



# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

A toolkit for Doctors Nova Scotia members,  
Board of Directors and staff

MARCH 2022



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# Introduction

Advancing equity and diversity and fostering inclusion are the responsibility of every citizen. This interactive toolkit will help you continue your learning journey with equity, diversity and inclusion and apply those principles to your work. These guidelines are a starting point for Doctors Nova Scotia staff and members who want to understand how they can apply an equity lens to their work, decision-making and interactions with others.

## **Acknowledgments**

The knowledge contained within this toolkit, including practical suggestions and underlying theories, largely originates from and is generated by people from equity-deserving populations. Centuries of labour and activism by Black, Indigenous and people of colour, queer people, disabled people, women and gender-diverse people have equipped us to develop such repositories of learning.

The toolkit was compiled by Doctors Nova Scotia staff and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) consultant Angela Simmonds. Doctors Nova Scotia's EDI learning was influenced by training from Chrysalis Human Rights Agency, based in Kjiptuk (Halifax).

# 1. Scope of the equity, diversity and inclusion toolkit

## 1.1 What are equity and inclusion?

### **Equity is not equality.**

Equality is equal treatment; equity is fair treatment. Equality seeks to give everyone the same opportunities. Equity seeks to give everyone the same opportunities while recognizing their unique situation and proactively and continuously addressing systemic barriers.

If an organization treats someone starting from a place of disadvantage the same as it treats a person starting from a place of advantage, it perpetuates and ultimately increases the gap between those two people. Equitable measures close that gap, getting everyone onto a level playing field.

Equity with inclusion means a variety of people have power, with a voice and decision-making authority.

## 1.2 Guide to the toolkit: How will the toolkit help us?

An equity lens is a practical tool that helps to ensure policies result in equitable outcomes. This lens helps you see things from a new perspective. This lens is a series of considerations that will assist you and to guide your work as you seek to understand how decisions and actions break down or reinforce the barriers that exclude equal participation within your profession.

This toolkit will help Doctors Nova Scotia's (DNS) staff, Board of Directors and members to be consistent when applying an equity lens. This toolkit will help users identify barriers where they occur; eliminate barriers by making adaptations that reflect the lived experience of those affected; and create new ways of working by considering equity and inclusion at the earliest stages.

This equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) toolkit describes which groups of people are at the highest risk of being excluded and how they are affected by systems of oppression, including racism, sexism, ableism and ethnocentrism. When we consider our own diversity, check our assumptions, ask about inclusion and apply these tools, we become more aware of the diversity around us. This means we will be better able to develop and deliver services that are responsive to clients and the communities we work with every day; to create positive changes within our work environments and the profession; and, ultimately, to address the systemic barriers and inequities faced by people from equity-seeking groups.

## 2. Context setting: How and why exclusion happens

### 2.1 The “average” person

When we design services or make decisions for a so-called “average person,” we make assumptions that the services are or ought to be accessible to all. In reality, this design makes them inaccessible to many people in society. Too often, policies and programs are developed and implemented without thoughtful consideration of equity and inclusion. When equity is not explicitly brought into operations and decision-making, inequities are likely to be perpetuated. This toolkit provides a structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity and inclusion.

Although, by law, practices such as enslavement, residential schools and criminalization of queer marriage have been dissolved, the underlying ideologies that were built into our society’s systems and institutions persist. The systems, structures and government institutions that we still use today were developed with a deliberate agenda to oppress specific groups and maintain power for others.

At an individual level, we all have blind spots in our thinking and implicit biases that affect our judgment and the decisions we make each day. It is because of these blind spots and biases that it is crucial to use this toolkit when creating new policies, processes or processes or replacing old ones.

### 2.2 Historically marginalized groups in Nova Scotia: How we got here

Many current inequities are sustained by historical legacies and structures and systems that repeat exclusion. Institutions and structures have continued to create and perpetuate inequities, sometimes despite the current lack of explicit intention.

The following groups of people have been historically marginalized in Nova Scotia:

- African Nova Scotians/Black Canadians
- Indigenous peoples (Mi’kmaq/L’nu)
- Immigrants, refugees, newcomers to Canada
- 2SLGBTQIA+ (two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and others)
- Disabled people (*Note: The community stated a preference for this term over “people with disabilities.”*)
- People with mental illness
- People with lower socioeconomic status

Each of these groups has its own unique story, which should be explored and understood by all Nova Scotians. This toolkit does not review each specific history. Instead, toolkit users should take the initiative to educate themselves on the provincial context for each population listed below. Ideally, seek out materials prepared by people from the population you are learning about.

### 2.3 Practice in critical analysis: What do you see?

This image was part of the Canadian Red Cross 2014 Water Safety Campaign. This image and campaign were aimed at addressing pool safety and risk mitigation.



At first glance, the image appears to be unobjectionable. It not until you take a more careful look, viewing it through an equity lens, that it becomes disturbing.

In the image, every Black or brown child/youth is doing something that is “not cool,” while the white people in the picture are all labelled as “cool.” This may be psychologically harmful: any racialized person who looked at this image would see the people who look like them labelled as “not cool” – that is, Black and brown people being linked to something that is bad. Images like this have the potential to create or inform unconscious biases for some people.

## 3. Tools and learning: Power analysis

### 3.1 Key definitions

Note: When referring to a personal characteristic, use adjectives rather than nouns; for example, say “Black people” rather than “the Blacks”. There is nothing wrong with asking the person you are speaking with what they prefer, or listening to how the person you are speaking with describes themselves and echoing their terminology. Furthermore, change your own vocabulary when you are corrected and/or learn of a better term. Each equity-deserving community is the expert on their own identifiers.

