



At a Glance: Value the benefits of diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and ways of thinking. Support and promote the voices of others during discussions. Collaborate successfully with cross-disciplinary and intercultural groups. Recognize discriminatory behavior and be an agent of change.

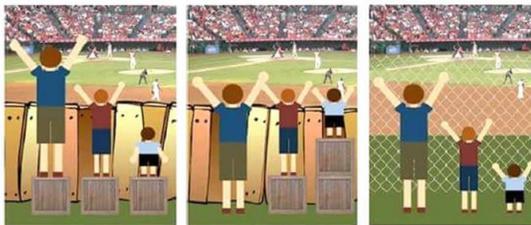
Understanding Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

While humanity has accomplished significant social progress in recent decades, from decreasing poverty to providing more widespread healthcare and education, this progress remains uneven. Social and economic injustice persists at both the global and the local community levels, often targeting an individual’s identity (e.g., cultural, racial, gender).¹

At the micro-level of a community or a team, the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion are intertwined; they are defined by the process of improving the terms of participation in a discussion (**inclusion**), and promoting and integrating diverse perspectives (**diversity**), in order to attain fair access to opportunities (**equity**).

Equity

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.

In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.

In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

While equality focuses on equal treatment, equity recognizes that existing barriers require different level of support so that every member of the community has fair access to opportunities and resources (see figure). In other terms, equity requires different treatments to remove the “barriers” so we can all become equal.^{2 3} For example, equity in access to jobs is preserved through a governmental or organizational Employment Equity Act.

In Canada, the [Employment Equity Act](#) aims to achieve equality and fairness in the workplace by applying principles of equity, such as providing adequate work

accommodations, to ultimately correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.⁴

Diversity

Diversity refers to “any and all differences between and among people”⁵ Some examples of the various dimensions of diversity include: gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture, ability, and socioeconomic status; this is not an exhaustive list. To learn more about the dimensions of diversity, check-out the [McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education \(SEDE\)](#).

Importantly, diversity is present at multiple levels and is not exclusive to being different from an arbitrary norm (e.g., social or cultural norms). For example, individuals of the same gender or race have different educational backgrounds, abilities, values, and opinions; these differences are elements of diversity.⁶ In social equity, diversity refers to differences in social group membership (e.g., social class, sexual orientation, and others). In fact, resistance to diversity is rooted in historical and contemporary experiences of social inequity and oppression.^{7 8}

Inclusion

Inclusion implies improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for individuals who are disadvantaged such as: people with disabilities, and minority populations such as racialized people, women, LGBTQ+ people, and Indigenous people. Fostering inclusion facilitates access to opportunities (e.g., education, job) and to resources (e.g., financial and social support), hence respecting basic human rights.⁹

Why does it matter?

Imagine a future where you are still paid less than a man with the same qualifications – because you are a woman. Imagine a future where your coworkers still dismiss your ideas – because of your cultural background. Imagine a future where you are still told who you can and cannot love. Imagine a future where generations are still being taught that there are limits to their dreams – because of who they are. Imagine a world without equity, diversity and inclusion.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are key for positive social and professional interactions. In a team, diversity in abilities, perspectives, and values widens horizons and expands knowledge.¹⁰ A team embraces diversity and inclusion by respecting everyone's input; this practice results in more fruitful discussions, creative solutions to complex problems, and new “outside the box” ideas.¹¹

On a larger scale, systemic discrimination in organizations creates and perpetuates the disadvantage for marginalized groups, including racialized people, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, women, and Indigenous people. Systemic discrimination in higher education translates into less access and lower success rates among targeted groups; in the labour market, systemic barriers produce higher than average unemployment rates, lower than average salaries, and concentrations in low-status jobs among these groups¹²

Race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, and age are not mutually exclusive entities. These social categorizations are interconnected and create an overlapping system of discrimination – also known as intersectionality.¹³ Gender inequality and racial discrimination are examples where discrimination experienced because of gender, such as discrimination against women, can be directly related, encouraged, and shaped by race or ethnicity.¹⁴

Respecting the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion enhances social cohesion while preventing alienation of individuals or groups. Learning about the various dimensions of diversity around you, and developing a better understanding of the other will motivate you to combat discriminatory behaviour, and to advocate for inclusive and equitable practices for the ultimate wellbeing of your community.

Cultivating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

If history is any indication, we as a community should rise above inequity and discriminatory behaviours (e.g., stereotyping, misogyny) by acknowledging their detrimental consequences on society as a whole. Promoting inclusion and diversity, and advocating for equity are collective efforts that require the commitment of organizations, governments, as well as individuals.

Organizational behaviours (e.g., code of conduct, policies) are a reflection of an organization's dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion. At this level, systemic discrimination calls for systemic remedies in the form of changes to policies and practices that address the barriers limiting the full participation of disadvantaged groups. Additionally, various Canadian government agencies have designated policies as well as training opportunities to promote the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in their activities (e.g., peer review and recruitment processes at [Canada Research Chairs](#)).

At McGill, the Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) office is dedicated to ensure an equitable and inclusive experience for all students, staff, and faculty as part of McGill's mission of academic excellence and service to society. SEDE offers educational programs to raise awareness on practices that foster diversity, equity, and engagement.

Studies in psychology and sociology have shown that we all possess, to different extents, implicit biases – defined as unconscious associations of stereotypes and attitudes with a particular group.¹⁵ These biases are dictated by the social environment that each individual is exposed to (e.g., cultural or religious influence).¹⁶ Perform the [Implicit Bias Test](#) created by Harvard researchers to find out about your bias as a first step in consciously and objectively modeling your perceptions and behaviours.¹⁷ You may be surprised by the contrast between your conscious egalitarian values and your implicit ones.

