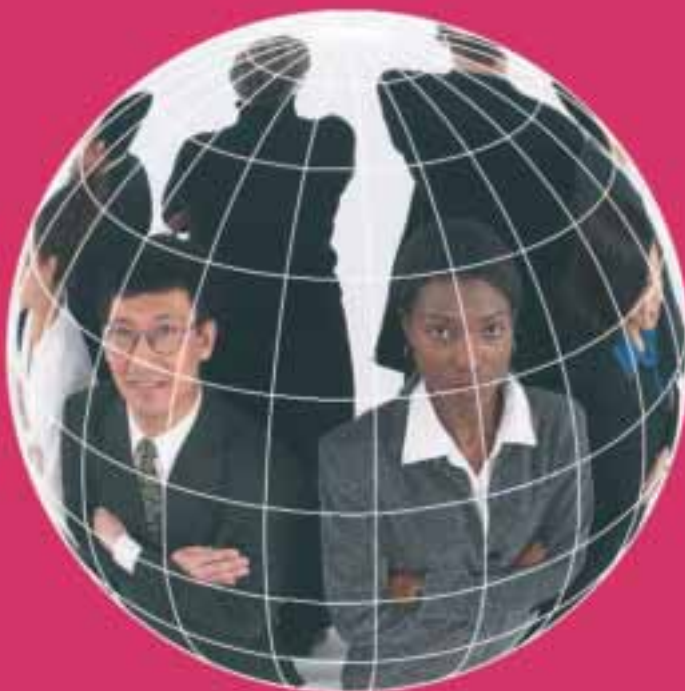


# Supporting diversity at work



**Clocking In to Clocking Out**  
**Improving workplace basic education**

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## ***Vocabulary***

**Acknowledge**

**Awareness**

**Bigotry**

**Colloquialism**

**Customs**

**Disability**

**Discrimination**

Direct discrimination

Discrimination by association

Indirect discrimination

**Diverse**

**Diversity**

**Equality**

**Ethnic**

**Force majeure**

**Gender**

**Gesture**

**Harassment**

**Impairment**

**Inclusion**

**Inclusive**

**Labour market**

**Marital**

**Measures**

**Mutual respect**

**Non-verbal**

**Origin**

**Perception**

**Prejudge**

**Prejudice**

**Prohibit**

**Race**

**Racism**

**Sensory**

**Simplistic**

**Stereotype**

**Transgender**

**Values**

**Victimise**


## What is diversity?

The word **diversity** means that many different types of people or things are included. For example, think of all the different kinds of food that exist or the huge variety of animals, plants, and birds found all over the world. We can say that these are **diverse**.

People are diverse in many ways too. We have a variety of **ethnic** backgrounds and religious beliefs. We also speak many different languages and differ in our **customs** and **values**. When we use the word 'ethnic', we mean a group of people who share the same cultural traditions and maybe come from the same geographical region and speak the same language. There are many different ethnic groups. We sometimes use the word **race** instead of saying 'ethnic group'.

Other differences among people include, for example, gender, age or having a disability. In the workplace, diversity also means employing people with different educational backgrounds, ways of communicating, skills and work experience.

When we talk about people, the word 'diversity' has a much broader meaning than the dictionary definition. It is about embracing difference and being **inclusive**. It means we should

- **acknowledge**
  - accept
  - value
  - celebrate
- 
- difference among people.

## ***Try it out***

**Answer these questions.**

**Write your answers in your notebook.**

1. In what ways are people diverse?
2. Can you list different ethnic groups living here in Ireland?
3. Explain what makes a society inclusive.
4. How is Ireland today different to how it was twenty years ago?
5. Does this difference have any effect on you?

## **Words**

**Make a sentence using each word. Use a dictionary to help you.**

gender .....

.....

diversity .....

.....

ethnic .....

.....

acknowledge .....

.....

value .....

.....

## **Extension activities**



### **Find out**

St Patrick's Day is celebrated outside Ireland. What festivals and special days do we have that celebrate other cultures?