- **2SLGBTQIA+:** An acronym for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual, while the “+” stands for other ways individuals express their gender and sexuality outside heteronormativity and the gender binary.
- **Ableism:** Practices and dominant attitudes in society that assume there is an ideal body and mind that is better than all others.
- **BIPOC:** An acronym standing for “Black, Indigenous or person/people of colour.” This term is used to describe any person who is not white (although racism affects different groups differently).
- **Dominant culture:** The cultural beliefs, values and traditions that are centred and dominant in society’s structures and practices. Dominant cultural practices are thought of as “normal” and, therefore, preferred and “right.” As a result, diverse ways of life are often devalued, marginalized and associated with low cultural capital. Conversely, in a multicultural society, various cultures are celebrated and respected equally.
- **Disability:** A complex phenomenon reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and mind and features of the society in which they live.
- **Equity:** The absence of barriers, biases and obstacles that impede equal access and opportunity to succeed in society.
- **Equity-deserving groups:** Equity-deserving groups are communities that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, and so on. Equity-deserving groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

**N.B. On the shift from “equity-seeking” to “equity-deserving” (Teresa Smith, 2020):** To seek something is to ask for something from someone else. And if equity is a right, which it is, no one should be put into the position of having to ask for it. The act of asking for something puts the asker in a vulnerable position. The asker assumes all the risk: the risk of appearing needy and the risk of having to give control over to someone else. And what of the person or group being asked? The “askee” becomes the one with all the power – the power to give, the power to deny and the power to look the other way.

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*Change your  
own  
vocabulary  
when you are  
corrected  
and/or learn  
of a better  
term*

- **Gender identity:** How an individual perceives and calls themselves that reflects their innermost and authentic gender, which may or may not correspond to sex assigned at birth. Gender-diverse people identify with a gender outside the male/female binary.

- **Genderism:** The systematic belief that people need to conform to their gender assigned at birth in a gender-binary system that includes only female and male.
- **Homophobia:** An irrational fear of, aversion to or discrimination against homosexuality or gay people
- **Intersectionality:** The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect, especially in the experiences of historically excluded groups. The term was originally coined by Kimberley Crenshaw in her analysis of the experiences of Black women with racism and sexism.
- **Institutional betrayal:** This term refers to wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that institution, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings by individuals (for example, sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution.
- **Neurodiversity:** Describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits. It refers to the diversity of all people, but it is often used in the context of autism spectrum disorder, as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as ADHD or learning disabilities.
- **Patriarchy:** Patriarchy is an analytical concept referring to a system of political, social and economic relations and institutions structured around the gender inequality of socially defined men and women. Those attributes and activities seen as “feminine” or as pertaining to women are undervalued, even when performed by men.
- **Power:** Power can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual and financial resources exercised by different sections of society.
  - *Visible power:* This level includes the visible and definable aspects of political power – the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision-making. Examples include elections, political parties, laws, legislatures, budgets, corporate policy and by-laws.
  - *Hidden power:* Certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to be at the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups.
  - *Invisible power:* Invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation.
- **Privilege:** A right or advantage that only some people have access or availability to because of their social group membership.
- **Preferred pronouns:** A preferred gender pronoun is a consciously chosen set of pronouns that allow a person to accurately represent their gender identity.
- **Racism:** Any individual action or institutional practice that treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination.
- **Socioeconomic status:** The social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.
- **Sexism:** Prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls.
- **Systemic barriers:** Consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for marginalized persons.



- **Systemic racism:** Policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized people. These appear neutral on the surface but, nevertheless, have an exclusionary impact on racialized persons.
- **Tokenism:** The practice of including one or a few members of an underrepresented group without their having authority or power equal to that of other members of their community. This places a burden on an individual to represent all others like them. (For example, when the lone person in an underrepresented group is consistently asked to speak about being a member of that group.)
- **Tone policing:** Tone policing is a silencing tactic used in arguments or discussions that focuses on the emotion behind a message rather than the message itself. (For example, telling someone who is discussing an issue that affects them personally and makes them upset to “calm down” instead of responding to their concerns.)
- **Transphobia/transmisogyny:** An irrational fear of, aversion to or discrimination against transgender people. Transmisogyny is the intersection of transphobia and misogyny as experienced by trans women and transfeminine people.
- **Unconscious bias:** Refers to social stereotypes about certain groups of people. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one’s tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. This is also known as implicit bias: the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner.
- **White supremacy:** White supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and people of colour by white people and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege (Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, San Francisco, 2017).

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*Each equity-deserving community is the expert on their own identifiers*

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### 3.2 Power analysis: A tool for assessing power relationships in a given situation

The matrix below was developed by Just Associates in 2003. It can be used to analyze and outline EDI considerations when considering policies or practices. At Doctors Nova Scotia, it can be used in senior leadership team and Board of Directors Briefing Notes.

