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Introduction and Objectives

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are something we talk about a lot in terms of policy, and steps to make Lancaster University a more inclusive environment where everyone is afforded equal opportunity.

But what does EDI mean in practice? This session will touch upon some key topics that arise in day-to-day work:

- The responsibilities of an employer, line manager and institution with regards

The Equality Act 2010 and Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace, and in wider society.

For public sector employers (such as Universities), the Equality Act 2010 not only sets out the Equality Law that all individuals and employers must abide by, but also a specific **Public Sector Equality Duty** which regulates how public bodies must consider EDI in their day-to-day work (such as in designing policies, and in relation to their own employees).

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires that we:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between different people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

What does this mean in practice?

You don't need to memorise the PSED, but it is good practice for you to consider whether policies, ways of working, service design etc and team management are as inclusive as possible. This could look like:

- Being open and receptive to feedback relating to potential barriers that individuals might be facing, and working together to thinking of ways to mitigate those barriers.
- Working to support disabled employees and ensuring that they have appropriate reasonable adjustments in place that will ensure they are not disadvantaged at work.
- Thinking about the potential effects of changes to your

What are 'Protected Characteristics'?

The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine 'protected' characteristics. The 'protected' element refers to the fact that discrimination in relation to an individual's membership of any of the following groups is prohibited under the Act. The characteristics are therefore those which are explicitly protected by the Equality Act 2010.

Talking about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Managing a team, or perhaps even being a trusted friend or colleague, might mean that sometimes, you're approached by team members, colleagues or students who would like to discuss something which relates to EDI. This could be: a disclosure of a disability, seeking advice about transitioning or changing of preferred pronouns, raising a concern or letting you know that they have experienced racial discrimination at the University.

Many people express discomfort, or even fear, when faced with these scenarios, particularly if they don't consider themselves to be an expert on the topic or subject.

This discomfort might be due to a range of factors:

- Lack of understanding or personal experience with the topic being discussed
- Fear of 'saying the wrong thing'
- Feeling offended or attacked (even if indirectly) by the topic of discussion
- Fear of becoming emotional
- Worries about being supported by HR or specialists to offer the right guidance.

As a line manager, you are not expected to be an expert on all things EDI, nor are you expected to know immediately what the right course of action, resources to signpost, or advice to provide in these kinds of situations. However, there are a range of things that can help to both make sure that your staff feel supported, heard and taken seriously, and that you feel confident in approaching these kinds of scenarios.

Tips for EDI-based discussions

Conversations with employees can often contain elements of personal information which they are entrusting you with. Not everyone will be comfortable disclosing a disability or element of their life to you or their team, and pushing an employee to tell you something can often have the opposite effect, creating more barriers.

In the first instance, **confidentiality** and **consent** is key when sharing details of your employees with others.

<p>Confidentiality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not sharing private or personal details with anyone who does not need to know. This can be verbally or in writing.• Don't discuss an employee or team member's personal life without their explicit permission.• Only share relevant information in these settings. Not everything is pertinent to a conversation.	<p>Consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each employee has ultimate say on who information is shared with about themselves.• If you need support from HR but don't have permission, discuss topics in general terms.• Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
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Whilst there's no 'right' answer or advice to give, and often you may not know what the topic of discussion is going to be, there are some things that employees and managers have said they've found particularly useful when having conversations about EDI. These tips are not prescriptive, and you might find that different ones are helpful in different situations.