While policies exist at most Canadian organizations, it remains our responsibility as citizens, colleagues, peers, friends, or neighbours to support and respect each other's' rights to be treated fairly, to be recognized for our abilities, to be respected and appreciated for who we chose to be, and to provide necessary support for those of us who remain disadvantaged. The day we no longer ask if we are sufficiently inclusive, diverse or fair, is the day these principles would have become the norm, rather than a remarkable exception.

Quick Guide to Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Know your [rights as a McGill student](#), employee, and citizen while respecting those of others
- Confront your biases and prejudice and accept that unconscious biases impact your perceptions and behaviours. Check out [this article](#) to learn about interventions to reduce your bias.
- Commit to learning more about the different forms of oppression that affect you and the people around you: Exploitation, Marginalization, Powerlessness, Cultural domination, and Violence.¹⁸
- Benefit from the cultural diversity at McGill to learn about other existing cultures, religions, and perspectives on local and global issues.¹⁹
- Participate in groups, associations or projects where you can engage in constructive dialogues about topics within or beyond your expertise or comfort zone
- Connect, listen and learn from books, events, movies, and people – especially those with more diverse experiences than yours²⁰
- Be an agent of change: act when witnessing discriminatory behaviour or human/student rights violation²¹
- Be objective and open to other perspectives, and compromise when necessary²²
- Use and promote assertive self-expression during a group discussion (assertive self-expression is a direct, firm and positive way of communication that promotes equality in person-to-person relationships²³
- Treat others the way they want to be treated – The Platinum Rule²⁴

Taking Action

Professional Development & Training

- Check [myInvolvement](#) for upcoming workshops and programs by searching for events tagged with this category: equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Workshops - [McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education \(SEDE\) - Safer Spaces Workshops](#): a list of workshops designed to expose participants to a number of concepts related to equity, diversity and inclusiveness.

Gaining Experience

- Participate in the [SEDE's Equity Programs](#) (Family care, Café Collab, Black History Month, Indigenous Education, and more)
- Volunteer in [SEDE's Community Engagement](#) projects

Events

- [Black History Month](#)
- [Indigenous Awareness Week](#)

Resources

Websites

- [McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education Office](#): SEDE provides trainings, events, consultation, mentorship, and resources to raise awareness and ensure an equitable and inclusiveness experience for the McGill community.
- [McGill Post-Graduate Students' Society - Equity and Diversity Resources](#): a list of equity tools, training and resources to learn more about diversity and equity.
- [Gender-inclusive language guidelines](#) - University of North Carolina Writing Centre.

Groups & Associations

- [McGill SEDE page](#) has a list of groups and organizations at McGill and in the community.
- [DAWN Canada](#): an organization that works towards the advancement and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities and Deaf women in Canada.
- [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#): a social organization that spreads awareness, and initiate dialogue and action to promote diversity and inclusion.

Books, Articles & Reports

- A list of articles, guides, toolkits, and books per topic are available on [SEDE Resources](#) page.
- Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. New York: Delacorte Press. <http://mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/687655333>
- Kaplan, M., & Donovan, M. (2016). *Inclusion Dividend: Why Investing in Diversity & Inclusion Pays off*. <http://mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/1014372064>
- Liswood, L. A. (2010). *The loudest duck: Moving beyond diversity while embracing differences to achieve success at work*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. <http://mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/495092249>
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References

- ¹ [Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development. United Nations \(2016\).](#)
- ² [Equity Education. McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education Office \(SEDE\).](#)
- ³ [Equity Education. McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education Office \(SEDE\).](#)
- ⁴ [Employment Equity Act 1995](#)
- ⁵ [Clow 2012](#)
- ⁶ [Clow 2012](#)
- ⁷ [Equity Education. McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education Office.](#)
- ⁸ [Equity Education. McGill Social Equity and Diversity Education Office.](#)
- ⁹ [Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development. United Nations \(2016\).](#)
- ¹⁰ [What Differences Make a Difference? The Promise and Reality of Diverse Teams in Organizations. Mannix, E. \(2005\).](#)
- ¹¹ [What Differences Make a Difference? The Promise and Reality of Diverse Teams in Organizations. Mannix, E. \(2005\).](#)
- ¹² [Understanding Discrimination. Social Equity & Diversity Education Office \(SEDE\).](#)
- ¹³ [Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas. Collins, P.H. \(2015\).](#)
- ¹⁴ [Gender and racial discrimination: Report of the Expert Group Meeting. UN Women Watch \(2000\).](#)
- ¹⁵ [Implicit and explicit prejudice and interracial interaction. Dovidio, J.F. \(2002\).](#)
- ¹⁶ [Godsil 2017](#)
- ¹⁷ [Project Implicit](#)
- ¹⁸ [Five Faces of Oppression. Young, M. \(2011\).](#)
- ¹⁹ [McGill Social Equity & Diversity Education \(SEDE\).](#)
- ²⁰ [McGill Social Equity & Diversity Education \(SEDE\).](#)
- ²¹ [Defining Twenty-First Century Skills. Binkley, M. \(2011\).](#)
- ²² [Defining Twenty-First Century Skills. Binkley, M. \(2011\).](#)
- ²³ [Alberti 2008](#)
- ²⁴ [Alessandra 1996](#)