

FREE CLASSROOM RESOURCE

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

A practical guide for learners: understanding difference, promoting inclusion and creating respectful places to learn and work.

Workplace **Hero**

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Learning objectives

By the end of this resource you should be able to:

Understand	Recognise	Reflect	Act
Explain equality, diversity and inclusion in practical terms.	Identify behaviours that can support or undermine inclusion.	Consider how your actions contribute to respectful places to learn and work.	Know what to do if you experience or witness discrimination, harassment or exclusion.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality

People should have fair access to opportunities and should not be unfairly disadvantaged because of who they are.

Diversity

People have different identities, backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and characteristics.

Inclusion

People should be able to participate, contribute and feel respected and valued.

Equality does not always mean treating everybody identically. Sometimes people need different support or adjustments to access the same opportunity.

Why does EDI matter?

In learning and at work, EDI helps create places where people:

- feel safe and respected
- can participate
- contribute different ideas and experiences
- have fair access to opportunities
- are able to ask for support
- can challenge inappropriate behaviour
- feel that they belong

Reflect: What helps you feel included in a team, classroom or workplace?

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination because of nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Whether the law applies depends on the circumstances and the type of treatment involved. You do not need to be a legal expert - but it helps to know the law exists and why.

Everyone has protected characteristics.

Fair doesn't always mean identical

Three learners are completing the same programme:

Learner A	Learner B	Learner C
Needs information in an accessible format.	Uses assistive technology.	Does not need additional support.

Would giving one learner additional support be unfair? Fairness is about removing unnecessary barriers so people can take part - not giving everyone exactly the same thing. Organisations have a duty to make reasonable adjustments so disabled people are not put at a substantial disadvantage.

Discrimination: different forms

Direct	Treating someone worse because of a protected characteristic - for example, refusing someone an opportunity because of their race.
Indirect	A rule or practice that applies to everyone but puts people who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, unless it can be objectively justified.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Victimisation	Treating someone badly because they made, or supported, a complaint about discrimination.

Something can be rude, unfair or inappropriate without meeting the legal definition of discrimination. That does not mean it should be ignored.

Harassment, banter and respect

“It was only a joke.”

Humour can bring people together - but not when someone is the target.

“Everyone talks like that here.”

Common does not mean acceptable. Newer people may feel unable to say so.

“They didn’t mean anything by it.”

Intent and impact are not always the same thing.

Calling something “banter” does not automatically make it acceptable - and not every joke or disagreement is harassment. Think about impact, context, repeated behaviour, boundaries, dignity and professional expectations.

Inclusion in practice: what would you do?

1	Someone repeatedly talks over a quieter team member.
2	A learner is left out of an activity because others assume they would not be interested.
3	Someone mocks the way another learner speaks.
4	A colleague requests an adjustment because of a disability.
5	Somebody expresses a different religious or non-religious belief.

Discuss: What could an inclusive response look like in each situation?

Belonging and difference

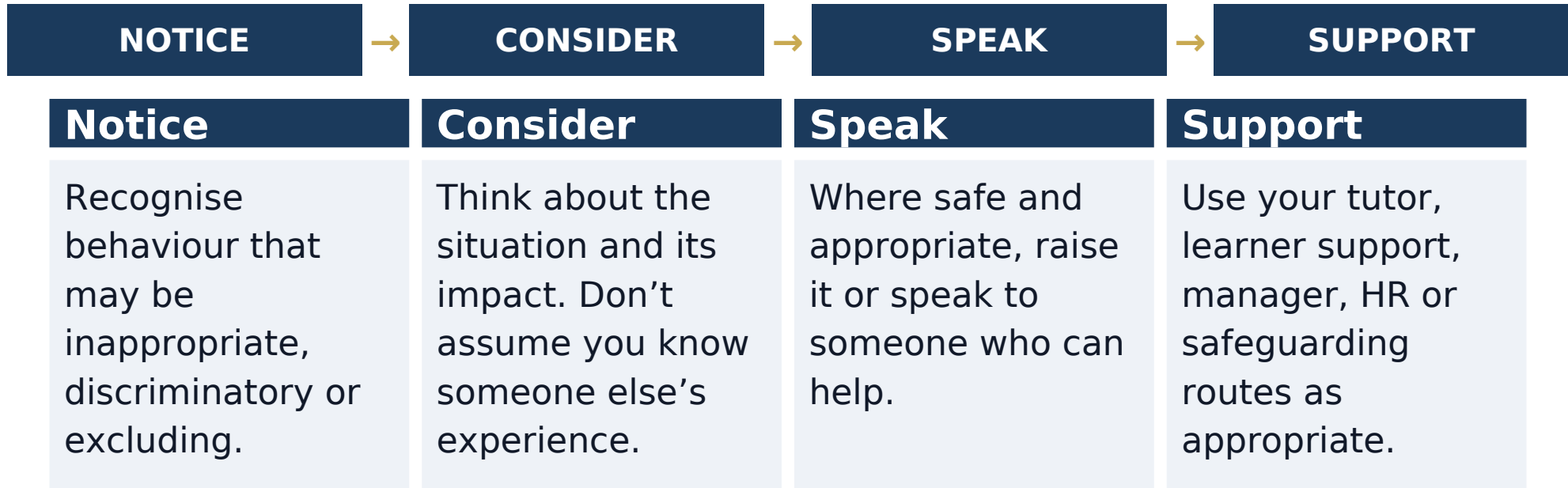
Inclusion does not mean everyone:

- thinks the same
- agrees about everything
- has the same experiences
- shares the same beliefs

People can disagree respectfully. Different perspectives can strengthen learning and teams.

You do not have to agree with somebody to treat them with dignity and respect.

If something happens



You never have to confront anyone yourself. Telling someone who can help is always a good option.

What can you do?

- use people's names correctly
- respect reasonable boundaries
- listen to different perspectives
- avoid assumptions about people
- challenge stereotypes appropriately
- include others
- ask rather than assume
- be willing to learn
- speak up when something genuinely concerns you

Inclusion is something we all help create.

Reflection

One thing I can do to help other people feel included.

One assumption I can challenge in myself or around me.

One place I can go if I need help or advice.

About this resource

This resource is designed for tutors and trainers to use with learners as an introduction to equality, diversity and inclusion. It reflects the Equality Act 2010 (Great Britain) at awareness level.

It does not replace organisational EDI policies, specialist HR advice, legal advice or safeguarding procedures.

Content reviewed: 25 September 2026 Suggested next review: 25 September 2027.
Reviewed earlier where relevant legislation or official guidance changes.

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