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Title page

2.

It seems there is always a "moment" that thrusts EDI back into the spotlight. As though it has been waiting offstage for its moment. You might think of recent examples like "Me Too", "Black Lives Matter", or even the equality implications of the pandemic. But EDI efforts are never really "done", because culture and our environment are ever-changing, and this brings new challenges. It's the people behind these efforts that keep momentum, even when it seems like an issue has gone quiet. This is why we need to plan, and align those plans with others to make sure we keep moving forward, even when we reach burnout, or leave a company, or face a funding crisis. Throughout this course we'll look at ideas that help us make those plans more resilient, and help you think about the opportunities and responsibilities that come with championing those plans.

So why does equality, diversity and inclusion matter?

It is impossible to change the prevailing culture that defines how people behave at work without acknowledging the impact of an individual's background, experiences and perspectives.

Equally, there is little point in creating a diverse workforce if the cultural norms, behaviours and incentives within a company don't allow them to contribute and flourish.

And yet sometimes, organisations treat diversity and creating a fair and inclusive culture as separate issues - to be addressed with discrete initiatives and with different reporting lines.

And it is this that we need to get right in any organisation to be able to achieve sustainable change.

3.

Acronyms are not our friend in the world of D&I, EDI, EIEIO. They can change as often as expressions of identity, and while this can be frustrating, it's important to make sure we have understanding and respect when we communicate with others in this space. Think carefully about how and when you use them, and whether your audience is going to appreciate your nuance and interpretation.

In this interpretation, 'equality', 'diversity' and 'inclusion' all mean different things but are vitally interconnected, and they all need to be addressed together to

achieve change.

Equality means ensuring fairness and equal access to opportunities, so ultimately everyone can achieve the same outcomes. It's about recognising that for some there may be systemic barriers or attitudes that often inadvertently mean they experience unequal outcomes. In an employment context, we need to identify what those may be and take action to address them – in recruitment and progression for example. Some people use other terms to distinguish between different approaches to equality, and we'll look at that on the next slide.

Diversity means ensuring we have a broad mix of people: different perspectives, thinking styles, and lived experience - working in the organisation. Many HR professionals will choose to talk about the Diversity Dividend not the Deficit, because it focuses on the benefits Diversity brings to any organisations - not just on what they think might be missing.

Inclusion is about working together to create an environment that's welcoming and respectful of difference. We all have a responsibility to do that. It's no good recruiting people from different backgrounds and identities who, once they start, never feel comfortable to be themselves at work.

These are the three elements that interconnect to form the basis of an EDI strategy, which envisions a happier, safer and more innovative workplace.

4.

Is equality enough? Let's look closer at this term and how people use it differently.

Starting with inequality in the top left image, the person on the right has very few apples on their side of the tree, compared to the plentiful supply for the person on the left side of the tree. The right person is underprivileged when it comes to getting their apples.

In the Equality picture, bottom left, ladders have been given to both people, helping them to access the apples. Is this now fair because they both have the same tools? This solution focuses on equality of input, where we treat everyone equally. But as they discover, that doesn't mean equality of output, because they still don't have the same opportunities.

That leads us to Equity, top right. Here they each have different tools so that the person on the right can reach more of the apples on their side, so the access to opportunities are more equal. But are they truly? Because the tree is still not

straight, which means there's more fruit growing on one side, and the person on the left still has an easier time reaching them.

This leads us to the final picture in the bottom right, True Equality (which some people call Justice). This is where they fix the tree to be straight so the balance of apples is as it should be. In this scenario we focus less on the individuals, and more on the structures at play, unpicking biases that exist in the way we do things, the way we recruit, what "good looks like" and the unwritten rules about working hours, or how "leaders" behave, for example.

Whatever terms you use, the most important thing is to focus on challenging exactly how fair our organisational systems are, not just the tools we give to our employees.

5.

When we say that EDI is all about structures and not individuals, we are of course overstating matters to make a point. But it's important we know who we're talking about as groups of people, and one of the most common ways to do that is to look at the legal state of equality in your location. Many countries and territories will have some sort of provision for this, and we're going to use the UK Government's Equality Act as an example, but please do seek out and understand whichever is most relevant to you.

The term "protected characteristics" here refers to legal protection against discrimination on the basis of an individual's race or ethnicity, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

But when we talk about Diversity it's not all about the legal framework. We need to think about the breadth of diversity, for example carers; educational background, thinking styles: introverts/extroverts; or socio-economic background.

All of these groups may experience discrimination and exclusion, and all bring valuable perspectives and lived experiences. Equally, we cannot assume that someone has experienced any kind of discrimination simply because they are a member of a group.

It's not about putting people in boxes, but recognizing that we all share multiple identities and life experiences, and these identities intersect in unique ways that have an impact on how we are treated and what we can bring to the table.

6.

This unique mix of characteristics that we all have, leads us to consider the term "Intersectionality"

In this dictionary definition you can see it means the interconnected nature of multiple identities that can overlap and create systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

For some this means they are more likely to experience unique and potentially greater forms of exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation.

This term was created because of a legal case which examined how a group of workers who were made redundant found themselves in that position not because they were women, and not because they were black, but because they were black women. There's more in your further reading if you're interested.

7.

The final term we're going to explore in this session is "Micro-aggressions". Here are some common examples:

Females who may be experts in their field or at a high ranking level within an organization may experience male colleagues interrupting or rolling their eyes when they speak.

People of colour being asked "where do you come from, no where do you really come from", told "your english is good" or people holding on tighter to their bags when approaching them in the street.

Assuming a gay person will get on with another gay person just because of their sexuality or saying "you don't seem gay!"

Referring to different targeted groups as "you people" is also a harmful

microaggression.

People with disabilities, red hair, who are overweight, or those in religious groups are often the targets of jokes which can circulate through emails or in work-social settings.

8.

A study appearing in the journal *Urban Education* reported that people who experience racial microaggressions have negative job satisfaction. Offensive speech and microaggressions can and probably will affect productivity and undermine employees' safety.

People who experience microaggressions are at risk of mental and physical health issues, which can lead to absenteeism.

Some mental health effects of microaggressions may include:

- depression
- anxiety
- suicidal ideation
- alcohol-related problems

Feelings of being undervalued from microaggressions may prevent people in targeted groups from:

- applying for jobs
- negotiating salaries
- striving for promotions

Don't forget, that like mosquito bites, it's not the single action or comment, but the build up of them, that has the impact.

Another way to think of it, is like a wave against a cliff. One wave won't bring a cliff

down but over time, again and again, that cliff can fall. There's a link in your further reading which has more examples.