


TNF'S Guide: What DEI Is & Isn't


Diversity - Equity - Inclusion

DEI work is often misunderstood.

This guide offers a concise explanation of what each element of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) **is** and **what it isn't**, with the intention of elevating organizational and individual understanding of DEI.


Diversity

 **Is:** In its simplest form, diversity is being composed of different elements. It is acknowledging that everybody comes to the table with some sort of diverse element to their identity.

 **Isn't:** Applicable to just one group or demographic.

For example: Ensuring that your workforce is reflective of the communities in which you work and/or the clients or customers you serve.

 **Is:** Looking for high-quality candidates in many different places - in other words: "not lowering the bar, just casting a wider net".

 **Isn't:** Using arbitrary quotas to guide hiring decisions.







For example: Targeting talent from underrepresented groups earlier in the pipeline, like starting high school internship programs.







 **Is:** Understanding which views and voices aren't represented in an organization or process.







 **Isn't:** Creating an environment of divisiveness, dismissal, and disunity.

For example: Recognizing that you don't need to agree with everyone's perspective to be thoughtful of everyone's perspective.

Equity

 Is:	Removing obstacles so that everyone has opportunities to succeed in the workplace, regardless of their background.
 Isn't:	Disregarding merit and barring deserving people from opportunities if they are from well/overrepresented groups.
For example:	Creating platforms of visibility for the work of employees who otherwise may not be noticed or credited.
 Is:	The fair distribution of power - e.g., the ability to influence decisions or people. To achieve this, existing policies and practices that hinder full participation and advancement of people from underrepresented groups must be transformed.
 Isn't:	Attempting to make people who are well/overrepresented in positions of power feel personally culpable for systemic inequities.
For example:	Ensuring that your job requirements do not unintentionally exclude underrepresented groups (e.g., requiring a college degree where equivalent experience is sufficient).
 Is:	Using disciplined data collection to understand why inequitable outcomes are occurring and how we can work towards more equitable outcomes.
 Isn't:	Relying on anecdotal evidence to determine company policies.
For example:	Conducting a pay equity analysis to discover whether there are legitimate business reasons why people who do the same job are not paid the same.

	Inclusion
 Is:	Creating an environment in which everyone feels welcome, respected, supported, and safe to contribute within the fullness of their unique and diverse perspectives.
 Isn't:	Asking people from well/overrepresented groups to be ashamed about their identity.
For example:	Challenging assumptions that people must have certain beliefs because of their identity.
 Is:	Ensuring that a diverse group of perspectives are participating in important decisions.
 Isn't:	Selectively censoring some perspectives.
For example:	Actively questioning which voices are in the room when making major decisions, like pursuing a new client type.
 Is:	Creating an environment where people feel like their identity is respected and valued.
 Isn't:	Assimilation.
For example:	Putting effort into understanding and finding common ground with someone who seems very different to you.

	Diversity	Equity	Inclusion
 Is:	In its simplest form, diversity is being composed of different elements. It is acknowledging that everybody comes to the table with some sort of diverse element to their identity.	Removing obstacles so that everyone has equal opportunities to succeed in the workplace, regardless of their background.	Creating an environment in which everyone feels welcome, respected, supported, and safe to contribute within the fullness of their unique and diverse perspectives.
 Isn't:	Applicable to just one group or demographic.	Disregarding merit and barring deserving people from opportunities if they are from well/overrepresented groups.	Asking people from well/overrepresented groups to be ashamed about their identity.
For example:	Ensuring that your workforce is reflective of the communities in which you work and/or the clients or customers you serve.	Ensuring that your job requirements do not unintentionally exclude underrepresented groups (e.g., requiring a college degree where equivalent experience is sufficient).	Challenging assumptions that people must have certain beliefs because of their identity.
 Is:	Looking for high-quality candidates in many different places - in other words: "not lowering the bar, just casting a wider net".	The fair distribution of power - e.g., the ability to influence decisions or people. To achieve this, existing policies and practices that hinder full participation and advancement of people from underrepresented groups must be transformed.	Ensuring that a diverse group of perspectives are participating in important decisions.
 Isn't:	Using arbitrary quotas to guide hiring decisions.	Attempting to make people who are well/overrepresented in positions of power feel personally culpable for systemic inequities.	Selectively censoring some perspectives.
For example:	Targeting diverse talent earlier in the pipeline, like starting high school internship programs.	Ensuring visibility for the work of employees who may not otherwise be noticed or credited - e.g., Board presentations, client pitches, etc.	Actively questioning which voices are in the room when making major decisions, like pursuing a new client type.
 Is:	Understanding which views, ways of thinking and perspectives are missing in an organization.	Using disciplined data collection to understand why inequitable outcomes are occurring and how we can work towards more equitable outcomes.	People feel like their identity is respected and valued.
 Isn't:	Creating an echo chamber or environment of homogenous thinking.	Relying on anecdotal evidence to determine company policies.	Assimilation.
For example:	Recognizing that you don't need to agree with everyone's perspective to appreciate the value of differing perspectives.	Conducting a pay equity analysis to discover whether there are legitimate business reasons why people who do the same job are not paid the same.	Putting effort into understanding and finding common ground with someone who seems very different to you.

REACH OUT TO TO LEARN HOW DEI EXPERTS CAN HELP YOU DEVELOP A DEI STRATEGY UNIQUE TO YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS.

ABOUT THE NORFUS FIRM

The Norfus Firm, PLLC is a boutique consulting firm that offers strategic Human Resources (HR) services, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) solutions, and Executive Search assistance.

The firm comprises an alliance of consultants that help round out Natalie E. Norfus' 18 years of experience, bringing additional perspectives and solutions in the areas of mindfulness and well-being practices, social justice, and anti-racism. We pride ourselves on representing various industries, different backgrounds and a global outlook.

Our consultants believe it is critical to deeply understand the people and business priorities of our clients. As such, we consider it essential to become part of our client's businesses for the duration of the projects. We do not provide "off the shelf" solutions. Rather, we are always driven by data, which helps our clients solve HR & DEI challenges in ways that are sustainable and responsive to their unique and layered business needs.

GET IN TOUCH



thenorfusfirm.com



[The Norfus Firm, PLLC](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-norfus-firm-llc)



[@thenorfusfirm_](https://www.instagram.com/thenorfusfirm_)



[The Norfus Firm, PLLC](https://www.facebook.com/thenorfusfirm)



[@thenorfusfirm](https://www.tiktok.com/@thenorfusfirm)

Sources: Merriam Webster & TNF's experience working with employers in 30 countries around the world.