

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026



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# **Our EDI goals**

The overall aim of the EDI strategy is to support the CDI Vision of every individual realising their career potential by creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment.

We have identified three goals for this EDI strategy designed to set a direction for our work in the coming years, enable easier communication of our approach and engage communities to garner support.

- To Welcome, Encourage and Enable people with diverse characteristics to enter and thrive in the career development profession.
- 2. To ensure clients with diverse characteristics receive career development support that enables them to overcome barriers and achieve their career goals.
- 3. To demonstrate the value that a diverse workforce brings to the profession and those we support.

These goals will be explored in more detail in the strategy but, in short, they ensure we are working to improve the diversity of the workforce, the support provided to clients and proving that working in a more diverse way adds value.

## Purpose of this strategy

This Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy outlines the CDI's targeted goals, strategies, and actions aimed at enhancing EDI within the profession. Our focus is twofold: to cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusion for existing professionals, and to equip career development professionals with the tools to support clients with a range of diverse characteristics.

The strategy does not detail every action to be taken, rather setting out the framework for where the CDI will focus its attention, whether on general activities that will indirectly improve diversity, generic EDI activities that will drive change across most or all communities, or more specific actions that benefit one or a small number of communities.

This is intended as a long-term strategy that sets out that framework, below which annual action plans can be developed, allowing the flexibility to adapt according to changes in the external environment and the CDI's capability.

#### Language

One of the many areas where people can be uncomfortable talking about EDI is language. A key lesson in the development of this strategy has been that it is best to ask people with diverse characteristics how they prefer characteristics to be referred to, and that will be encouraged going forward.

In this strategy document, we are using the following language:

• Characteristics describes various aspects of diversity (e.g., religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, etc).

- Diverse communities refers to all those who have one or more characteristics.
- Intersectionality is where an individual is a member of two or more diverse communities.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion are terms used individually and collectively to create a sense of belonging for everyone. Equity is about offering most support to those who face the greatest barriers, so they are equally able to realise opportunities. Diversity recognises the differences in – and different needs of – all aspects of the society we live in. Inclusion fosters acceptance and involvement. Together, they promote a welcoming, encouraging and enabling environment where all individuals feel valued.

## EDI and the CDI 2025 strategy

The EDI strategy is driven by the CDI's 2025 strategy. It starts with the CDI's overall Vision 'For every individual to realise their career potential so they can enhance their wellbeing and fully contribute to the economy and society.' This Vision is underpinned by one of the four Values being to be Inclusive, operating and promoting an inclusive culture where everyone can thrive.

The fourth pillar of the 2025 strategy directly relates to EDI. Working for a Fair Future includes leading the sector to address social issues including EDI.

The EDI strategy also supports the CDI Code of Ethics, particularly principle 1. Accessibility, promoting access in a range of ways that are appropriate and support inclusion, and principle 8. Equality, actively promoting equality and diversity and removing barriers from prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

## What challenges are we trying to address?

The CDI's EDI strategy aims to address significant challenges in career development across the UK, primarily focusing on the lack of comprehensive, reliable data and the limited visibility of professionals with diverse characteristics.

One of the issues regarding EDI in career development is the lack of comprehensive, reliable data. The CDI only has demographic data for around 46% of members, and there are many people working in career development who are not members of the CDI. Some organisations do collect data on their career development employees, but this has not been easy to obtain.

The image of the profession is that its workforce is weighted towards older, white, middle-class females. While our work to date has shown this to be broadly true, we have found that there are many professionals with diverse characteristics, but they often lack visibility. Analysis of the CDI membership data in September 2021 showed the profile of those members who have completed their demographic profile as:

Eth	nicity	Ger	nder
White	88.3%	Female	81%
Asian	4.6%	Male	19%
Black	4.8%		
	1		1

One of the issues the strategy needs to address is this limitation in our data.

A more visible community sharing their demographics is a start. The data and feedback we do have indicate that there is a need for increased representation from the various communities we serve. There is under-representation in many areas of diversity, and a lack of visibility and engagement with those from diverse backgrounds. To address these issues, we must strive to create a more inclusive environment that welcomes, encourages, and enables individuals with diverse characteristics thrive in the sector.

