



6 Lesser-Known DEI Categories

to Consider in Your Workplace



When planning your organization's DEI strategy, go beyond race and gender. Employees work, learn, and socialize in a wide variety of ways, so one-size-fits-all hiring and internal procedures could cause you to miss out on a creative, innovative, and productive work force.



Physical Ability

Employees might have physical differences that could affect their workplace experience, such as:

- Blindness or vision problems
- Deafness or hearing problems
- Mobility problems



Health Conditions

Some employees live with health conditions that could affect their physical or mental ability to complete their tasks, but do not fall under typical workplace accommodations. These might include:

- Chronic illnesses
- Allergies and sensitivities
- Pregnancy and post-partum recovery





Education

Not every employee has attended the same type or caliber of school, even if they have the same degree. This could affect their learning or work styles or their access to a professional network.



Cognitive Diversity

Employees think, work, and problem-solve in different ways and at different levels. Cognitive diversity can refer to:

- Learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- Work styles (logical, detail-oriented, supportive, idea-oriented)
- Diverse cognition (ADHD, autism, Down Syndrome)



Age

Employees of different ages have likely had different life experiences that could lead to different perspectives and ways of doing things. Address these without stereotyping or assuming that all employees from the same age group want or need the same things.



Language

While you may need to require a language proficiency in order to effectively carry out business, don't discriminate against those whose first or primary language isn't English.



Actionable Steps for Inclusion

Physical Diversity: Consider physical ability when planning team outings, e.g. no golf if you have an employee in a wheelchair or no concerts if you have an employee who is deaf.

Health Diversity: Offer flexible schedules so employees with health conditions can work around their medical appointments and energy levels.

Educational Diversity: When hiring, don't put too much weight on the institution a candidate attended, and don't rely solely on networking/referrals to find new employees.

Cognitive Diversity: Encourage managers to give their employees learning style and/or personality tests, then tailor their communications with each employee according to the results.

Language Diversity: Write internal documents (policies, memos, etc.) in multiple languages.

Age Diversity: Pair up employees of different generations to share ideas and knowledge (and make social connections).

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