	<b>Micro power</b> ( <i>Power dynamics that take place between individuals or within an organization or community</i> )	<b>Macro power</b> ( <i>Power dynamics that shape national and international arenas and broader public spaces</i> )
<b>Visible</b> <i>Observable decision-making</i>	<p>What does representation look like within our organizations and strategies (who is speaking for whom and what are class, race, gender and other differences)?</p> <p>Who are the leaders and are there opportunities for new leadership?</p> <p>What are the coalition dynamics? How are decisions made? How is conflict managed?</p>	<p>What does representation look like in formal political spaces, international financial institutions, etc.?</p> <p>How are public policy decisions made (who is and who is not included in the process)?</p> <p>How do decision-makers interact (or not) with citizens?</p>
<b>Hidden</b> <i>Setting the political agenda</i>	<p>Within family/community/organizations/movements, what agendas dominate?</p> <p>Are gender, class, ethnicity and other dimensions integrated into justice strategies?</p> <p>How is information gathered and used? To what extent is practical knowledge valued alongside technical expertise?</p>	<p>What institutions and/or individuals have access to the decision-making process and how is this access determined?</p> <p>How do civil society groups project their agenda and get their issues on decision-makers' agendas? How are spaces created to negotiate with decision-makers? How is information used and produced?</p>
<b>Invisible</b> <i>Shaping meaning</i>	<p>How are internalized social (race/gender/ethnic/class/etc.) roles and stereotypes played out in family, work and community?</p> <p>Do people think they are too "stupid" to understand the problems that affect them?</p> <p>Do people think they have no role and no right in changing their situation and that they're to blame for being poor?</p>	<p>Is there systematic discrimination/exclusion, whether on basis of race, class, gender, age, etc.?</p> <p>How are problems "sold" to the public – as natural, inevitable? Are people made to feel that they have any role in the solution?</p> <p>What is the paradigm of development that underlies decision-making?</p>

### 3.3 Human resources: Hiring with an EDI lens

Many organizations want to increase the diversity of their staff, volunteers and leadership. This is a set of considerations for how you can integrate EDI into hiring processes. This content was adapted from [\*Canada Research Chairs: Creating an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Research Environment: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention.\*](#)

#### Job postings

- Ensure an EDI expert reviews and approves the job posting before it is posted to confirm it aligns with best practices.
- Post all job postings publicly for a minimum of 30 days.
- Use encompassing, clear, flexible criteria for assessing excellence that fully document, recognize and reward all aspects of the role.
- Strongly encourage language that focuses on abilities over experience. Highly skilled candidates can be overlooked and not short-listed because they lack “the experience.” Candidates from underrepresented groups may lack the requisite experience not because of lack of skills, but because of leaves (for example, parental or sick leaves) and also because of historical and systemic barriers and unconscious biases that have prevented them from gaining that experience.
- Post only the qualifications and skills necessary for the job.
- Use inclusive, unbiased, ungendered language. Be inclusive of all genders: e.g., use the phrase “all genders” rather than stipulate “women and men,” and use the pronoun “them” instead of “him” and/or “her.” Avoid stereotyping, and avoid prioritizing traits and descriptions traditionally viewed as masculine (e.g., assertive, ambitious, competitive).
- Include information in the job posting about the organization and provide web links, if available. Showcase the diversity of the organization if possible.
- Require, as part of the job criteria, a track record related to EDI. Encourage applicants to identify their strengths and experiences in increasing EDI in their previous institutional environment.
- Use commitment-to-equity statements effectively:
  - Develop an equity statement that is meaningful and applies a wide lens in defining diversity. Avoid using very general statements saying the organization supports equity or supports applications from individuals from underrepresented groups. Apply language that is consistent with the principles of EDI.
  - Avoid using the adjective “qualified” in the equity statement, as all candidates must be qualified.
  - Provide information about the institution, community assets and resources, EDI policies and action plan, accommodation policies and family resources that would serve a diverse group and attract them to the organization.
- Avoid creating unnecessary barriers. For example, posting internally or limiting external distribution of the job posting inherently values seniority and those who are “in the know.” Work-related assessment criteria should also apply to comparable experience in academic or unpaid experiences.
- Reach out to colleagues, community members and other organizations to promote the position. Consider using social media, job portals and electronic mailing lists to promote the position. Where there is documented underrepresentation of a specific group within the

organization, explore the possibilities of conducting a strategic recruitment process that is limited to candidates who will help address gaps (where aligned with provincial/territorial human rights legislation). Clearly communicate in the job posting that the process is limited as such.

### **Search for candidates**

- Mandate proactive, strategic outreach to attract members of underrepresented groups.
- Compensate hiring committee members by giving them relief from other committee assignments; this will let them devote more time and resources to the hiring process, and will underscore the importance that senior management accords an open and transparent search that takes EDI into consideration. Include measures to avoid the “equity tax.” (This is when members of underrepresented groups face greater workloads and are not compensated or recognized for this additional work and pressure on their time.)
- Accept a full CV, ensuring that career interruptions due to parental leave, family care, extended illness or community responsibilities do not negatively impact the assessment of a candidate’s research productivity. It is important that applicants know these will be taken into consideration when their applications are assessed.
- Search for candidates through social media and at conferences, gatherings or other events.
- Collect disaggregated self-identification data from all applicants. Provide a clear privacy notice that indicates this data is collected to better assess how to attract applicants from underrepresented groups and the diversity of the applicant pool. Apply the self-identification best practices identified below.
- Encourage stakeholders to approach members of underrepresented groups and suggest that they apply.
- Assess whether the pool of applicants is sufficiently diverse. If the pool of applicants is not large or diverse enough, extend the application deadline or review the job posting more critically for potential barriers and re-post it.
- Treat candidates who are not shortlisted with courtesy and respect by providing responses as swiftly as possible.
- Be mindful that the best-qualified candidates may not have the most years of experience, most significant achievement or highest levels of education. For example, an applicant who took time away from work or studies for family-related matters or a disabled person who has a reduced workload may not have as many formal achievements, but the substance and quality of that applicant’s work may render them best qualified.
- Recognize the value of work-related outputs that are in different formats or platforms, including informal volunteering and leadership in communities. For example, a person’s experience as a patient and/or caregiver may give them extensive experience with the health-care system.

### 3.4 Self-identification in hiring and surveys

Here are some things to consider about self-identification in hiring and surveys.