To gather more insight and set a baseline against which we can track progress against the strategy, the #CDIBigListen survey for January 2023 included several EDI related questions. Key findings from the 317 responses to the survey included (see Figure 1).

The 'diversity excluding female' figures are for respondents who identified as being from diverse communities but excluding male/female gender responses to remove the effect of the high number of female responses, which are similar to the overall response.

The analysis shows that, while there are some positive features of career development related to diversity, there are clearly areas where more is needed. For example, only around a third of people agree career development is sufficiently diverse, and 23% of those from a diverse background have experienced barriers because of their characteristics.

This research acted as an input to seven EDI workshops held in January 2023, focusing on gender, sexuality and sexual identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, socioeconomics, and intersectionality. Attendees represented career professionals from a wide range of backgrounds and covered the barriers to diversity within career development and the potential solutions.

The outputs from these workshops are available on the CDI website and identified broader barriers to diversity (such as the low awareness among all communities of career development as a profession), general EDI issues affecting multiple communities and barriers specific to each community. These insights have been key to the development of this strategy.

# Strategic approach

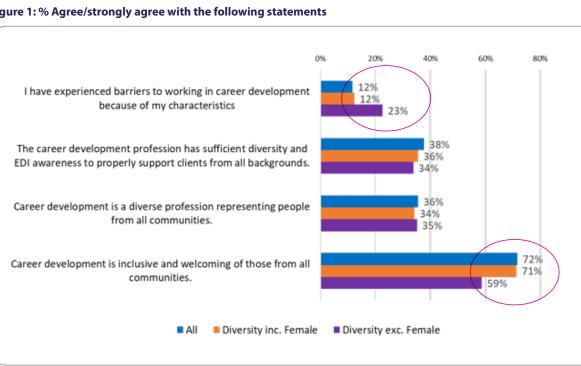
There are three aspects underpinning our approach in this strategy.

#### 1. Welcome, Encourage and Enable

There are many ways to approach EDI. From the work over the last year the CDI have identified three areas where more can be done to address diversity issues within the profession (see Figure 2).

These could be seen as a progression route - from starting with simpler activities to ensure people feel welcomed into the profession, progressing through active encouragement

100%



# Figure 1: % Agree/strongly agree with the following statements

#### Figure 2: Welcome, Encourage and Enable



and finally to more fundamental change through providing support, tools and so on. In this strategy they represent different areas of focus to address different issues, problems and needs.

For those already in the profession, there is less need to enable or encourage them to come in, but there is more we can do to make career development more *inclusive*. Others may be interested in joining the profession but need encouragement to help people with *diverse characteristics* see the opportunities available. Yet others may face specific barriers that prevent them from even considering the profession, so we need to address the *equity* of opportunity to enable them to fulfil their potential.

The same thinking can be applied to goal 2, ensuring clients with diverse characteristics receive the careers support they need.

#### 2. General, Generic EDI and Specific EDI actions

From our development work for this strategy, and in particular the seven workshops held towards the end of January 2023,

it became clear that there are three broad areas of activity to address (see Figure 3).

**General** activities are changes that are not unique to EDI but will have an impact on the diversity goals. The main example from the workshops was raising the profile of the career development profession among the public and as a career option in itself. While this is a general change that the CDI aims to address for a wide variety of reasons (improving the talent pipeline, helping the public find expert careers guidance, etc.) it will support the EDI strategy by making more people, from a wider range of backgrounds, aware of the profession.

**Generic EDI** activities apply across most or all aspects of diversity. They are about addressing general barriers or taking positive steps that will enable people from all communities. Examples may include gathering demographic data periodically to benchmark and track the level of diversity across the profession, or ensuring the composition of speakers at conferences and events reflect the diversity of society more generally, so people can see 'people like them' on the public stage.

General	they will be	e linked as supp	nay sit outside th orting activities.	(e	.g. raionig tite p		2001011) 2 at
	Ethnicity	Gender	Disability	Sexuality	Religion	Socio- economic	Inter- sectionalit
Generic EDI	~	~	~	~	<b>~</b>	~	~
Specific EDI							
Action 1	<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>	✓	<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>				<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Action 2			<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>		
Action 3	<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>						
Action 4		<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>				<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>	
Action 5				<ul> <li>✓</li> </ul>			

#### Figure 3: General, Generic EDI and Specific EDI actions

**Specific EDI** actions relate to one or a small number of aspects of diversity. These are important to address more unique issues and barriers for one community that may not be faced by another. For example, people with a disability may face access issues that those with other diversity characteristics may not.