### **Talk about**

We have many traditions and customs about food, celebrations, births, marriages and deaths. What do you know about them? What do you know about them in other countries?



### **Writing**

Write about some of the traditions and customs you are familiar with at home. Compare them, if you can, with traditions or customs that you know from holidays or people you know from another country.



### **At work**

Ireland has workers from 160 countries. Find out how many countries are represented in your workplace or in your industry.



### **Computer skills**

In a spreadsheet, enter the names of all the countries represented in your workplace and the numbers of workers from the different countries.



### **Using numbers**

Create a chart or graph for your workplace to show the different numbers of workers from different countries. You can do this on graph paper or on computer.

## ***Why is diversity in the workplace important?***

Diversity is important for all those who are involved in the world of work and business. It benefits the individual as an employee and also as a citizen. It also benefits the company, the customer and society as a whole.

### **It is inclusive**

Diversity allows people from a wide range of backgrounds to participate in the labour market and be economically independent. They can make important contributions to society through their jobs.

### **It promotes equality**

By law, all employees must be treated **equally** in recruitment, promotion and training opportunities.

### **It promotes respect**

**Mutual respect** means respecting others who have different beliefs or customs and treating them in a way we would like to be treated. Lack of respect can lead to **harassment**. Harassment is unwanted behaviour that abuses people's dignity. It is an attempt to offend, belittle or intimidate another person.

### **It is good for business**

A diverse workforce gives companies a wider range of skills, abilities, experience and points of view. As a result, companies are more productive and can also be more profitable.

### **It reflects society**

Society is diverse. So a diverse workforce can understand and relate better to the needs of diverse clients when they make enquiries, require service, ask for assistance, need specialised products and so on.



## Try it out

### Answer these questions.

Write your answers in your notebook.

1. Who benefits from diversity in the workplace?
2. What does it mean to be economically independent?
3. Name three areas of employment where people must have equality of treatment.
4. In what ways can diversity help a company?
5. In what ways can diversity in a workplace help society?

### Words

Explain the difference between these words. Use a dictionary for help.

recruitment          promotion

.....

.....

diversity          inclusion

.....

.....

respect          dignity

.....

.....

### Word families

'Diverse' and 'diversity' are words that belong to the same family. Look at the other words above. Make word families for them. Be careful about the spelling because it can change if you change the word.

## **Extension activities**

### **Talk about**



What are the positive and negative responses that people have to diversity in the workplace?

What kind of harassment can happen in the workplace? How would you recognise it? What do you think causes it? What effect does it have on the victim? Is there a policy on it in your workplace?



### **Role play**

You see someone being harassed at work. Would you intervene? What could you do or say? Think of a situation in which someone is being harassed. Role play the situation. Discuss it with the rest of the group.



### **Writing**

Draft a group contract.

First you need to discuss what points to include in a group contract. How can you include diversity awareness?



### **Computer skills**

When everybody has agreed on the group contract, type it up and get everyone to sign it.

### **Find out**



Use the Internet to research the difference between your personal rights and personal responsibilities. Give at least two examples of your own personal rights and personal responsibilities in the workplace. Type each phrase into a search engine to start your research.

## ***What are stereotypes?***

We now have people from over 160 countries living and working in Ireland. If we do not have first-hand contact with other cultures, it is very easy to **stereotype** people. A stereotype is a generalisation about a group of people. It tries to judge an individual person's abilities, skills and behaviour based on ideas about cultural, racial or physical traits.

In the workplace, stereotyping can be positive or negative. As the following examples show, no one is immune from it.

- Women can be seen as caring and sensitive.
- Men can be seen as brave and logical.

This is called **gender** stereotyping.

The problem with stereotypes is that they limit our **perception** and understanding of other people. The way to overcome stereotypes is to question them and recognise that they are just **simplistic** representations of a group.