Some examples are:

- Be comfortable asking to make notes if there are actions to take away, or questions and support you and your employee might need from other services.
- Be willing to sit with your own discomfort.
- Don't be afraid of saying that you want to check on the most appropriate policy/process but reiterate that you'll support them with the next steps.
- Don't try to persuade your colleague that their experience didn't really happen in the way that they're explaining it to you.
- If you don't know the policy or process, again, be honest about that and check that your colleague is happy for you to speak to your HR Partner/Advisor, or to seek further guidance elsewhere.
- Instead of telling the employee or your colleague what you're going to do, particularly if you're not sure of the most appropriate way to offer support, ask them 'what can I do to best support you with this?'
- Listen to hear, not to respond.
- Offer to meet in whichever setting would be most comfortable for your colleague i.e. Teams or face-to-face. If you're having a face-to-face meeting, try to arrange this so that you can give your full attention to your colleague.
- Try to avoid placing your own 'spin' on what your colleague is saying – if they're reporting discrimination or victimisation this is particularly important.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Accessibility	The practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.
Allyship	Active support for the rights of a minority or marginalized group without being a member of it. More details here .
Disability	A physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. More details here .
Diversity	The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc..
Equality	The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.
Equity	Recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. More details here .
Ethnicity	Large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.
Gender	The social, psychological, cultural and behavioural aspects of being a man, woman, or other identity. More details here .
Inclusion	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and of l

	<p>applicants.</p> <p>e.g.: Encouraging people from particular ethnic backgrounds to apply for jobs, but the decision on who to select being made on merit alone.</p> <p>e.g.: offering training or internships to help certain groups get opportunities or progress at work or hosting an open day specifically for under-represented groups to encourage them to get into a particular field.</p>
Positive Discrimination	<p>The unlawful practice or policy of favouring individuals belonging to groups regarded as disadvantaged or subject to discrimination.</p> <p>e.g. setting quotas or benchmarks in the recruitment process to take on a proportion of people from a protected characteristic group;</p> <p>e.g.: Hiring or promoting someone with a disability to increase the number of people with disabilities in the workforce, despite another candidate for the job being better qualified.</p>
Prejudice	<p>A preconceived (usually unfavourable) evaluation or classification of another person based on that person's perceived sex, gender identity, beliefs, ethnicity, disability, or other personal characteristics.</p>
Privilege	<p>A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group.</p>
Protected Characteristic	<p>Aspects of a person's identity that makes them who they are.</p> <p>More details here.</p>
Race	<p>A category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical or social qualities or traits.</p>
Sex	<p>Either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions.</p>
Sexuality	<p>A person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are typically attracted.</p>
Tokenism	<p>The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to engage targeted communities. Often used in conjunction with 'Performative'.</p>
Unconscious Bias	<p>Making judgments or decisions on the basis of our prior experience, our own personal deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions or interpretations, and not being aware that we are doing it.</p>

Disability

Disability is often thought of as being related to mobility, senses (like vision, hearing), or things which might be visible to others. This, though, represents only a proportion of disabled individuals. Disability can include conditions which are 'invisible' or episodic (meaning that they can fluctuate, or come and go). Mental health conditions can also be considered a disability, if the effects of them are such that they are likely to last for more than 12 months, and can affect the day-to-day lives of the individual.

Disability and Work

It is by no means true that disabled individuals can't be in employment. However, by law, employers must make reasonable adjustments to the work environment and working practices which mitigate any barriers that the disabled individual might face at work as a result of their disability. These can be things like allowing flexibility with deadlines, to accommodate the additional time that might be required to complete a piece of work, or looking at changes to the place that an individual works if the lighting or technology is unsuitable.

As a line manager, you might be the first person that an employee talks to about their disability. It's important to show empathy, and also to avoid making judgements about what an individual can or can't do as a result of what they tell you. In fact, if you're thinking about the best way to support someone who is disabled in your team, whether they are a new member of staff or someone you have worked with for a long time, but who you've just discovered is disabled, the best way of finding out how to support them is to ask them if there is any support they would find helpful from you or from others.

At Lancaster, we're members of the [Disability Confident Scheme](#), and use the [Access to Work](#) programme.

LGBTQ+ Inclusion - 004 (e) 10 rg- (Lct Br) 7e 012 0 0 12 2TQ) - 9 2 (an) 10 (d us) 4TBT/H2

You might have heard of other sexual orientations and gender identities in addition to those listed above, including Pan

