



Guide 03



EUROPEAN
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Let's Talk DEI: Terms You Should Know

Perfect for anyone looking to strengthen workplace communication

About the Glossary

This glossary provides concise definitions of **10 key terms** related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). For a more comprehensive exploration of these topics, please refer to the [\[link to detailed glossary\]](#).

Find more opportunities and tools, get in touch with the ECDA team!



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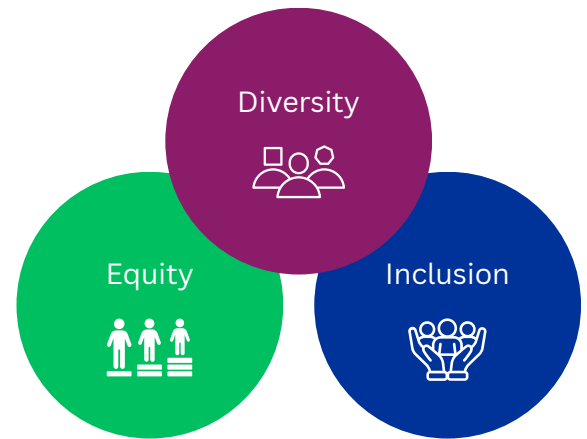
The European Chips Diversity Alliance has received funding from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under project No 101140006

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Diversity refers to differences in race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, civil and family status, education, and many other characteristics. Diversity means having different types of people in a group or organization.

Equity means being fair, not just treating everyone exactly the same. Equity recognizes that people start from different places and may need different resources.

Inclusion means making sure everyone feels welcome, respected, and able to participate fully. It's about creating spaces where people can be themselves and where everyone's ideas and contributions are valued.



Together, DEI helps create environments where everyone has opportunities to succeed, feels they belong, and can contribute their unique perspectives.

Learn more:

- [Rethinking Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Moving Beyond the Business Case Approach](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion \(as it was\)](#)

2. Discrimination

Discrimination happens when people are treated unfairly or unequally based on who they are or characteristics they possess. This includes treating someone worse because of their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, or other personal traits. It can be obvious, like a rule that excludes a group, or more subtle, like unconscious bias affecting hiring decisions.

People often face multiple types of discrimination at once. For example, a woman with a disability might experience both sexism and ableism in ways that are unique and more complex than either form alone. This overlapping discrimination is called intersectionality.

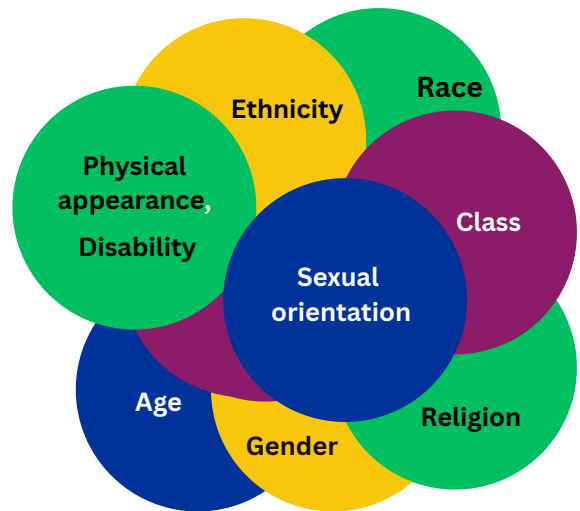


Learn more: [That Little Voice](#)

3. Intersectionality

Intersectionality helps us understand how different parts of a person's identity - like race, gender, age, or disability - work together to create unique experiences of both discrimination and privilege. Since everyone's identity is made up of different parts, each person's experience is different.

For example, a person might face discrimination both because of their race and because of their gender – and this combined experience can feel different from the discrimination faced by someone who shares only one of these identities, such as a person of the same gender but a different race, or vice versa.



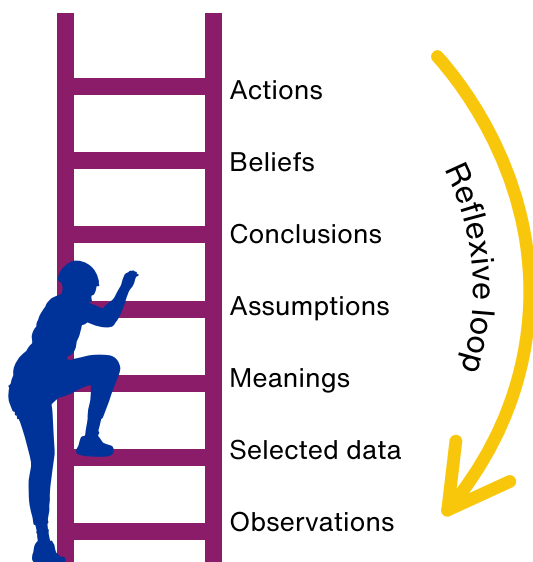
Learn more: [What is intersectionality?](#)

4. Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias (also called implicit bias) refers to attitudes or stereotypes that we hold about other people without realizing it. These biases happen outside of our awareness and often stem from cultural messages, personal experiences, or media influences – even if we believe we treat everyone equally.