## ***What is prejudice?***

When we stereotype a person, we **prejudge** them before we really know them. This can sometimes lead to **prejudices**. A prejudice is usually a negative attitude about a person or group because of their race, religion or gender. It is usually based on negative qualities we think the group has, but actually the prejudice has no basis in fact.

A prejudice can influence how we act towards people. People can suffer very unfairly because of the prejudice they experience. The negative attitudes that cause prejudice can be very hard to change.

## Try it out

### Answer these questions.

Write your answers in your notebook.

1. According to the information in this section, what can happen when we do not have first-hand contact with other cultures?
2. How can you overcome stereotypes?
3. In your own words, describe what prejudice is.
4. Give two examples of how you can prejudge a person.
5. How are stereotypes and prejudices related to each other?

### Stereotype or fact?

Do you think the following sentences are stereotypes or facts? Tick the box for each sentence.

	Stereotype	Fact
1. Men are very good at understanding computers.		
2. Computers are taught in school nowadays.		
3. Women make better nurses.		

Write sentences, two stereotypes and two facts.

Stereotype

.....

.....

Fact

.....

.....

Stereotype

.....

.....

Fact

.....

.....

## **Extension activities**

### **Talk about**



Does stereotyping affect our judgement of the people we work with? Is stereotyping harmful or helpful? Consider what stereotypes you have grown up with. Have they changed?

How much does racism or bigotry impact on sports, nationally or internationally? What is being done about it?

### **Find out**



Look at advertisements in magazines that contain stereotypical images of, for example, gender or age. Is it clear what the advertisement is for? Can you identify the stereotype in the advertisement? Is the image positive or negative? How are stereotypes used for marketing?

### **Writing**



Pick one negative image of stereotyping in an advertisement and draft a letter of complaint to the newspaper or magazine.

### **Reading**



Find a news story that is in both a tabloid and a broadsheet newspaper. Compare the styles of writing. Do both papers present the same stereotype or is there a difference?

### **Computer skills**



All the major newspapers and television stations have an online news service. Use the 'Reading' exercise above to see if they differ in their reporting.

Do you think the media reinforces stereotypes?

## What is discrimination?

In Ireland today people working together in a typical workplace may have nothing in common apart from the job. Most people will try to get along and put aside personal and cultural differences. However, if workers do not get along, there can be unacceptable behaviour such as **discrimination** or harassment. Discrimination treats people in an unjust manner just because they are different. Employers can also discriminate by refusing employment or giving unfair pay and conditions.

Discrimination is not always open. Sometimes it is hidden and subtle.

**Direct discrimination** is the unfair treatment of someone because of their:

● gender	● marital status
● family status	● sexual orientation
● religion	● age
● disability	● race
	● membership of the Traveller community

**Indirect discrimination** is about behaviour or decisions that may seem fair but actually discriminate against some people. Indirect discrimination may be intentional or unintentional. For example, as a bonus a company decides to take its employees on an overnight trip away. However, many of the employees are single parents so they cannot take it up because they have no overnight childcare. Therefore they get no bonus.

**Discrimination by association** happens when a person is treated differently because of the company they keep. They may be connected to, or be friends with, somebody from a group that is discriminated against. Because of this they find that people prejudice them negatively.

## Try it out

### Answer these questions

Write your answers in your notebook.

1. How does the information sheet describe a typical workplace in Ireland today?
2. What is direct discrimination?
3. In your own words, describe discrimination by association.
4. Give an example of indirect discrimination that is different to the one in the information sheet.
5. Explain how you would handle this example of indirect discrimination.

### Words

Look at these pairs of words. The noun is on the left. Write the verb on the right. Is there an 'e' at the end? Use a dictionary to help you.

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. discrimination | discriminate<br>..... |
| 2. behaviour      | .....                 |
| 3. employment     | .....                 |
| 4. judgement      | .....                 |
| 5. harassment     | .....                 |
| 6. treatment      | .....                 |
| 7. decision       | .....                 |
| 8. association    | .....                 |

### Write sentences in your notebook.

Choose three verbs and three nouns from the list. Make a sentence for each word.