By looking at the strategy through these different lenses, the CDI can maximise its impact both across the board and for those communities facing specific issues.

3. Addressing the short-, medium- and long-term issues

There are many actions which can be taken to have an immediate impact, while others need a longer-term approach to make a difference. The temptation is to focus on the quick wins first, but this can result in fundamental change being pushed further back. So, the approach is to have annual priorities that are a combination of quick wins and progress towards both medium- and long-term change.

The priorities of year ones, two, and three have been decided by the CDI members and are not set in stone (see Figure 4).

While the specific actions in each year will be set out in an annual plan, this strategy outlines a range of activities for the short- medium- and long-term and which are prime candidates for the year one priorities.

Through these three approaches, the CDI aims to effect change over the short, medium, and long term that addresses broad and specific issues, that welcomes, encourages, and enables people with diverse characteristics to thrive in career development, and support clients with diverse needs. In developing the plan we explored seven areas in more depth and these provide the focus for the plan:

- 1. Disability
- 2. Ethnicity
- 3. Gender
- 4. Religion
- 5. Sexuality / Sexual Identity
- 6. Socioeconomic Status
- 7. Intersectionality

Intersectionality reflects individuals having multiple diverse characteristics and how these can create additional needs, barriers and considerations, beyond those of belonging to any individual diverse community.

The strategy covers these areas, plus is designed to be relevant to all aspects of diversity, such as age. These will be considered in the individual actions below – for example recent EDI webinars have included one on Pregnancy and Maternity.

# Three-year action plan

The table on the next page (see figure 5), outline the actions and priorities for each of the three years and have been categorised under three key areas: welcome, encourage, and enable.

These actions are based on the extensive work carried out over the past year, the valuable feedback and suggestions gathered during the co-creation workshops on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January as well as the consultation phase. The timing of activities will be subject to review at the end of each year, in response to progress made and any factors that affect priorities. This ensures that, while we have a robust plan, we are also flexible in our approach and able to adapt to changing circumstances.

#### Figure 4: Addressing the short-, medium- and long-term issues

	Quick wins	Medium-term	Long-term
Priorities for year 1			
Priorities for year 2			
Priorities for year 3			

**Encourage** Diversity of those joining career Enable Welcome Inclusivity within career development Removing barriers to equity YEAR 1 Continue to review images used by the CDI Provide terminology and EDI training Campaign to gather demographic to ensure they are balanced and inclusive. to improve understanding and data from CDI members and across the Increase contributions from members communication. profession. of diverse communities on topics not EDI related (e.g., Career Matters articles, conferences, CPD training). Review CDI Board and team recruitment to Emphasise knock-on negative effects on Review existing diversity statements which clients with a non-diverse workforce. • Form first working group to address a • EDI article(s) in each edition of the Career specific area of diversity and inclusion. employers have in place, and highlight Develop a programme of CPD webinars focused on EDI topics, explicitly stating best practice Matters magazine. Set up diverse community forums/ Provide a diversity statement and guidance for careers employers to include on job postings and interview panels. support groups as a safe space to share experiences, challenges, and successes, fostering a sense of belonging. • Begin gathering case studies from career client related. Define and encourage allyship and advocacy, demonstrating benefits of this.
Create a mechanism for EDI suggestions · Support the mental health and wellbeing of careers professionals and clients. professionals with diverse characteristics. Refugee and trauma career guidance · Create EDI space on the CDI website with and feedback. workshops information, resources, and case studies. Engage with key dates related to EDI. Review and seek feedback on impact of Normalise EDI in the workforce and & International student in demographic workplace by showcasing meaningful, these data for transparency. • Add to the CDI Code of Ethics web pages inclusive imagery. • Communicate effectively about EDI Work with organisations that provide careers training to support their EDI to share EDI how members can be allies. initiatives and progress. policies · Encourage members to signpost on their • Set up regular EDI meetings with the four Interagency working to raise awareness member profiles where they have EDI specialisms nations organisations to work together, of the sector and increase visibility (e.g., e.g., to share demographic data.
Build resource bank based on existing EDI approaches, using this as a foundation for further development. Education and Employers/Speakers for • Focus on supporting CDPs/Clients with Schools - CDPs to volunteer and share disabilities in the workplace their pathways). • Work with Prospects/My Path on • Web content - showcase a range of diverse showcasing CDP job profiles to increase CDP - e.g. A Day in the Life of ... visibility Create marketing materials to engage clients from diverse communities for careers professionals.

