

HDRN Canada: IDEA

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY

*Definitions & Principles for
Working Together*



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Purpose of this Document

Create Shared Understanding

Across the HDRN Canada network, organizations may be using slightly different definitions for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA). We made this document as a way to create shared understanding and as a baseline for working with these concepts and principles in our collective work as a network. We acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the interconnected functions of these concepts – being explicit about their definitions and utilities is an important step in our work together.

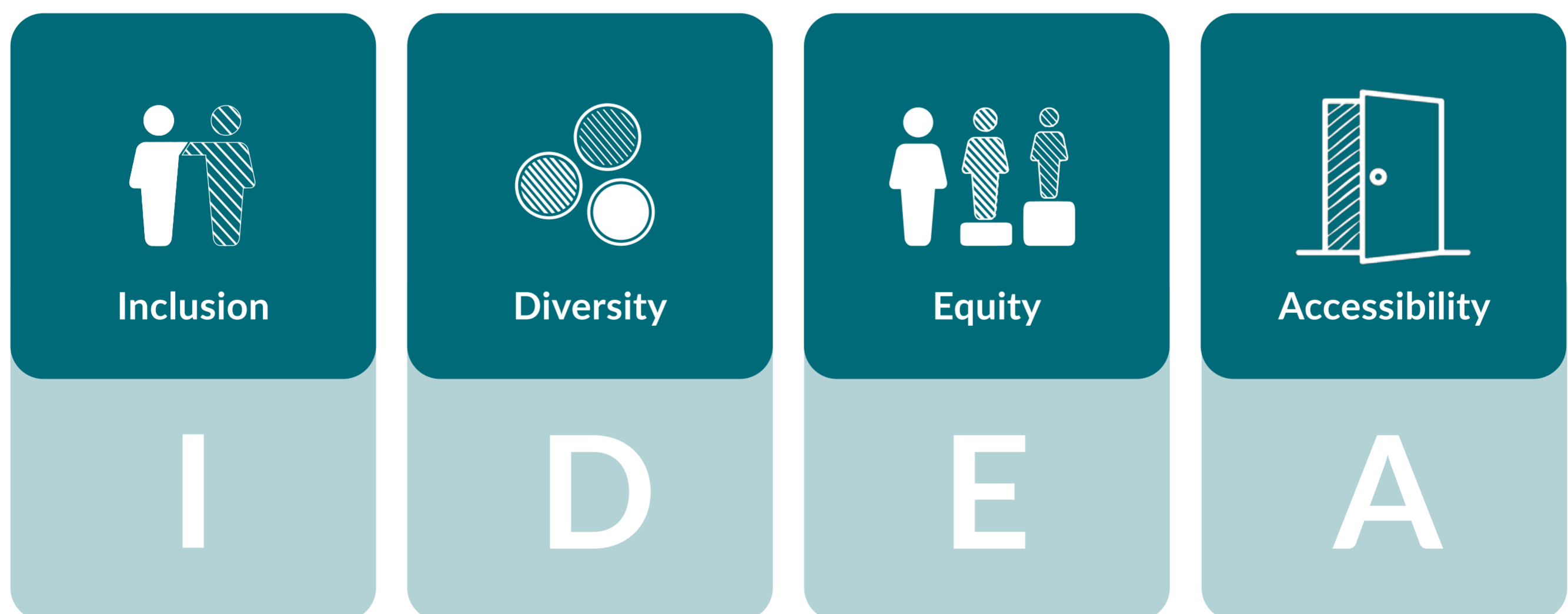
These principles are not exhaustive and do not encompass the “only” or “right” way of enacting IDEA. Most effectively, IDEA is practiced in conjunction with the realities of our work environments, and it is up to each of us to identify concrete actions we can take.

HDRN Canada will endeavour to abide by these definitions and principles within our work as a distributed network. We do this with the understanding that this is a living document and our practices will be updated as we learn and grow alongside these concepts.