- When prioritizing self-identified equity-deserving applicants in hiring or performing a survey or census, provide a definition of each designated group, including 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, and then ask if the respondent self-identifies as a member of that group. Options should be inclusive (for example, man, woman, gender neutral, non-binary, trans man, trans woman, Two-Spirit) and each question should provide the option to not respond.
- Collect disaggregated data for all groups to identify systemic barriers within policies and processes.
- Explain the purposes of the question/questionnaire, how the data will be used, privacy considerations, and the importance of self-identification for an accurate understanding of equity representation.
- Be respectful of why someone may choose not to self-identify; self-identification is a choice.
- Explicitly state a privacy policy alongside the methods of protection and planned uses of any information collected.
- Ensure senior management (as well as union representatives) understand and can communicate the institution's equity and diversity data and objectives.
- Send an accompanying letter from the president or the vice-president of research with the equity questionnaire.
- Consider creating a video (with closed captioning) on employee diversity and self-identification. Ask designated management and staff of diverse backgrounds to participate as champions, to explain the importance of self-identification and encourage respondents to self-identify. Consider having a periodic self-identification campaign.
- Designate one or more staff members to encourage respondents to self-identify; send reminders.
- Clearly communicate how individuals can change their self-identification data if they so choose.
- Include information on rank and seniority level to be able to collect data that would indicate if there are systemic barriers to members of underrepresented groups being promoted to senior academic positions.
- Never guess or assume the gender, race, or other characteristics of a nominee. This is a violation of the individual's right to privacy and is open to error/misrepresentation. Do not rely upon assumptions about a person's identity (if they choose not to self-identify). Do not "identify" candidates based on physical appearance.
- Avoid general, blanket equity statements such as, "This institution celebrates diversity and believes in creating an equal-opportunity environment." Instead, use the statement to strongly emphasize the institution's commitment to equity, have with examples and/or a plan to follow through. For example, "This institution is an advocate for equity and is committed to ensuring its community is diverse and inclusive. We welcome applications from members of racialized minorities, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, persons of various sexual orientations and gender identities, and others with the skills and knowledge to productively engage with diverse communities and contribute to the institution's excellence. The institution seeks to maintain its commitment to excellence and recognizes that increasing the diversity of its faculty and ensuring an inclusive environment supports this objective."
- Suppress data counts of less than five when sharing or publishing data. The ability for others to identify individuals is increased when the number of chairs/individuals is less than five.
- Include non-identification rates when presenting the data, so the margin of error and reliability of the data are transparent.

### 3.5 Human resources: EDI in governance

Doctors Nova Scotia is committed to embedding EDI in its governance structure. This will be accomplished by ensuring that leadership roles are filled by a diverse group of people. In addition, DNS will prioritize the appointment of equity-focused leaders throughout the organization. The following recommendations on board diversity and inclusion were adapted from **Diverse City: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project**. Full recommendations, tools and templates are available [here](#).

#### Developing board or committee policies on EDI

**Look at the competencies on your board as well as the demographics of your organization, your board and your community. Set goals and make a plan.**

To plan a comprehensive strategy addressing diversity in board governance, it is necessary to understand your starting point:

- What is the demographic composition of the community?
- Is the demographic composition of the community currently reflected in the governance of the organization?

**The development of a board diversity policy may be the function of a board diversity committee or a board governance committee. Some organizations are moving away from the diversity committee approach and placing diversity work within a broader context related to governance.** Regardless, it must remain a board priority. This board committee can do the following:

- assess the current state of governance practices and identify gaps
- develop draft by-laws, policies and procedures to improve and clarify governance
- recruit new board members
- ensure board orientation and ongoing development needs are met
- ensure committees have Terms of Reference
- review and make recommendations to the board concerning board composition, board size, board structures, board policies and procedures, by-law amendments and board attendance

#### Board outreach and recruitment

**Identify what you need and what you have.**

Consider your strategic priorities for the next few years. You may have already set these out in a strategic plan. Identify the skills, experience and knowledge needed at the board level to help you achieve them. Consider your changing external environment and whether this requires new skills. What gaps will be created by retiring board members?

Some outreach techniques include:

- advertising in community hubs and population-specific media
- distributing brochures at events and business associations of diverse communities
- newsletters of ethnic professional or business associations
- reaching out to your volunteer base
- conducting information sessions in diverse communities

- advertising in different languages
- becoming affiliated with services that recruit, screen and train potential board candidates

### **Design a transparent and clear application process.**

Ensure that application criteria for board positions are clear and publicly available through board and vacancy profiles. Take a good look at how you manage your selection process now and see if there are ways to be more inclusive.

### **Equip the board or committee for EDI work**

#### **Offer governance and diversity training.**

Regardless of the model of your board governance, all board members require ongoing training on good governance. Good governance training includes diversity training. To be effective, governance training needs to be tailored to your particular audience. You will know if you need to bring in a facilitator to assist you with the planning and delivery. It is important to create a safe learning environment and to allow plenty of time for discussion. You may choose to have board members undertake a self-assessment regarding diversity issues; for example, looking at their assumptions about how they conduct themselves in their board work and their level of cultural awareness. Build more than one diversity training session into your board learning calendar. The commitment to diversity is ongoing and it can take time for board members to develop and/or strengthen the skills they need to achieve your diversity goals.

#### **Take the needs of new board members into consideration.**

Ensure that venues are accessible, that meetings are scheduled to not interfere with major cultural holidays and that child-care needs are addressed. Ask if there are other requirements or preferences.

#### **Keep board members engaged and active.**

Providing ongoing opportunities for your board members to stay engaged is a logical, strategic follow-up to recruitment and selection. Keep up the momentum!