#### YEAR 2

- Establish a Religious Diversity or interfaith career development professionals' network
- Develop and promote materials highlighting the success stories of professionals with diverse characteristics , within the field
- Support & promote the apprenticeship route to getting qualified, showcasing diversity of entry paths. • Highlight best practice of organisations
- through case studies.

#### Promote diverse recruitment and hiring

- practices across the profession. Encourage diverse leadership and interview panels.
- Increase representation by employing more people from diverse communities within the CDI.
- Organise events and webinars targeted at underrepresented communities to introduce them to the career development profession.
- Foster partnerships and collaborations to promote EDI within the career development sector.
- Implement internal mentoring programmes for under-represented aroups.

# YEAR 3

 Promote EDI initiatives and successes through various channels. Raise visibility of diverse community forums and networking to encourage

• Ensure client case studies include those

careers professionals to join.

from diverse communities.

- Advocate for inclusive hiring and promotion practices within the industry, including employer training on unconscious bias and inclusive management.
- Encourage under-represented groups to enter the sector through targeted recruitment campaigns. • Encourage under-represented groups to
- pursue progression roles.
- Collaborate with community organisations and educational institutions to reach out to diverse populations and promote the profession.

- whether these are workforce EDI related or
- Set clear guidelines on identification of UK

- Review the delivery of the Level 6 and QCD training content to integrate EDI, promote
- diverse career theories and voices. Develop specialist badges for CPD on EDI Establish more working groups to address areas of diversity and inclusion.
- Collaborate with the Open University and other training providers to validate their
- EDI course as accredited CPD. Conduct self-efficacy, self-promotion, and navigating pregnancy and careers sessions.
- · Provide authenticity and belonging in cultures training.
- Provide webinars on socioeconomic differences, including perceptions, assumptions, and stereotypes. • Co-create CPD resources with individuals
- who have lived experience.
- Create and promote bursaries, scholarships, grants, or financial aid programs specifically for underrepresented groups to gain career development qualifications and experience.
- Develop resources and tools, such as workshops or online courses, tailored to the unique needs and experiences of professionals with diverse characteristics.
- Develop and deliver webinars and CPD sessions on supporting socioeconomic diversity and delivering financial education for careers practitioners.
- Review qualification routes to ensure pathways encourage diversity – e.g., for those unable to self-fund or with caring responsibilities.
- Promote careers without gender boundaries from primary school. Develop parental involvement guidelines. • Compile a list of diversity-friendly
- employers to support clients in their job search.
- Collaborate with industry leaders to identify and address systemic barriers including advocating for policy change.

# **Measuring success**

Measurement is important to track progress and inform future stages of the strategy. By including questions on EDI in the January 2023 CDI Big Listen survey, we have some baseline data we can use to track. From 317 respondents, 72% agreed that career development is inclusive and welcoming of those from all communities, yet only 36% agreed that career development is a diverse profession representing people from all communities.

Figure 6 shows the proportion of respondents agreeing with the statements about the CDI.

A subset of these questions will be repeated annually in the survey to track changes and estimate the impact of the strategy.

In addition, part of the strategy will be to define additional KPIs to track and see if diversity issues are improving in the profession. This will be developed as follows:

## Step 1: Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs

- Identify SMART KPIs that align with the goals and objectives of our strategy. Examples of areas to measure include:
- The proportion of the profession that demographic data is available for.
- How closely the career development profession demographics match national demographics (or client demographics if available)
- The percentage of people who agree the profession is diverse and welcoming (especially agreement among those from diverse communities).
- The percentage of people who feel the CDI is doing enough to represent diverse communities.

