



**Council on Licensure,  
Enforcement & Regulation**

Promoting Regulatory Excellence

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Definitions Working Group**

### **Background**

During its August 1, 2023, meeting the Definitions Working Group agreed to propose the following definitions to CLEAR's Board of Directors. The Board is asked to consider approving these definitions as part of CLEAR's wider Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. The definitions are intended to help establish a shared understanding of some of the key terminology used in DEI conversations and initiatives, as well as in CLEAR's daily activities.

### **Proposed Definitions**

The following definitions include key terms frequently used in discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Where possible the terms refer to jurisdiction-specific use or variation. CLEAR has carefully considered a range of definitions for each term and is constantly refining and reflecting upon this work. CLEAR **welcomes feedback** about the terms and definitions provided below. This is a living document and will be updated to reflect the evolution of our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Aboriginal**

A term used to describe a member of a people, or a people, who were the first to live in a country, prior to the arrival of colonists, or who lived or existed in a place since the earliest known time. In Australia, these peoples are typically referred to as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

### **Belonging**

Individuals can be their authentic selves and feel like fully secure and supported members of a larger community, in which they can thrive.

### **Culture**

The accepted, dynamic norms, practices, and ways of life of particular groups of people.

### **Differing ability**

Acknowledges that any community contains participants with a range of abilities.

\*Given the controversy about using the closely linked term 'differently abled', CLEAR chooses not to employ either 'differing ability' or 'differently abled'.

### **Disability**

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

*As defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

**Diversity** - is defined broadly and refers to the range of similarities and differences in individual and organizational characteristics that shape our association. Some examples of individual characteristics may be national origin, language, race, color, people with disabilities, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structure. Some examples of organizational characteristics may include size, jurisdiction, and agency structure. There are many more. The concept also encompasses other differences among people, including employment role, status, or positional power, geographic differences and, importantly, diversity of thought and life experience.

**Equity** - is defined as fairness, and it ensures that everyone has the resources to succeed. It does not mean that everyone is the same or receives the same resources.

### **First Nations**

A term that can be used to describe Aboriginal peoples (the original inhabitants of a territory or jurisdiction). In Canada the term is used for peoples who are ethnically neither Métis nor Inuit.

**Inclusion** - can be summed up as giving every individual a sense of belonging. It leverages diversity so that all individuals and groups are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.

**Unconscious Bias** - Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

<sup>i</sup> **The National Center for Disability and Journalism** ([Disability Language Style Guide | National Center on Disability and Journalism \(ncdj.org\)](https://www.ncdj.org)) produces a style guide, which notes the following about the term 'Differently Abled':

Background: This term came into vogue in the 1990s as an alternative to “disabled,” “handicapped” or “mentally retarded.” Currently, it is not considered appropriate (and for many, never was). Some consider it condescending, offensive or simply a way of avoiding talking about disability. Others prefer it to “disabled” because “dis” means “not,” which means that “disabled” means “not able.” But particularly when it comes to referring to individuals, “differently abled” is problematic. As some advocates observe, we are all differently abled.

NCDJ: “Person with a disability” is a more neutral term than “differently-abled.”

AP Style: The style book suggests avoiding the term and, instead, trying to be specific about the disability.

Approved by CLEAR's Board of Directors, August 16, 2023