For example, unconscious bias can play a role in discrimination in hiring or performance reviews, sometimes linked to gender bias, ageism, or ableism.

Learn more: Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism (3 minutes), also check other videos below



“Ladder of Inference” is a concept developed by the late Harvard Professor Chris Argyris, to help explain why people looking at the same set of evidence can draw very different conclusions. [Learn more](#)

5. Gender

Gender is how we see ourselves and how society expects us to act. Gender isn't just "man" or "woman" - many people identify somewhere in between or outside these categories entirely.

Gender is different from biological sex. It is shaped by culture, history, and personal identity, and it can change over time and in different places.

Gender identity is a person's internal sense of their own gender, which may or may not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Learn more:

- [The Difference Between Sex and Gender – SciShow](#)
- [Did You Know: The difference between sex and gender](#)

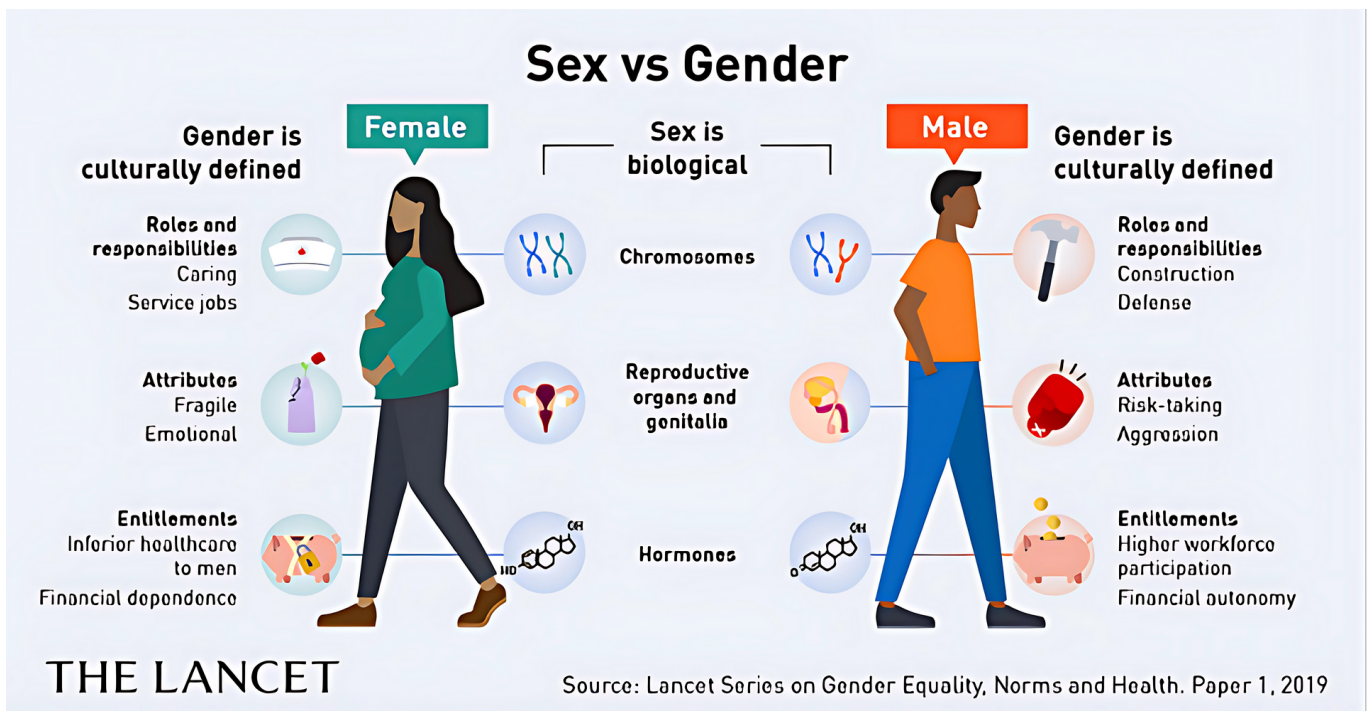


Image source: Lancet Series on Gender Equality, Norms and Health. Paper 1, 2019

6. Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation describes a person's feelings of attraction to other people. This attraction can be romantic, sexual, or both. People's sexual orientation can be towards people of the same gender, a different gender, or multiple genders. Some people are not attracted to anyone.

Learn more: [Sexual orientation and gender identity](#)

7. Ageism

Ageism refers to stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age. The term is generally used to refer to age-based discrimination against older adults.