#### Step 2: Collect and Analyse Data

• Establish a process for collecting and analysing data for each KPI. This may involve the CDI Big Listen survey and additional surveys, gathering demographic data from stakeholders and tracking visibility of diverse communities (such as speakers at events, etc.).

#### Step 3: Monitor and Report Progress

• Regularly report on the progress of the initiatives and the tracked KPIs to highlight successes and areas for improvement.

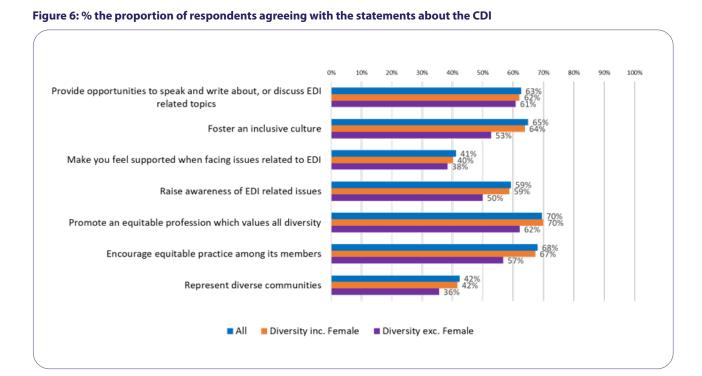
#### Step 4: Review and Adapt

 Conduct an annual review of EDI initiatives to identify areas for improvement and inform future action plans, ensuring our strategy remains relevant and responsive to the needs of members and stakeholders. Involve underrepresented groups in measuring success.

#### **Step 5: Continuous Improvement**

• Maintain a focus on continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and adapting the strategy, collecting and analysing data, and engaging with our members and stakeholders. This will ensure our efforts remain effective and impactful, driving positive change within the career development sector.

The EDI strategy will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate from the process o8utliend above, as well as feedback from diverse communities, members and stakeholders.



# **Appendix A**

### **Developing the strategy**

Since June 2022, the CDI Chief Executive, David Morgan, and EDI Associate Ifza Shakoor have led a series of events designed to inform the EDI strategy, including one-to-one chats, lunchtime sessions, webinars, and the CDI Big Listen Survey.

#### **EDI workshops**

This culminated in two days of workshops on 26th and 27th January 2023 focused on individual aspects of diversity, providing a platform for careers professionals to discuss barriers and possible solutions to driving forward equity, diversity, and inclusion within career development.

The workshops included an overview of the CDI Big Listen survey results, a keynote speaker who shared their lived experience then breakout discussions covering the barriers to greater diversity and the potential solutions.

The seven workshops covered, and their keynote speakers were:

- 1. Disability Jenny Connick
- 2. Ethnicity Gina Visram
- 3. Gender Chris Webb
- 4. Religion Sarfraz Ahmed
- 5. Sexuality and sexual identity Sarah Warburton and Liane Hambly
- 6. Socioeconomic Status Dr Deirdre Hughes
- 7. Intersectionality Huyen Le

The workshops were highly successful in capturing the views of those from a wide range of backgrounds and situations, giving them a direct opportunity to raise issues and solutions in either an open (speaking out during the workshop) or anonymous (posting comments on the Padlet sheets) format.

The feedback from the workshops was extremely positive and the outputs have been invaluable in developing this strategy. Key issues identified by those attending the workshops included:

- Disability: There is a lack of support and recognition for disabled practitioners, and the three-hour online sessions may not be accessible to all, creating barriers to training. The sector needs to provide additional support and generate ideas to address these issues.
- Lack of diversity and representation: Men, BAME individuals, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are underrepresented in the sector. Recruitment and promotion processes, poor pay, limited access to networks and lack of role models exacerbate this problem. The sector needs to diversify the pool of people coming into the sector, elevate voices from marginalised communities, and embed EDI throughout CPD.
- Religious diversity: There is a lack of understanding of different religious beliefs, practices, and values, and unconscious bias and judgmental attitudes towards people from different faiths. The sector needs to provide training and

professional development opportunities focused on religious equity.