## Extension activities



### Computer skills

Go to the EU official website [www.stop-discrimination.info](http://www.stop-discrimination.info) Go to the interactive section and test your knowledge of discrimination using the on-line quizzes.



### At work

Does your workplace have an anti-discrimination policy? If not, are there other similar policies? Who would you ask to find out more?



### Find out

Indirect discrimination is different from direct discrimination. Do you know any examples of indirect discrimination? Find out more on the Equality Authority website at [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)



### Talk about

Discuss what discrimination feels like. Identify strategies for confronting it. Start the discussion with the following questions.

- Have you ever been discriminated against?
- Did anyone help? If not, how did you feel?
- Have you ever witnessed discrimination? What action did you take?
- What techniques could be used to tackle discrimination?



### Role play

Use the ideas from the 'Talk about' group discussion to create some role-play scenarios. Think of the strategies you could use for tackling discrimination. Practise role playing these techniques to become confident in using them.



### Writing

Use one of the scenarios from the discussion and write a short story. Here is an outline for your story: Who is the story about? What happens at the start of the story? What happens next? What happens as a result of this? What is the final outcome?



## *How are we promoting equality in Ireland?*

The Equality Authority is responsible for promoting equal opportunity in Ireland. It runs national campaigns and provides information and advice in the areas of equality and discrimination. For example, 2007 was the European Year of Equal Opportunity for All, and the Equality Authority produced information and organised public **awareness** campaigns.

The Equality Authority works for everybody, but it keeps a special focus on members of the community who are at risk of discrimination.

The Equality Authority focuses on:

- promoting and defending people's rights under equality legislation;
- raising awareness of equality issues; and
- helping companies with their equality policies and practices.

The Employment Equality Acts of 1998 and 2004 cover employees in all sectors as well as people who are looking for employment or training. The Acts make it illegal for employers to discriminate at work in areas such as training, work experience, access to employment, pay and promotion.

The legislation also **prohibits** harassment and victimisation at work. To **victimise** someone means to penalise them for taking action about their legal rights at work. The legislation also requires appropriate **measures** in the workplace for people with disabilities.

## ***Try it out***

**Answer these questions.**

**Write your answers in your notebook.**

1. How does the Equality Authority promote equality in Ireland?
2. Who is covered by the Employment Equality Acts?
3. Describe in your own words what the Acts do.
4. Describe in your own words what victimisation means.
5. Does equality of treatment mean that everyone should be treated exactly the same?

**What do you think?**

These people have applied for a job as a .....



*Ms Helen O'Brien*



*Mr Artur Onescu*



*Mr Pat Higgins*

Discuss which person should get the job. What information do you need to make your decision?

## Extension activities



### Reading

Research the Equality Authority's website at [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie) for information on parental leave and **force majeure**.



### Writing

Write a paragraph for your colleagues explaining the difference between the two types of leave and what you are entitled to.



### Computer skills

Type the words 'Employment Equality Act 1998' into a search engine. Name at least three different websites that list the Act. Why do you think they refer to it? Are you surprised at some of the websites that refer to the Act? Why?



### Role play

Role play the job interview for the people on the previous page.



### Talk about

Do you know of any events to promote equality in the workplace? What about the Anti-Racist Workplace week or the Say No To Ageism week? When are they on? Have you heard about them in your workplace? Look them up on the Equality Authority website.



### At home

What do you know about work-life balance? Look it up on the Equality Authority website. How can you improve your work-life balance?

## ***How can I communicate in a diverse environment?***

When you work with people from different backgrounds, cultures or countries, it can be very easy to offend someone without realising it. Learning how to communicate requires more than just being aware of differences. You have to know how to deal with those differences. Of course, the more you get to know people, the easier it can be to communicate. A sense of humour usually helps, although you need to remember that there are different styles of humour!