### **Evaluate board or committee EDI efforts**

#### **Here are some actions that will contribute to a successful board diversity initiative:**

- link your actions strongly with your strategic priorities
- clearly communicate what it is you would like to achieve
- keep your board diversity plan “front and centre”
- integrate your diversity plan into your board decision-making processes
- allocate resources for implementation of the plan (for example, for a board retreat)
- put accountability measures in place
- determine what success will look like
- measure (and celebrate) progress
- implement recommendations for improvement

#### **Tracking progress**

You may begin by going back to your starting point and assessing your board composition against relevant demographic information. You may also choose to take a closer look at policies and procedures:

- How have you changed your board nomination and appointments policies and procedures?
- Have your policies and procedures been amended to reduce/address barriers?

### 3.6 Brave spaces

As part of ensuring the practice of inclusion, DNS is committed to creating brave spaces throughout the organization. Meetings and discussions at DNS should always happen in a brave space. More information is available [here](#).

#### **Basic guidelines to creating a brave space**

##### **Controversy with civility**

This is one of the most critical tenants of a brave space. Of course, controversy is often an inherent part of working through complex issues. But maintaining both dignity and respect while navigating a disagreement can foster greater connection.

##### **Owning intentions and impacts**

Accountability is another cornerstone of a successful brave space. Members must be willing to hold themselves responsible for how their words or actions affect others. Even if their impact is not intentional, they must recognize the impact certain decisions can have on a system.

##### **Challenge by choice**

Challenge by choice refers to being willing to challenge yourself and others. It means that you are open to stretching your comfort zone and absorbing new information, even if it feels uncomfortable or scary.

##### **Respect**

Respect is imperative in a brave space. Even if you don't particularly like someone or their ideas, you need to respect them for who they are and what they bring to the discussion. Respect means avoiding jumping to conclusions, gossiping about others or disrupting the safety within a group setting.

##### **No attacks**

Members must handle conflict appropriately. Insulting, yelling, threatening or otherwise making fun of someone is never tolerated. If an attack occurs, the group must manage such outbursts immediately. Members must fully understand and implement these fundamental ideas to create an effective brave space. Doing so requires an inherent set of structure and rule-setting – the teacher or facilitator must be willing to openly share this concept with members.



## 4. Allyship

### 4.1 Take action: Be an ally

Allyship is process. You must continuously demonstrate allyship to earn the status of ally. This includes understanding the impact of what you do, and changing your behaviour and language when needed – when you know better, do better. It is not enough to say you did not intend to be hurtful; it is the actual impact that matters regardless of your actions.

*I am an ally when....*

1. I listen...and listen some more.
2. I speak up against hurtful comments or insulting action, rather than wait for others to point it out.
3. I help others to understand discrimination and exclusion.
4. I share power.
5. I check my assumptions so as to unlearn biases and stereotypes.
6. I am aware of my own advantages and how to use them.
7. I am aware of my own disadvantages and how to use them.
8. I understand being an ally requires on-going learning.

### 4.2 Enabling allyship in the workplace: Questions to get you started

- Does my workplace and do my co-workers celebrate all equity-seeking communities all year long or only during designated periods, such as Pride Month, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Women's History Month, Mi'kmaq History Month and African Heritage Month.
- Do I encourage employees and staff to attend events in the community that would allow them to learn about systemic discrimination, first voices and lived experiences? Are they given paid time to attend if these events occur during typical work hours?
- Do my co-workers and I actively listen to and believe the lived experiences of community members without external validation and without judgment?

### 4.3 Types of ally

The following content was developed by Chrysalis Human Rights Agency.

#### 1. Mentor allies

Mentor allies foster a relationship that includes being a good coach and giving honest feedback. But a big part of this is being a good mentor to people who are different from yourself. Mentor allies uplift others by providing personalized feedback, a sounding board for problem solving and career coaching.

What it looks like: Sit down with a colleague before a high-stakes conversation to listen to them practice. Then, give recommendations and help role-play particularly challenging questions that may come from the audience.

## **2. Sponsor allies**

As a workplace ally, you have an opportunity to uplift others by connecting them to the right people and opportunities. As a sponsor ally, you can help to make introductions to key partners and pave the way for stretch assignments and development opportunities. You can also help to amplify a member of a marginalized group and create visibility for impactful contributions and efforts.

What it looks like: Know someone in a different part of the company who could benefit from someone on your team's expertise? Connect them. For example, introduce a teammate with stellar financial acumen to the vice-president. The vice-president could certainly benefit from the financial skills of your teammate. But the vice-president could also provide your teammate with some learning as well.

## **3. Structural allies**

For leaders whose role provides them with the ability to influence organizational policies and practices, allyship is not just an option but an imperative. Structural allies use their position and power to create a safer, fairer, more inclusive workplace.

What it looks like: There are many actions that these allies may take. These include restructuring selection or performance management practices that are biased. Actions also include creating equity grievance infrastructure for reporting issues, running pay equity analysis and improving hiring processes.

## **4. Cultural allies**

Allies can have power to create equity through the direct reach of their personal, everyday actions. But they can often have the most impact through ripple effect. Cultural allies recognize this truth and create and take opportunities to coach others to be more inclusive.

Cultural allies are also well-versed in "calling in." What does this mean? They speak up to address exclusionary words or actions (in the moment or after the fact) by providing honest and empathetic feedback while maintaining esteem. By standing up for what's right, cultural allies can create a groundswell of inclusion by evangelizing others to step in as allies who may not have been motivated to do so before.

What it looks like: If someone is using the wrong pronouns when referring to a transgender colleague, provide feedback to the person who did this to help them become a better 2SLGBTQIA+ ally. Teach them to recognize the power of affirming their transgender colleague's true self through language choices.

## 4.4 Boots and sandals: How to handle mistakes

The following content was developed by Chrysalis Human Rights Agency.



