

Cultural Diversity



Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Definition of Diversity

- The condition of having or being composed of differing elements: **VARIETY**
- Especially the inclusion of people of different races, different cultures, different sexual orientations, different religions, etc.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Definition of Culture

- Shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group of people.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY – A Variety of groups with different beliefs and behaviors living in the same place. There have always been many diverse cultures living together within the United States. But cities and towns across America are becoming more and more diverse every year.

Our jobs bring us in touch with many people every day and chances are co-workers, clients, vendors, and other people you encounter throughout the day, are from culturally diverse groups. For example, Hindu groups throughout the world revere and worship cows, some people believe if you walk under a ladder, it is bad luck, or someone you know may wear a special necklace to guard against the Evil Eye.

There are many beliefs that may seem funny, strange, or even stupid but remember, your beliefs may seem just as funny, strange, or stupid to them!

Living or working in a culturally diverse environment, it is important to:

- Learn all you can about the differences between people
- Try to understand other people's beliefs and habits – even if you don't agree with them
- Look at each day an opportunity to learn something new about another culture.

What are some typical Examples of Cultural Diversity in the Work Force?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language• Age• Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Race• Sexual orientation• Gender
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LANGUAGE

A systematic means of communicating ideas or feeling using conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings.

- Lingo, slang – a special vocabulary used and understood by people in certain groups.

Examples:

- ❖ Jewish

- Oy Vey – an expression of frustration
- Shiksa – a non-Jewish girl

- ❖ Southern

- Vittles – food
- Britches – pants

- ❖ British

- Bloke – dude or man
- Daft – stupid or foolish

- ❖ Irish

- Wee – something or someone very small
- Lethal – means great

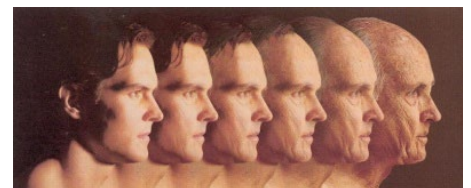
- ❖ English

- Dope – Awesome, great, cool, or Stupid
- Fire – Awesome, great, cool or an actual fire
- Shut up – A feeling of disbelief or telling someone to be quiet
- GOAT – Greatest of all times or stubborn
- Slay – Amazing, excellent or to kill or murder

As you can see, you must be careful when using certain words or phrases in some situations to avoid offending someone or maybe not conveying what you really mean to say.

AGE

Different age groups have their own general characteristics, including significant events that have shaped their lives. They have different views on work, leadership, communication, political and consumer values and civic engagement.



SOME characteristics of age groups (REMEMBER people ARE individuals and these may not apply to everyone, these are just examples of some common characteristics)

- Traditionalist (born before 1945)
 - They were called the “silent generation” Children were to be seen and not heard”
 - Experienced the great depression
 - They were a generation of helpers
 - Respects authority
 - Frugal
 - Wife and mother usually did not work.
- Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964).
 - Second largest population

- Generation of Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, Space exploration, Women rights, Woodstock
- Grew up before on-line shopping
- Mostly do not like unclear language like slang
- Equate authority with experience
- Competitive
- Define themselves by their jobs
- GenXers (born between 1965 and 1980)
 - Highly educated
 - Task and results oriented
 - Not intimidated by authority
 - Thrive on flexibility
 - Independent (mothers out of the house working)
 - Flexible
 - Informal
 - Technologically adept
 - Values a balance between work and personal time
- Millennials or Generation Y (Born between 1981 and 1986)
 - Motivated by creative work
 - Challenges the hierarchy with sometime a contempt for authority
 - Quickly adapt to change in technology
 - Free thinking and creative
 - Places importance on task rather than time
- Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2010)
 - Will be the last generation that America's population is predominantly white
 - Technologically advance
 - Socially connected via social media
 - For the most part, do not think about race, sexual orientation, or religion. Gay marriage and an African American President are a way of life and the norm.
 - Strong opinions and wants to be heard.
- Generation Alpha include anyone born after 2010.
 - Technologically connected
 - High cognitive abilities
 - They may prefer to spend time along than with other kids
 - Self-sufficient

RACE



Various groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits such as skin color, hair form, head shape. However, *advances in genetics now show that ALL humans alive today share 99.99% of their genetic material.*

Throughout history, people have judged (and treated other human beings) based on the color of their skin.

“What we know is this: racism is a serious public health threat that directly affects the well-being of millions of Americans. As a result, it affects the health of our entire nation. Racism is not just the discrimination against on group based on the color of their skin or their race or ethnicity, but the structural barriers that impact racial and ethnic groups differently to influence where a person lives, where they work, where their children plan, and where they worship and gather in community.” – Media statement from CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, on Racism and Health.

Racism has been the catalyst for slavery, genocide, apartheid, division, and social inequality. While it is certainly true that we have come a long way, there remains elements of racism in our society. There continues to be racial profiling, rises in “white supremacist groups”, a rise in antisemitism (against Judaism) and unspoken divisions that continue to exist in our society.

