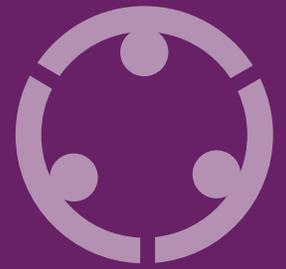


Expanding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Volunteer Programs



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Introduction

This Introductory Tip Sheet offers practical advice from voluntary-sector specialists who are also thought leaders with lived experience and expertise in diversity and inclusion. Thanks to each contributor for sharing their voice and creating spaces where volunteers and volunteer management specialists can listen, learn, grow, and adapt.

Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are important values and practices in the voluntary sector. Examples of racism, ableism, agism, and exclusion in volunteer programs continue. Also some volunteers experience tangible and intangible barriers to participation. By expanding knowledge of cultures and diversities, honing the ability to adapt and change, and co-creating volunteer programs with people who are under-represented, more welcoming spaces are created for volunteers from all demographic groups.

So how do organizations shift from planning for diversity and inclusion to being organizations that are diverse and inclusive?

Create Welcome

Inclusion and diversity specialists recommend that first **define what diversity and inclusion means** for volunteer programs and then **explore how welcome is experienced by volunteers** when they visit our organizations – in-person, online, or on social media.

What do new volunteers see, hear, smell, experience, and feel when they arrive in our real and virtual spaces? Are there obvious signs, images, and messages to let underrepresented volunteers know that they are welcomed and wanted, or are there barriers to engagement at first contact?

Good accessibility and tangible signs of welcome are important elements to help volunteers feel recognized, comfortable, and safe in new surroundings.

Top Tip: Before planning your preferred volunteer programs, learn more about what others prefer. Be intentional about connecting with people to learn how they feel welcomed and accepted.

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Grow Your Cultural Literacy

Welcoming organizations demonstrate their cultural competency and enhance their cultural literacy in tangible ways: through policy and practice; behaviours and values; by continuously learning and building knowledge; and by developing and articulating strategies to support and enhance inclusion and diversity in their workplaces.

Here are some practical ideas to help create more culturally safe and welcoming spaces:

- Define what culture and inclusion means in your volunteer programs
- Learn more about personal identities and how people reflect and represent their cultures
- Examine the impact of assumptions in your volunteer programs and understand how they create barriers to inclusion
- Design a framework to create a more inclusive volunteer program with developmental stages
- Create a model for change and learn how to manage change
- Identify potential barriers and success factors and develop strategies to help reduce and overcome barriers
- Plan for your volunteer program to be different and learn how to manage the “dynamics of difference”
- Acquire knowledge and learn more about being a good ally
- Share your learning and be a leader in inclusive volunteer programs

Who Else Needs to Be Involved?

One of the most important elements in developing a plan for inclusion in a volunteer program is making a commitment to include other people with lived experience in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the plan.

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Definitions

Ableism – discrimination in favor of able-bodied people

Allyship – a situation or time when a person in a position of privilege supports, shows up for, amplifies the voices of, and otherwise works in solidarity with marginalized and oppressed groups

Anti-racism – a range of ideas and political actions meant to counter racial prejudice, systemic racism, and the oppression of racial groups

Colonialism – the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically

Cultural Appropriation – the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant society

Cultural Competency – the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own

Cultural Literacy – being able to understand the traditions, regular activities and history of a group of people from a given culture

Diversity Dimensions – The dimensions of diversity include gender, religious beliefs, race, marital status, ethnicity, parental status, age, education, physical and mental ability, income, sexual orientation, occupation, language, geographic location, and many more components

IBPOC and BIPOC – a contemporary term that refers to Indigenous, Black, Brown, and People of Colour. Its origins are in the USA where the term is expressed as BIPOC

Indigenization – is a process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts

Traditional Territory Acknowledgement – Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Aboriginal Peoples. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences.

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Additional Resources

Diversity of charity and non-profit boards of directors: Overview of the Canadian non-profit sector

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210211/dq210211a-eng.pdf> Feb 11, 2021

Volunteer Canada 127 Individual Diversity Resources https://www.volunteer.ca/Listings.php?ListType=Resources_Diversity_Public

Dimensions of Diversity

Volunteer Victoria offers gratitude and respect to the following individuals and organizations who have helped us and other volunteer-led organizations develop our cultural literacy and create welcome and inclusion.

Dr. Moussa Magassa, The Intercultural Capacity Building Inc. www.magassa.ca

Indigenous Perspectives <https://ipsociety.ca/>

Intercultural Association <https://www.icavictoria.org/>

Victoria Disability Resource Centre <https://www.icavictoria.org/>

Tanya Rumble, Diversity Specialist

Mary Catherine Williams, Diversity Specialist

About Volunteer Victoria

The Greater Victoria Volunteer Society, more commonly known as Volunteer Victoria, is a volunteer centre and hub to help volunteers, volunteer managers, and volunteer-led organizations.

Our mission is to *inspire and empower volunteerism!* We:

- Help volunteers and volunteer-led organizations
- Build and share knowledge through the delivery of professional development, training, learning and networking opportunities
- Offer specialized services and resources that advance the quality of volunteer programs and build capacity
- Treat all members, volunteers, partners, staff and stakeholders with fairness, dignity, and respect
- Provide welcoming spaces that embrace diverse ideas, knowledge, cultures, and experiences

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