### **Communicating through writing**

It is important that a company produces written communications that everyone can understand. These can be letters, emails, notices or memos. You need to make sure that the information is presented simply and clearly, that the writing is big enough, and that photocopies are of good quality. This can be especially helpful for someone with a visual **impairment** or reading difficulties or someone who does not speak the language well.

### **Communicating through speech**

A person who does not speak your language very well may find it difficult to follow your accent or the expressions you use. Somebody with a hearing impairment may need you to face them when you talk to them. Depending on what you are talking about, some terms can be offensive and you may have to choose your words carefully.

### **Communicating non-verbally**

Facial expressions, hand **gestures**, body language and tone of voice are very helpful in getting across your message. However, they can also sometimes mean different things in other cultures.

## Try it out

### Answer these questions.

Write your answers in your notebook.

1. List the different ways you can communicate with your fellow workers.
2. What kind of written communication do you get in your workplace?  
How could they be improved?
3. What are the different types of non-verbal communication?
4. A person who does not speak your language well may have some difficulties understanding you. Name them.  
What can you do to help the communication?
5. How would you choose to communicate with a friend who is moving to South Africa for two years?

### Words

Put the words in the box in the correct place.

visual      language      accents      gestures      spoken

Communication can be written, ..... or non-verbal. Large, clear writing can help someone with a ..... impairment. People have different ..... and they can be difficult to understand for someone who does not speak the language well. Non-verbal communication includes hand ..... and body .....

## **Extension activities**



### **At work**

Do you call people by their first names? Do colleagues and customers from different cultures have the same level of formality or informality?



### **At home**

Colloquialisms are informal words or phrases that are used in your region. For example, in some parts of Ireland 'Well' is used in place of 'Hi' or 'Hello'. Think of other colloquialisms and explain their meanings. Could someone from a different country or culture understand them?



### **Talk about**

How do you feel about offering, accepting or refusing help if you or your colleague or customer has a language difficulty or a disability? Practise ways of offering, accepting or refusing help. Think about body language, tone of voice and the words you use.



### **Find out**

What non-verbal signals do people use in your workplace? Find out if they mean the same thing in other cultures. Ask around or check on the Internet.



### **Computer skills**

Design a poster for an open social event for the canteen noticeboard.



### **Reading**

Check the notices and signs in your workplace. Are they easy for everyone to understand? Suggest improvements if any are needed.

## ***How can we support people with a disability in the workplace?***

About 800 million people worldwide have a **disability**. In EU countries the number is 40 million. There are many types of disability. Some people have disabilities from birth while others get a disability later in life through injuries or illness. In this situation people have to learn to make adjustments in their personal and work lives.

Unemployment among people with a disability is much higher than in the general population.

### **Recognising capabilities and challenges**

People with disabilities have a wide range of abilities and skills that are needed in the workplace. For example, an everyday situation may be a problem for someone with a disability. They may have to work out a way around it. This type of thinking is one of the contributions that a person with a disability can make to business.

### **Improving access to the workplace**

There are many ways that a company can make the workplace and the job more accessible to an employee with a disability. Companies and individuals can apply for different types of grants. Some grants are for buying equipment and aids to help a person in their job. Other grants are for training such as disability awareness training. There are also plenty of organisations and websites that can give advice on identifying the problems that employees (and customers) can have because of their disabilities.

The O2 Ability Awards are for organisations that recognise the contribution that people with disabilities, whether employees or customers, make to business. You can find out more at [www.theabilityawards.com](http://www.theabilityawards.com)

## ***Try it out***

### **Answer these questions.**

**Write your answers in your notebook.**

1. Why do you think unemployment is higher for people with disabilities?
2. What kind of contribution can a person with a disability make to the workplace?
3. List the ways that a company can make the workplace accessible for someone with a disability.

### **True or false?**

**Read the sentences and tick True or False.**

Check with the information sheet if you need to.

