

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## Building healthy communities for every student

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are key focus areas of an Active Minds chapter. Mental health impacts people from all walks of life, and it's essential to be thoughtful and deliberate about ensuring that your programming is inclusive and accessible to all. While we all have mental health, it's discussed and treated differently among different communities and cultures, and considering this is important when planning programs. Additionally, social injustices like discrimination, oppression, and inequitable access to mental health services and messages can impact mental health profoundly.

## TERMS TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH:

### 1 ACCESSIBILITY

Working to **remove as many physical and digital barriers** that aren't there for people with typical abilities and honoring the right of people regardless of ability to fully participate in all aspects of life.

### 2 DIVERSITY

Occurs within groups where **different identities, perspectives, and experiences** exist. Those differences are valued and serve to make the team stronger. It enables you to better plan your work in a way that is relevant and accessible to the community you're working in or serving.

### 3 EQUITY

The notion that everyone can live a healthy life and live to their full potential. It means offering **fair and just access** to opportunities for all students and acknowledging that we do not all start from the same place. We must recognize and make adjustments to imbalances to ensure access for all.

### 4 INCLUSION

**Actively creating safe spaces and a sense of belonging for all.** Spaces that recognize and value each individual's unique and intersecting perspectives, ideas, and experiences.

### 5 INTERSECTIONALITY

A term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how **each individual's identities are made up of intersecting elements** such as race, gender, sexual and romantic orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, and much more.

### 6 TRAUMA-SENSITIVE

A framework that involves **awareness of the impact that trauma can have in communities** where you work and live. This could look like having content warnings during presentations, affirming that it is okay to take breaks, allowing individuals to self-soothe through the use of appropriate and quiet activities such as fidget toys or doodling, respecting boundaries, etc.

# AN INCLUSIVE MINDSET IN CHAPTERS ACTIVITIES

Creating a welcoming, inclusive, accessible environment during your meetings, on social media, and online spaces, and at each of your programs is one way to strive for increased equity.

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

Are people with various racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and cultural identities, disabilities, and ages included in planning events?

*Tip: As a leader of an event or meeting, be prepared to challenge instances of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination, or other micro-aggressions.*

Is all information presented at this event inclusive to diverse groups concerning race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, culture, age, and disability?

*Tip: If you are doing group introductions, model sharing your pronouns and invite others to do so (if they would like).*

Do the speakers/presenters represent people of different genders, sexual orientations, races, ages, ethnicities, and/or other characteristics?

Have presenters been asked if they need accommodations for equal access? Have they been informed of ways to make presentations accessible to various audiences?

*Tip: Consider forming a team to review potential speaker lineups before confirmation to ensure that diverse perspectives and viewpoints are represented.*

**How might you incorporate these suggestions into your chapter activities when planning events or meetings?**

If you have students sharing their stories, do you have a diverse group?

Is there an anticipated need for interpreters or transliterators? (e.g. American Sign Language, a language other than English). If so, have arrangements been made?

Are there subtitle options available for presentations, movies, audio clips, etc.?

Are microphones available or requested? Have presenters or facilitators been instructed to use the microphone (even if they don't think they need it) and repeat questions from the audience that are not spoken into microphones?

Are all-gender bathrooms available and accessible? Do event materials include the location of all-gender bathrooms? This can help folks know what to expect about the event space.

Have you considered including a statement about your commitment to universal access and procedures for requesting disability-related accommodations?

*For example: "Our goal is to make all services and materials accessible. Please contact [insert name] at [insert email/ phone] by [insert date] to request accommodations that will make activities and resources accessible to you."*

Are all areas of the facility considered accessible for people with physical disabilities — including parking, pathways, and entrances to the building, restrooms, and the room itself? *Note: grassy or unpaved courtyards are not accessible.*

## TIPS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Interpreters can be expensive! Look to see if your school has ASL classes and if the students need interpreting credits or have printed materials ahead of time. You can also try utilizing Zoom for its live caption feature.

Consider sending out any "ice breaker" questions ahead of time as for some answering questions on the spot can be anxiety-inducing. Also consider offering an opt out option.

Make sure any presentation materials are utilizing contrast and clarity to make it easier for individuals with visual impairments to read and see.

Continue researching ways to make your events more inclusive!

The University of British Columbia has a pretty thorough [checklist to check out!](#)





## FINAL THOUGHTS

### **This list isn't comprehensive**

but should provide you a good starting point to consider what additional considerations to make in order to foster an inclusive environment. If you don't know the answer to some of these questions, reach out to your school's Diversity Office, Disability Resource Office, or other administrative body to learn what resources are already available to you and what suggestions they may have.

### **Collaborating and engaging**

with different individuals, organizations, resources, and professionals at your school is the best way to build robust, mutually beneficial partnerships proactively. As a leadership team, connect with a broad array of individuals and partners as early as possible to make sure you have many perspectives involved in your brainstorming, planning, promoting, and team goal setting.

**CONNECT WITH THE CHAPTERS TEAM!**

**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS  
OR OTHER RESOURCES?**



**Reach out to the Chapters Team at  
[chapters@activeminds.org](mailto:chapters@activeminds.org)  
for support!**