These definitions and principles will be reviewed annually by the HDRN Canada IDEA Team with input from across HDRN Canada. If you have suggestions for principles to add or amendments for us to consider, we welcome your feedback at any time.

Create Shared Accountability & Ownership

It is imperative that IDEA becomes a shared responsibility owned by everyone in an organization. Without shared accountability we risk silo-ing this work and undermining the principles outlined here; a lack of shared accountability may also lead to IDEA burnout. This document is one step towards shared accountability and provides some concrete examples of how you can take ownership of IDEA in the work that you do.



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Inclusion

Inclusion encompasses both actions and feelings. Inclusion is an intentional and continuous process lived through day-to-day practices aimed at addressing inequities in power and privilege. Acts of inclusion form safer environments where people feel welcome, respected, valued and able to bring their authentic selves. Ultimately, inclusion fosters a respectful and diverse community and ensures opportunities to flourish for all.

Inclusion is practiced by:

- Respecting differing opinions, knowledge levels and abilities.
 - Actively seeking expertise and/or knowledge if it doesn't exist in the Team or Working Group.
 - Providing different options for people to voice their opinions and experiences (e.g., pre-meeting questions, individual check-ins, in/out of meeting feedback) – recognizing that not everyone will want to provide verbal feedback in a large group setting.
 - Checking our own unconscious biases and practicing self-reflection.
 - Developing common understandings across our diverse experiences.
 - Creating a space of non-judgement where individual members can feel free to bring their different lenses and perspectives.
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Diversity

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess, and the mix that occurs in any group of people. Race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, economic status, abilities, language and geography, together with living/lived experiences and other perspectives can make up diversity. Diversity is a fact, and inclusion is a set of choices that demonstrates how diversity is valued.

Diversity is practiced by:

- Valuing the diversity that is part of this team (both individuals and organizations).
 - Striving for diverse teams on the basis of demographics, knowledge and geography in Canada.
 - Having people who need to be at the table present and welcome; when tackling a problem, ensuring that the people who will be most affected by the action are centered and prioritized from the beginning of a project.
 - Prioritizing diversity, but not quantifying diversity – we create space for diverse people to lead work where desired, but do not mandate that they do.
 - Understanding that diversity should not be tokenized – people are only asked to speak for themselves, not an entire community when referring to demographic or life experiences.
 - Avoid using “we,” “us,” and “them” language.
 - People choose what parts of themselves they want to share and when.
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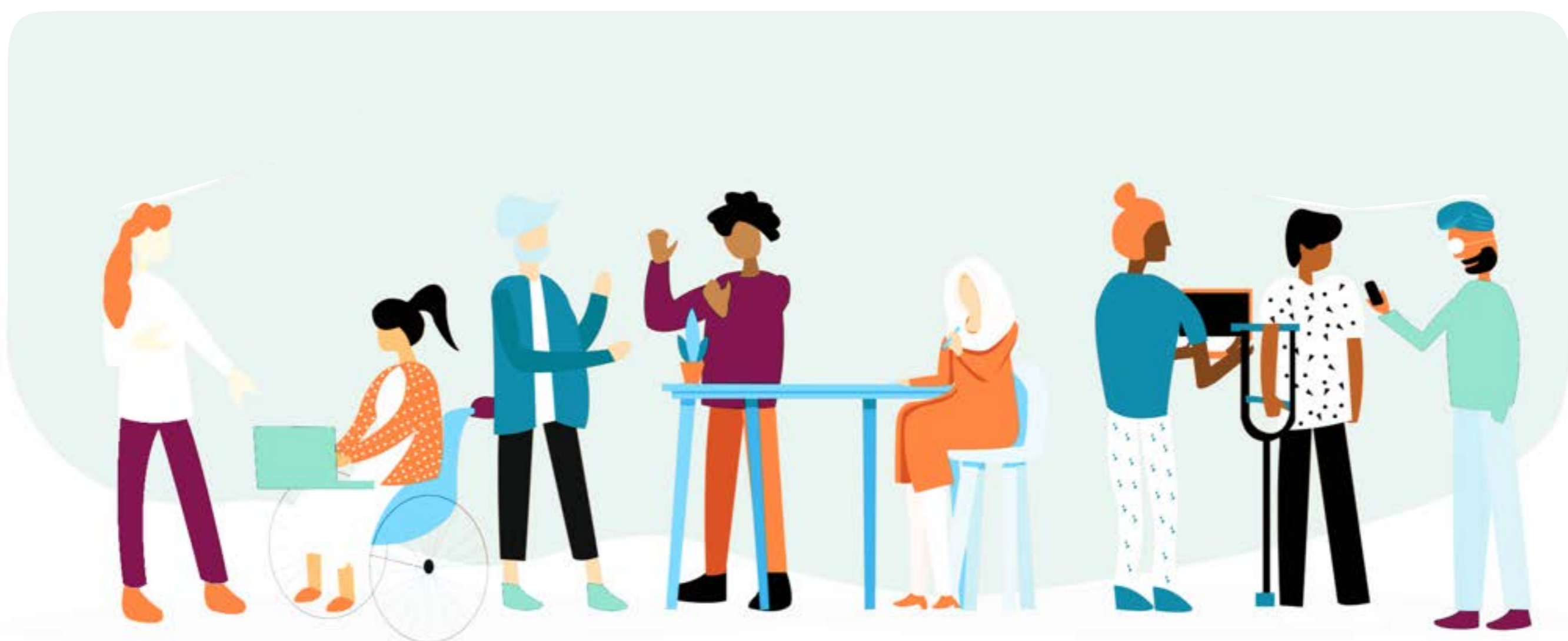