- **Centering yourself:** “I can’t believe you think I’m a toe-stepper! I’m a good person!”
- **Denial that others’ experiences are different from your own:** “I don’t mind when people step on my toes.”
- **Derailing:** “Some people don’t even have toes, why aren’t we talking about them instead?”
- **Refusal to center the impacted:** “All toes matter!”
- **Tone policing:** “I’d move my foot if you’d ask me more nicely.”
- **Denial that the problem is fixable:** “Toes getting stepped on is a fact of life. You’ll be better off when you accept that.”
- **Victim blaming:** “You shouldn’t have been walking around people with boots!”
- **Withdrawing:** “I thought you wanted my help, but I guess not. I’ll just go home.”
- **Center the impacted:** “Are you okay?”
- **Listen** to their response and learn.
- **Apologize** for the impact, even though you didn’t intend it: “I’m sorry!”
- **Stop the instance:** move your foot
- **Stop the pattern:** be careful where you step in the future. When it comes to oppression, we want to actually change the “footwear” to get rid of privilege and oppression (sneakers for all!), but metaphors can only stretch so far!

## 4.5 Intervening to stop discrimination

The tools below are useful for situations where you witness discrimination and want to support the person or people affected while holding the perpetrator(s) accountable.

### Active Witnessing Response Categories with Examples

© F. Ishu Ishiyama (2014) *Introduction to ART Program rev of 2008-3-11*

#### 1. Assertive interjections (interruptions):

- Stop it.
- Wait a moment.

#### 2. Expressing personalized emotional reactions:

- I can't believe you are saying this.
- I'm surprised to hear you say such a thing.

#### 3. Calling it racism or discrimination:

- That's racist.
- It's not fair.

#### 4. Disagreement:

- I disagree.
- I don't think it is true.

#### 5. Questioning the validity of a statement or an over-generalization:

- Always?
- Everybody?

#### 6. Pointing out the hurtful and offensive nature:

- It's a hurtful comment.
- Ouch! That hurts.

#### 7. Putting the offender on the spot:

- What?
- Could you repeat what you have just said?

#### 8. Empathic confrontation:

- You sound really annoyed.
- Would you mind telling me how you are feeling?

#### 9. Approaching and supporting the victim:

- You are not alone. I'm with you.
- This is a terrible thing. I'll come with you. So, let's get help.

#### 10. Approaching externals (teachers, administrators, other third-party members):

- You are one of the teachers I can trust. Can I talk to you about something very serious?
- I need to talk with you about what happened today.

#### 11. Approaching co-witnesses:

- Did you hear what I just heard?

## 5. Strategic planning

### 5.1 Foundational considerations in EDI planning

#### **Be intentional in your external relationship building**

Consider what role your organization should take when engaging with other organizations or individuals:

- advisory
- collaborative
- supportive
- funding
- adversarial
- advocacy
- amplifying

#### **Where are the gaps in knowledge?**

Ask yourself what you really know about people who identify as:

- African Nova Scotians/Black Canadians
- Mi'kmaq or other Indigenous peoples
- Immigrants, refugees, newcomers to Canada
- 2SLGBTQIA+ (two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and others)
- Disabled people
- People with mental illness

What do you know about their interactions with the health-care system? What do you know about their history with the health-care system?

If you're going to hire someone from one or more of these groups to educate and/or train you and your staff, provide them meaningful remuneration for their time and expertise.

#### **Address your barriers**

No working environment is free from systemic barriers.

If you do not have a diverse workplace, why? What barriers do you have that have prevented people from applying and/or getting these jobs?

Work from the inside out: addressing the blind spots in your workplace helps you to see them elsewhere.

What do you do to attract members? Are there people/groups missing from your membership?

Perhaps most importantly, have you started reading about anti-racism yet in your meetings?

**Don't perpetuate hierarchies**

Considering the fact that the further back in history, the greater the inequities, be mindful of perpetuating a physician culture that venerates only those with the most tenure.

See if you can recognize and reward people who have overcome barriers to join the profession. Encourage the profession to show some deference to those who come after, not just those who came before. The next generation has something to teach, and it is important that they are heard.

Also consider physician power in the context of the health-care system. Physicians traditionally sat at the top of a hierarchy of health-care providers, which was reinforced by the fact that they were historically men. Male-domination led to medicine being perceived as a “male” profession, while nursing, midwifery and, more recently, pharmacy are perceived as “female” professions. This dichotomy is a problem because the patriarchy has led us to value “masculine” professions or activities more than those perceived as “feminine,” regardless of the gender of the actual practitioners. The result is that, relatively speaking, medicine has historically held more weight in health systems discourse, while other professions have felt devalued. Even within collaborative care models, this hierarchy is still felt informally.

**Forecast your future**

Think about what you want to accomplish this quarter, this year and in the next five years with respect to EDI and anti-racism. Set down concrete goals. Be ambitious. Make the time.

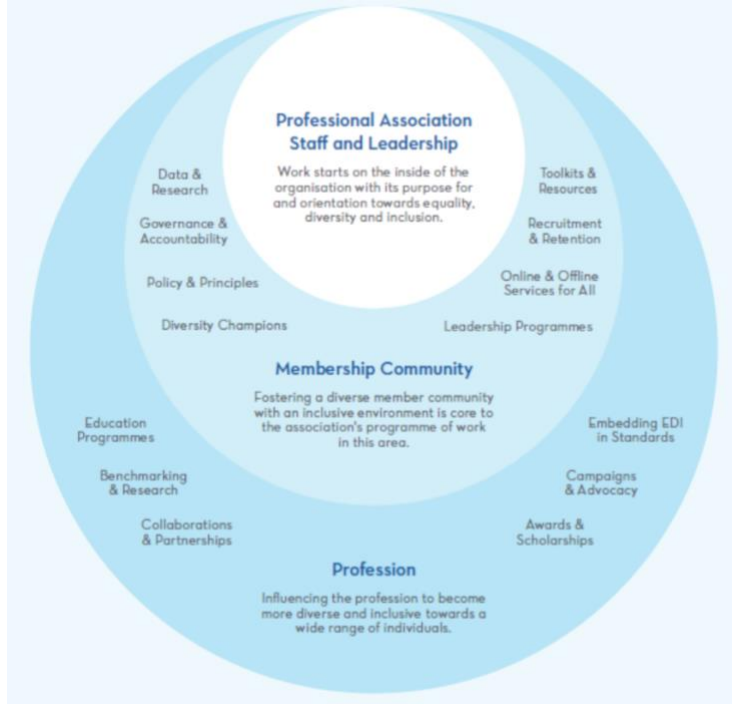
## 5.2 Worksheet: Considerations for reviewing organizational planning goals

Question	No/Yes If yes, where?	Gaps	Recommendations
Do policies acknowledge systemic and historical nature of racial inequity and discrimination?			
Do policies promote inclusion and diversity?			
Do policies acknowledge the hostility of the work environment and the need for proactive programs to promote inclusion and support racialized voices?			
Do policies educate and raise consciousness?			
Do policies identify or assert responsibility for contributing to equity in the larger community?			
Is there a program for systemic change within the institution (not statements, but a program with steps and actions)?			
Is there a proactive program for hiring, promoting and supporting diverse employees?			
Is there any acknowledgment of particular peoples as targets of diversity and inclusion?			

## 5.3 EDI approaches for membership organizations

The resources below are useful for developing EDI strategies and approaches in membership organizations. They may be valuable for other settings as well, especially when used as a guide to organizational change on EDI. The following text is adapted from Research by Design (via Salesforce), 2021.

## Professional membership associations need to consider multiple layers when approaching equity, diversity and inclusion



### Blockers: What Are the Challenges?

Throughout the academic research and interviews, we have identified a number of challenges and barriers to progressing the EDI agenda within professional membership associations. Linking to the diagram on page 11 and the layers of EDI, we look at the key ones, although this is not meant to be an exhaustive list.



Associations need to be mindful of the impact of over-engagement with members in certain ethnic, gender and age groups, for example. In an effort to achieve diversity, it is not uncommon for those within minority groups to be invited to join multiple committees or special interest groups, attend events, and so on. This can lead to frustration, burn-out, withdrawal and, in the worst case, resignation.



Associations also need to be conscious of the emotional labour required to fully and openly progress the EDI agenda. Many of our interviewees highlighted this as a challenge. They warned that those working within membership organisations may feel defensive, have a fear of offending or through their own lived experiences feel victimised, even traumatised. Further, the events following George Floyd's death in the U.S. in May 2020 and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 have made the environment more difficult for many attempting to progress the EDI agenda. These challenges need to be recognised.

Finally, it is important to note the specific challenges in developing an EDI strategy for associations with members spread overseas. These range from logistics (geographical distance, different time zones, virtual relationships, language barriers) to managing the different perspectives on EDI across their global membership (distinctive cultural values, actions and assumptions).

### **Benefits of the EDI agenda for professional membership associations: Going beyond the business case for membership associations**

It is evident that there are significant organisational benefits to pursuing an agenda of EDI: more members, increased member engagement, better representation, improved lobbying power and so on. Put simply, increased EDI enables the organisation to function better. It is clear, however, that these alone are not the only motivations for pursuing an EDI agenda. Professional membership organisations have different remits, roles, purposes and missions, but at their core is the profession each is representing. The benefits to the profession were cited widely in the interviews and include attracting the best talent, ensuring a sustainable workforce, improved well-being within the profession and increased innovation through diversity of thought and critical thinking. Those organisations representing medical or health-care professionals specifically mentioned one of their key goals being better patient/service user care. Some take this even further and cite the benefits to society as a whole: it's simply "the right thing to do."

### **Moving Forward with equality, diversity and inclusion**

- Develop longitudinal strategy
- Identify urgency to act and use it as a lever for change
- Take a data-driven approach

## 6. Living and working in Mi'kmaki

### 6.1 Land acknowledgments

Land acknowledgments are statement to recognize that the lands on which settler populations live and conduct their business belong to and are cared for by Indigenous people. They can remind settlers of their treaty obligations serve as a reminder of how Indigenous people continue to be impacted by colonialism. To avoid being empty or symbolic gestures, land acknowledgments should not be rehearsed and should instead be an opportunity for informed commentary and discussion on Indigenous land rights and settler relations. The guide below outlines key components of land acknowledgments to familiarize their typical structure and contents.

#### **Short version**

*This version is suggested for use in an online context that requires brevity, such as e-mail signatures and social media posts.*

Doctors Nova Scotia sits on the traditional and unceded land territory of the Mi'kmaq People. We are all Treaty People.

#### **Long version**

*This version is suggested for use in the opening remarks of meetings, conferences and special events. A phonetic guide to pronunciation is included in parentheses where needed.*

Before we begin, I want to acknowledge that we all live and work in Mi'kma'ki (meeg mah gee), the ancestral, unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq (meeg mah) people. The term “unceded” is important because it indicates that the Mi'kmaq did not give up their rights to their land or resources despite colonization. As settlers in Mi'kma'ki, we are grateful for the Treaties of Peace and Friendship with the Mi'kmaq people, which set out long-standing promises, mutual obligations and benefits for all parties involved. Mi'kmaq rights are also affirmed in our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitutions Act and by the Supreme Court of Canada. Treaties are about rights and how to build peaceful, long-term relationships with each other. At DNS, we honour and respect the Indigenous people of this land. We also know that we have much more to learn and much more to do to embrace the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. If you want to know more, I invite you to reach out to Doctors Nova Scotia staff, or to research Indigenous history or visit an Indigenous cultural centre.

I also want to acknowledge that African Nova Scotian history goes back more than 400 years to the earliest years of Nova Scotia, starting in 1605 with the founding of Port Royal. Small populations of French and English Black Settlers arrived in the 1700s and were followed by 3,500 American Black Loyalist refugees, then 600 exiled Jamaican Maroons, then another 2,000 U.S. and U.K. Black refugees after the War of 1812, and yet another few hundred Black Caribbean Settlers seeking work in the mills and mines of Cape Breton in the early 1900s. African Nova Scotians are not settlers, and have also experienced systemic racism, oppression and colonialization.

Doctors Nova Scotia is committed to working with the Indigenous and African Nova Scotian leaders, the medical community, physicians and system partners to disrupt systemic racism and decolonize the health-care system to improve the health-care experiences of Indigenous people and African Nova Scotians in Nova Scotia. We are all Treaty people.

## 6.2 When to use a land acknowledgment

Land acknowledgments are generally used at the beginning of meetings and public gatherings, but they can also be used in virtual environments and represented visually. While a land acknowledgment is not necessary at every meeting, they can and should be conducted on a regular basis at both formal and informal meetings. For example, Doctors Nova Scotia staff and physician leaders should deliver a land acknowledgment at public events and meetings with the Board of Directors, committees and any meetings that involve strategic planning for the organization. The latter will encourage staff and leadership to think critically about the organization's role in reconciliation while developing plans.

During a land acknowledgment, the host generally introduces themselves and acknowledges that they are either a visitor or settler in the territory. The host then acknowledges the territory they are in and the treaties which govern it. Land acknowledgments can be delivered in a variety of formats, whether verbally, in writing or other appropriate means as suggested by Indigenous people.

## 6.3 10 ways to get started

**Here's what to do when you are preparing and giving a land acknowledgment.**

1. Take a moment to reflect on how you came to call Nova Scotia and Canada home. Take time to think about how you/your family came to share in the life and prosperity of this land. Prior to giving your land acknowledgment, you may want to start with a statement like, "My name is Jen, I am a white settler, from the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Haudenosaunee, Ojibway/Chippewa peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and Haldimand Treaty. I want to thank the Mi'kmaq for welcoming me to their land 15 years ago..."
2. Clear the space of distractions. Ask people to put their phones on vibrate and mind the door for any latecomers.
3. Take the time to say the land acknowledgment prior to the meeting and practise pronunciations.
4. There are many times when saying a land acknowledgment is appropriate. While you do not have to say a land acknowledgment at every meeting, they can and should be conducted on a regular basis at both formal and informal meetings.
5. Allocate time and presence on the agenda for the land acknowledgment.
6. Do not always ask your Indigenous colleagues and partners to deliver the land acknowledgment. This is a practice best done by non-Indigenous people.
7. We all need to do land acknowledgments – DNS staff, Board and committee members, external stakeholders. It is usually whoever is chairing the meeting or event that delivers the land acknowledgment.
8. There is no right or wrong way to provide a land acknowledgment; the above statements are a template for guidance. Showing vulnerability and a level of discomfort is an indicator of learning and good intentions, it is important that when delivering a land acknowledgment that it is not scripted but from the heart.
9. Stand or sit while offering the land acknowledgment, depending on the events. Ensure you have announced that you are giving the land acknowledgment, confirming people are comfortable, present and ready to connect with your words.
10. The above statements are based on meetings being held in Mi'kma'ki, adapt if the meeting is being held in another territory.

## 6.4 Mi'kmaq language and pronunciation guide

### Phonetic guide

(English pronunciation of the letter → Mi'kmaq pronunciation of the letter)

- K = G
- T = D
- P = B

### Basic identifiers

More information is available [here](#) from Cape Breton University.

- Mi'kma'ki (Meeg-MAH-gee): Land of the Mi'kmaq, the land on which Nova Scotia sits
- Unama'ki (Oo-nah-mah-ghee): Cape Breton (Land of Fog)
- Mi'kmaq (Meeg-mah): Noun, as in “the Mi'kmaq” or the Mi'kmaq nation
- Mi'kmaw (Meeg-mah): Adjective, as in “the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre”; roughly translates to “relations”
- L'nu (ul-noo): Term the Mi'kmaq use to describe themselves, means “the people”

### Greetings

- Pjila'si ([bji-lah-see](#)): Welcome
- Wela'lin (weh-lah-lin) (singular)
- Wela'lioq (weh-lah-liog) (group)

### Communities with Mi'kmaq names

- Sipekne'katik: Suh-beg-ineg-iddy
- Paqtnkek: BAG-in-neh-geg
- Potlotek: BODO-lo-deg
- We'koqma'q: WAY-coh-bah
- Wagmatcook: WAT-mah-gook
- Kjipuktuk: Ji-bug-tug (Halifax)

### Health-care words to know

- Tajikeimik (Dah-jig-eh-mig): Mi'kmaw Health and Wellness Authority

### Strategies when in doubt

1. Ask! (Don't apologize profusely)
2. Look up videos on YouTube
3. Listen carefully to pronunciations when in meetings

## 6.5 Other resources

The [talking dictionary project](#) is a resource for the Mi'gmaq/Mi'kmaq language, and a helpful resource to incorporate the language into land acknowledgments.

[Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre](#) has numerous resources for further learning about the Mi'kmaw people.

Selena Mills is an Indigenous writer who shares in this blog post her thoughts about [why land acknowledgments matter](#).

## 6.6 Health-related calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**18.** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

**19.** We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

**20.** In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.

**21.** We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.

**22.** We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.

**23.** We call upon all levels of government to: i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field. ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities. iii. Provide cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals.

**24.** We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

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