We are the HUMAN RACE; we have the same DNA. If you go to the hospital and get blood, you do not differentiate what race you get blood from. Remember *“ALL humans alive today share 99.99% of their genetic material”*.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Heterosexual**
- **Lesbian** – term for women sexually and affectionately oriented toward women
- **Gay** – Homosexual person or those attracted to same gender
- **Bisexual** – those that are sexually and affectionately attracted to both men and women.
- **Transsexual** – can mean someone transitioning from one sex to another.
- **Transgender** – term for someone that identifies as a different gender than what was assigned on their birth certificate.
- **Queer** – characterized by sexual or romantic attraction that is not limited to people of a particular gender identity or sexual orientation
- **Intersex** – individuals that do not fit into a specific gender norm of man or woman.
- **Asexual** – those that don’t feel sexual attraction to either sex or don’t feel romantic attraction in the typical way
- **Pansexual** – characterized by sexual or romantic attraction that is not limited to people of a particular gender identity or sexual orientation
- **Heterosexual** – characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to or between people of the opposite sex



As with other forms of discrimination, it is illegal to treat someone different (such as not getting hired, not getting promoted, getting disciplined or fired) because of sexual orientation. Being harassed with comments or jokes, touching, making gestures, etc. is also illegal. Everyone has a right to choose and live according to their sexual orientation.

Sexuality is only one aspect of a person and does not define whom they are as human beings. We all have the same emotions and the same concerns. Regardless of sexual orientation, we should all be treated with same caring and consideration as all employees, and clients/patients.

GENDER

A range of characteristic pertaining to and differentiating between femininity and masculinity and describes a person's self-perceived identity that they belong to. Sex describes your physical body, while gender describes your mental identity. Some gender identifiers are:

- **Male**
- **Female**
- **Transgender** – term for someone that identifies as a different gender than what was assigned on their birth certificate
- **Non-Binary** – Someone who may identify as being both a man and a woman
- **Pansexual** – Someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender
- **Two-spirited** – Native American/Alaskan neither considered male or female that occupied an alternative gender status
- **Inter-sex** – individuals born with, or who develop naturally in puberty, biological sex characteristics which are not typically male or female.



RELIGION

A system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. There is an estimate of greater than four thousand different religions in the world. However, the vast majority of these faiths are contained within a handful of major religious groups. About 85% of the world's population identifies with a religious group.

The five most predominant religions in the world are Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. But there are many others such as New age, Metaphysical, Wicca, Paganism, Atheism, Agnosticism, Taoism, etc.

It is important to know that a person's religious beliefs can affect many things in their lives including how they dress, attitudes about marriage and divorce, children, and even food. The law prohibits discrimination in the workplace against an employee's religious beliefs. Understanding the beliefs and practices of an employees or patients' religion or non-religious beliefs, can help prevent misunderstandings in the workplace or patient's home. Additionally, knowing a client's religious beliefs can help facilitate better care by understanding why they may not eat certain foods, wear (or not wear) certain clothing or have certain request.



Some examples of religious:

- **Adventist** – most do not eat meat and do not drink alcoholic beverages. Their day of worship is Saturday rather than Sunday. Believe in the Bible 100%
- **Baptist** – prohibit drinking alcohol. Many believe in “laying on of hands” faith healing, they may refuse ventilator or resuscitation, believing it interferes with God's will. Believe in the Bible
- **Church of Christ** – no dietary restrictions, do not drink alcohol, generally opposed to all medications and medical treatments. Believe in the Bible

- **Church of Latter-Day Saints (also called Mormons)** – do eat meat but are encouraged to eat it infrequently, usually do not drink coffee, tea, or alcohol, most will fast for 24 hrs. on the first Sunday of the month. Read and observe the book of Mormon.
- **Islam (Muslim or Nation of Islam)** – it is an Abrahamic religion (it reveres the biblical patriarch Abraham and his descendants), like Christianity and Judaism. Muslims do not eat pork or pork products and generally do not drink alcohol. The Quran is the holy book of Islam
- **Jehovah’s Witness** – they will eat meat but only if the blood has been completely drained. They are opposed to blood transfusions and any vaccines that are made with blood components. They do not salute the flag and will not bear arms in the military.
- **Jewish** – dietary habits depend on whether they are Orthodox, Reform or Conservative. Jews do not eat pork and only eat meat that comes from animals that eat vegetables. They do not eat seafood unless it has scales. Orthodox Jews observe “kosher” requirements (food that is prepared according to Jewish law). They believe that the “Messiah” is yet to come. The Torah is the holy book of Judaism.
- **Pentecostal** – they do not drink alcohol but do not have any other dietary restrictions. They believe in laying on of hands, baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and Divine Healing. Some Pentecostal groups do not believe that a woman should cut her hair, wear makeup, and should dress modestly as to not give mixed signals.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN TO YOU??????????

We all must recognize that cultural diversity exists in all of us, including you!

- ✓ As an employee, you are going to encounter people of many cultures, beliefs, identities, ethnic groups, political views, religious views, and moral codes. It is important that you do NOT draw conclusions about patients or coworkers based on his or her culture. You must learn that every co-worker or patient is an INDIVIDUAL.
- ✓ You should learn as much about another cultural group as you can to help better understand them. Although, some practices may not make sense to you, they can be important to the culture of the patients you are caring for.
- ✓ It is important for you to be able to identify what your cultural beliefs are. Otherwise, you may not know how those beliefs might affect the way you approach people.
- ✓ You should NEVER try to change a patients’ or coworkers’ cultural beliefs, especially to “convert” them to your own.
- ✓ If you have reason to believe that some cultural practices are harming a patient, notify your supervisor. Do not interfere directly. If you discover a part of your job needs to be changed to respect one’s culture, notify your supervisor.
- ✓ Most importantly, remember, not all members of the same cultural group will behave exactly the same.