	True	False
1. People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than people without disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Half of the people with disabilities are in the EU.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You can get a disability as an adult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is easy to make adjustments to your life if you get a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There are grants to help buy equipment to make a job accessible to an employee with a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The O2 Ability Awards recognise individual customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Extension activities



### Computer skills

Make a list of the organisations that support people with disabilities and note down their contact details. Design and print an information sheet.

### Talk about



What difficulties could a colleague or customer with a disability face in your workplace? What can colleagues do to understand more about disabilities and to be more supportive?

How close is Ireland to achieving a fully diverse and inclusive workplace? What would you say are the most important factors in making this happen?



### Reading

You can read case studies on integrating employees with different types of disabilities on the Workway website at [www.workway.ie/best\\_practice/case\\_studies.486.html](http://www.workway.ie/best_practice/case_studies.486.html)

### At home



The National Disability Authority (NDA) sent every home a copy of the New Disability Plans booklet in May 2007. The booklet offers a simple guide to the Government's plans on disability. The booklet tells you where to go to get more information, or to make a complaint. To read the booklet, look at the one you got or go to the website at [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie) What are some of the changes that are planned? How do you think they will be helpful?



### Writing

The New Disability Plans booklet tells you how to make a complaint. Write a letter to a particular body, for example the HSE or the county council.

## What is the law on discrimination?

Gender	You cannot discriminate against somebody because they are a man, a woman or <b>transgendered</b> .
<b>Marital</b> status	You cannot discriminate against somebody because they are single, married, separated, divorced or widowed.
Family status	You cannot discriminate against somebody because they are the parent of a person under 18 years of age, because they look after someone who can't look after themselves or because they are the parent of a person with a disability.
Sexual orientation	You cannot discriminate against somebody because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.
Religion	You cannot discriminate against somebody because of their religion, beliefs or background or because they do not have religious beliefs.
Age	You cannot discriminate against somebody because of their age if they are over the age at which they must, by law, attend school.
Disability	You cannot discriminate against somebody because they have a <b>sensory</b> , physical, learning, cognitive or emotional disability or a medical condition.
Race	You cannot discriminate against somebody because of their race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.
Membership of the Traveller community	You cannot discriminate against somebody because they are called a Traveller or they are identified as a Traveller.

## ***Try it out***

**Answer these questions.**

**Write your answers in your notebook.**

1. What are the different categories of marital status?
2. What do you think is the difference between marital status and family status?
3. What does the employment equality legislation say about religion? Why do you think this includes having no religion?
4. The law states that you cannot discriminate against somebody because of their age. Why doesn't the law state an exact age?
5. What is the youngest age at which people can leave school?
6. Do you think there are any other areas of discrimination in the workplace?

## **Spelling**

**The letter e**

**Find the 12 spelling mistakes in the text and rewrite it correctly.**

You cannot discriminat againste sombody becaus they are the parent of a person under 18 years of age, becaus they look after someon who can't look after themselves or becaus they are the parent of a person with a disability.

You cannot discriminat againste sombody becaus of their age if they are over the age at which they must, by law, attende school.

## **Extension activities**

### **Reading**



Go to the Equality Authority website at [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie). The website has a list of the nine grounds of discrimination. Compare the layout and language of the information sheet here with the website. Which is easier to read and understand? Why?

### **Talk about**



Do the Employment Equality Acts make the workplace a fairer place than it used to be? If yes, how; if not, why not? Give examples.

### **At home**



What projects or events are there in your local area to promote inclusion?

### **Computer skills**



From an Internet search, find out how to recognise discrimination in a workplace. Check sites from different countries. For example, does the United States have the same categories of discrimination as Ireland?

### **Find out**



Find out which organisations give information, advice and support on some of the issues in the information sheet. How can you or someone you know contact them?

### **Writing**



Imagine meeting a famous historical character, for example a role model from a civil rights or workers' movement. What questions would you have for the person and what might he or she say about the world today? Write and act a short interview.

## Notes





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