- LGBTQ+ issues: Heteronormativity, lack of outreach work with LGBTQ+ clients, lack of visible role models and anxiety about using the wrong language are some of the challenges faced in this area. The sector needs to offer mentoring programmes for diverse groups, short videos and resources on career development and intersectionality, and embed EDI throughout CPD to address these issues.
- Socioeconomic barriers: Limited access to resources and networks, stigma and shame associated with not being able to afford certain things and lack of confidence and self-belief are some of the barriers faced by individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The sector needs to seek support funding and bursaries, establish flexible working guidelines, and consider discounted fees for individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Outputs of the workshops will be available on the new CDI website in the new EDI strategy section.

#### Consultation

This collaborative approach continued with a consultation period to review the draft strategy. This included workshops with:

- Two groups of career development practitioners
- The CDI team
- CDI regional representatives
- Members of the CDI Ethics and Professional Standards
   Committee
- A stakeholder group with invitations extended to the DfE, Careers & Enterprise Company, Careers Wales, SDS, Gatsby and members of the Career Development Policy Group.

Input was sought from EDI specialists within the career development profession, as well as gathering insight from organisations outside career development that have positive EDI approaches.

The consultation exercise helped refine and improve the EDI strategy based on the different perspectives and inputs of those involved in the process. There was appreciation for the strategy's coherent structure, organised around 'welcome, encourage, and enable', and the focus on inclusivity, demonstrated by plans to increase contributions from diverse communities and establish community forums. Respondents particularly valued the commitment to continuous professional development, underlined by proposed CPD webinars and the integration of EDI into training.

The strategy's explicit attention to mental health support and its provision for ongoing adaptation based on stakeholder feedback were well-received. The distinct yearly action plans were recognised for their progression and specificity, providing a clear path towards fulfilling the strategy's objectives. The commitment to promoting equitable representation and visibility in the career development sector was another standout element, solidifying a strong degree of endorsement and enthusiasm for the proposed EDI strategy. Alongside the generally positive response, the consultation participants raised a number of areas for improvement, primarily in the lists of yearly plan activities. These have been reviewed and incorporated into the tables above where they were considered to add value and be feasible to deliver with the resources available.

#### Launching the strategy

Once the final draft is approved by the CDI Board, it will be launched to CDI members and the wider profession through a series of activities including:

- Publication of the full strategy.
- Development of materials summarising the strategy.
- A range of presentations including webinar(s) for CDI members and non-members.

Articles in relevant media such as October's Career Matters magazine.

#### **Extended Glossary**

- Allyship Active support for marginalised or underrepresented groups by those in positions of power or privilege. Allies educate themselves, amplify voices, and leverage their advantages to promote equity.
- Bias Prejudice in favour of or against a thing, person, or group that is unjustified or stems from assumptions. Unconscious bias occurs without awareness.
- Characteristics Various aspects of diversity like ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, etc.
- Culture The shared values, beliefs, behaviours, customs, and artefacts that characterise a society, organisation, or social group.
- Disability Physical or mental conditions that limit a person's movements, senses, or activities.
- Diversity The range of human differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, religion, disability status and more.
- Equality Treating everyone the same by providing equal access, opportunity, and resources to all.
- Equity Ensuring fair treatment, equality of opportunity and fairness in access to resources for marginalised groups facing structural barriers. Achieved through needs-based approaches.
- Ethnicity Social group with a shared history, sense of peoplehood, geography, language, rituals, food, music and more. Often confused with race.
- Gender Complex interrelationship between an individual's biology, internal sense of self and gender expression.
   Includes man, woman, non-binary, agender and more.
- Inclusion Active, intentional, and continual engagement of diverse communities and identities. Creates belonging by valuing all individuals, empowering participation, and eliminating barriers.
- Intersectionality Overlapping social identities that compound systemic oppression and barriers, like race and gender.

- Prejudice Biased thought based on stereotypes or unsupported judgements towards a person or group.
- Privilege Unearned social power and immunity granted by normative cultural identity markers, like being white, male, straight or able-bodied.
- Race Social construction placing individuals into groups based on perceived physical and behavioural traits. No genetic basis.
- Socioeconomic Status Social standing determined by factors like income, educational attainment, financial security, and occupation.
- Stereotype Generalised beliefs about attributes, characteristics, or roles of those belonging to a group.



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