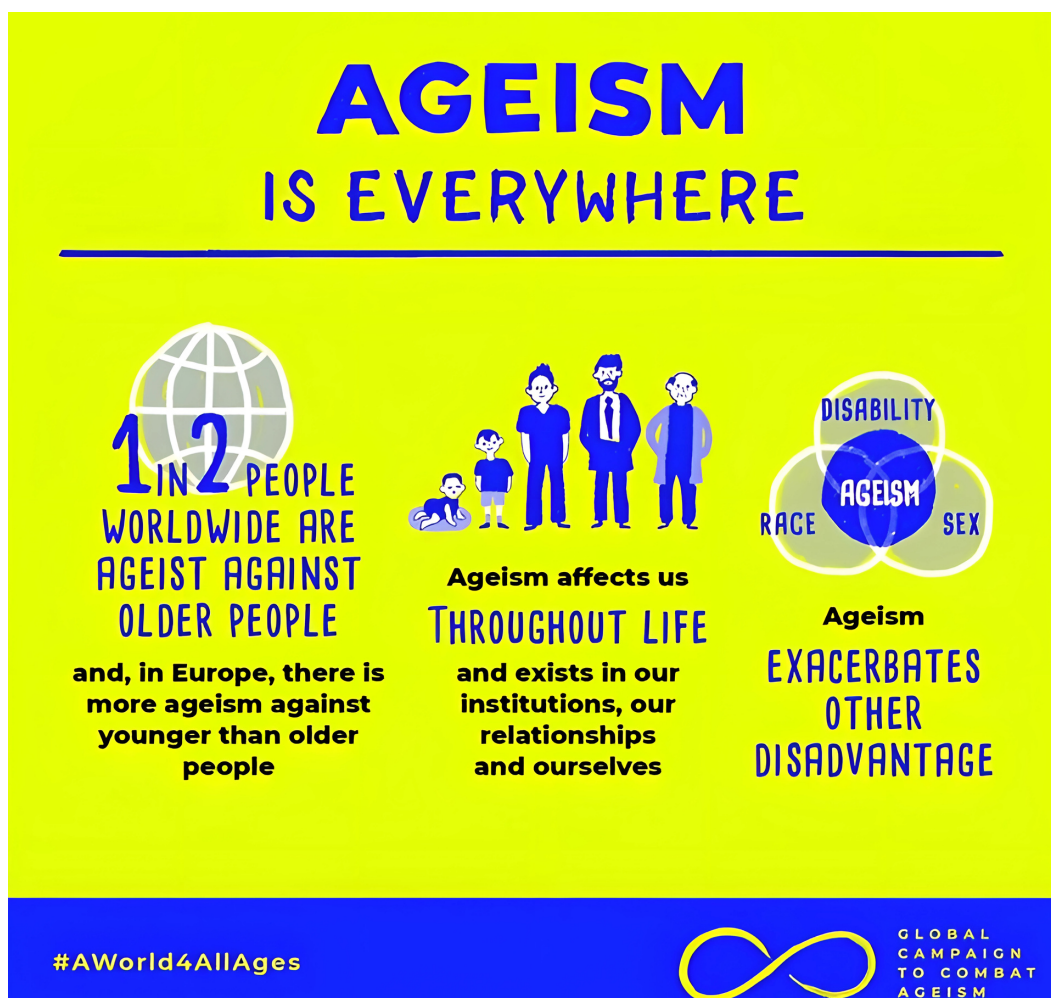


Image source: World Health Organization ([disabledbysocietywordpress.com](https://disabledbysociety.wordpress.com)), accessed July 17, 2025.

8. Race/Ethnicity

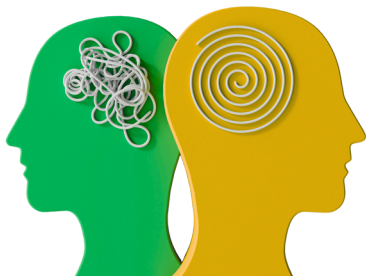
Race is a way that societies categorize people based on things like skin color, hair, or facial features. It's not really about biology, but more about how societies have created these groups.

Ethnicity is about belonging to a group that shares a common cultural background. This could be things like a shared language, religion, traditions, or a sense of shared history.

Learn more: [Race & Ethnicity: Crash Course Sociology](#)

9. Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity recognizes that people's brains naturally work in different ways. We differ in how we think, learn, and process information.



Some people are neurodivergent—a term often used to describe those with neurological differences in brain processes from what is socially considered typical (e.g., people with autism, ADHD, dyslexia). Others may be described as neurotypical. However, these terms are understood and used in different ways, and their meanings are subject to ongoing discussion within both academic and activist communities.

Learn more: What is Neurodiversity? – BBC Ideas

9. Disability

Disability means a condition that makes it harder for someone to do certain things or take part in everyday activities. It can affect how a person moves, sees, hears, learns, or interacts with others.

People with disabilities may face unfair treatment or negative attitudes because of their disability — this is known as ableism. To help prevent this and ensure equal participation, it's important to design spaces, tools, and systems so that everyone, including people with disabilities, can use them. This is called accessibility.

Learn more: [Disability Sensitivity Training Video](#)

Image source: Disabled By Society (disabledbysociety.wordpress.com), accessed July 17, 2025.