Equity

Equity is about treating people according to their diverse needs in a way that enables everyone to participate, perform and engage to a similar extent. Equity is a critical element of inclusion. Equity acknowledges that disparities exist and aims to eliminate disparities, systemic biases and barriers that are rooted in historical and contemporary injustices and oppression.

Equity is practiced by:

- Taking the time to understand what individuals need to be successful within HDRN Canada
- Recognizing inequities in resources, whether personal or between our organizations; understanding that some people and organizations with more resources may need to support - either with time or resources - others with less. This might mean:
 - Allocating administrative funding to give one person, based on need, more time to prepare for meetings or be involved in Teams, Working Groups or Sub-Groups.
 - Communicating in different ways – synchronous and asynchronous.
- Giving more weight or power to persons who will be most affected by the outcome of a project or decision.
- Taking the time to provide background materials, context, etc. and not assuming that everyone has the same background knowledge or ability.
- Having meetings during working hours for everyone on the Team or Working Group. Usually this means starting meetings at 11:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. CT to accommodate working hours for network members, and to facilitate care-giving roles outside of the workplace.



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Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services or environments for people who experience disabilities, as well as the continuous commitment to the removal of political, social, economic, historical and systemic inequities that limit full experience in social space and life. To fully address accessibility, we must commit to addressing systemic ableism, oppression and historic inequities encoded in policies, practices and services.

Accessibility is practiced by:

- Working to understand individuals' accessibility needs when they join the network.
- Recognizing that accessibility needs or requirements may change and providing confidential means of identifying new barriers to the Team or Working Group Leads and/or HDRN Canada Central.
- Planning for accessibility and budgeting in advance for things like sign language interpreters, website upgrades and staff training.
- Ensuring that meeting technology and formats meet the needs of members, providing closed captioning, accessible document and PowerPoint formats, feedback mechanisms, support and differing modalities as needed.
- Communicating with little to no jargon, recognizing that not everyone will have the same technical or literacy level.

Holistic accessibility policies consider permanent, temporary & situational disabilities, including:

