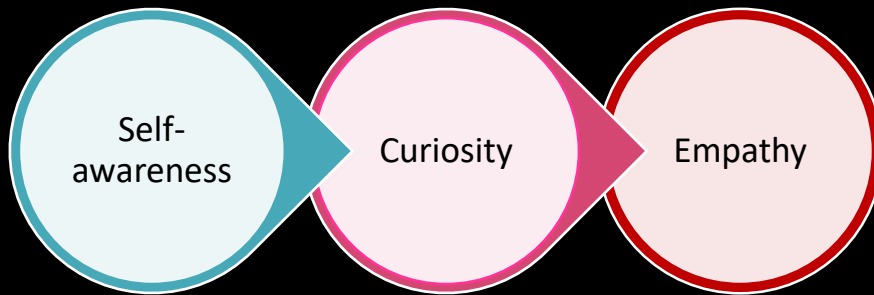
Age

Education
/
skills

What is inclusion?

Inclusion is providing an environment where people feel valued, trusted, connected, and informed. It's about recognizing and valuing the different lived and living experiences within our communities so that everyone may experience their own gifts, uniqueness and rights.

Be inclusive

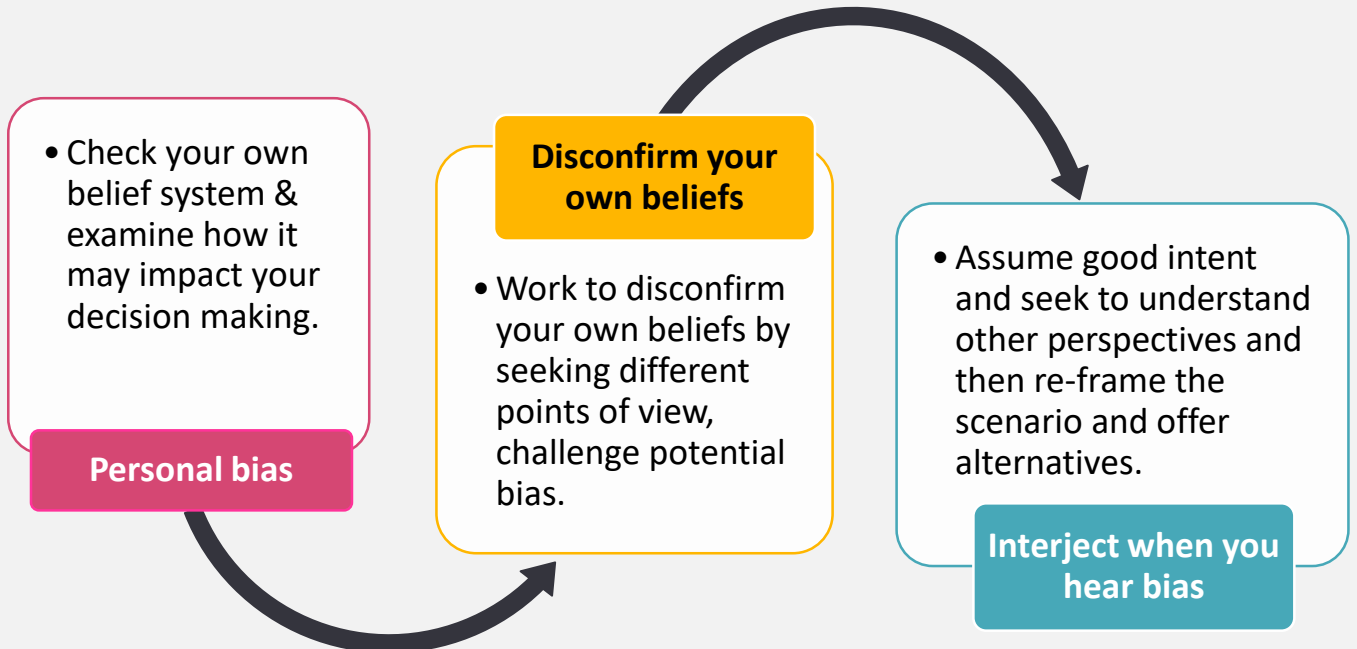


Be aware that your actions can and will be interpreted by diverse stakeholders

Be open to understanding different perspectives and experiences that enable growth

Listen effectively and understand from the others' point of view to build trust and safety.

Become aware of bias



- Check your own belief system & examine how it may impact your decision making.

Personal bias

- Work to disconfirm your own beliefs by seeking different points of view, challenge potential bias.

Disconfirm your own beliefs

- Assume good intent and seek to understand other perspectives and then re-frame the scenario and offer alternatives.

Interject when you hear bias

Value diversity

Voice

- Create a safe space for your team to feel confident to have a voice and share their opinions. Let everyone share their ideas without fear of repercussions, and live their identity without facing discrimination.

Celebrate differences

- Encourage everyone to express their identity and practice their culture within your team to demonstrate that you value their uniqueness.

Unite

- Design inclusive policies and programs or abolish some previous ones entirely to start building an inclusive culture. Regularly ask for feedback from the team regarding their experience.