



American Psychological Association

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION – FRAMEWORK

Framework

The purpose of the APA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework is to define and conceptualize EDI for the Association. The Framework offers an organizing structure for APA’s historical and current EDI work, guides APA’s future EDI planning, and provides context for the work of the Chief Diversity Officer. The Framework that follows includes a vision statement, guiding principles, and a model with a comprehensive set of domains across three levels—APA, the field of psychology, and society.

Vision

APA’s Vision for EDI articulates the organization’s ultimate aspirations and, thus, provides a guide to the desired outcomes of EDI activities (See Esty, Griffin, & Hirsch, 1995; Holvino et al., 2004). The following statement articulates APA’s vision for success regarding EDI across the organization and the discipline.

APA strives for:

- *An organization that is equitable, diverse¹ and inclusive²*, as reflected in its composition, leadership, goals, policies, operations, practices, culture and climate;
- *A field of psychology that is accessible, equitable and inclusive*, affording access³ and equity⁴ for people of all social identities; providing culturally responsive⁵ education and training; nurturing culturally responsive researchers, scholars, practitioners, educators and advocates; and creating and implementing culturally responsive disciplinary policies and practices.
- *A society of accessible, equitable and culturally responsive psychological research and scholarship, practice, education and advocacy* that advances the lives and well-being of all, and that promotes human dignity, human rights⁶, and social justice⁷.

¹ *Diverse* – Diversity has to do with the representation or composition of various social identity groups in a workgroup, organization or community. The focus is on social identities that correspond to societal differences in power and privilege, and thus to the marginalization of some groups, i.e. race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, spirituality, disability, age, national origin, immigration status and language. (Other identities may also be considered where there is evidence of disparities in power and privilege.) There is a recognition that people have multiple identities and that social identities are intersectional and have different salience and impact in different contexts. (See APA, 2017; Ferdman, 2014.)

² *Inclusion* – an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences, thus allowing all community members to bring in their whole selves (and all of their identities) and to demonstrate their strengths and capacity (Winters, 2014).

³ *Access* – the elimination of discrimination and barriers that contribute to unequal opportunities to join and be a part of a workgroup, organization or community (See Smith, 2009; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

⁴ *Equity* – the achievement of equivalent success outcomes by members of all social identity groups, as evidenced, for example, by retention, promotion, recognition, and the appointment or election to leadership roles. (See Smith, 2009).

⁵ *Cultural responsiveness* – the awareness/attitudes, knowledge and skills to engage respectfully and work effectively with individuals, groups and communities of diverse social identities and diverse intersections of identity. Organizations as well as individuals can demonstrate *cultural responsiveness*, for example, through their policies and practices. *Cultural responsiveness* is not an end-state, but rather an ongoing process, which requires cultural humility, i.e. an awareness that one will never fully understand the person of a culturally/socially different background or identity and that it is important to be self-reflective and open to co-learning with the other person or community. (See Ancis, 2004; APA, 2008, 2017; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

⁶ *Human rights* – Defined by the United Nations as “universal legal rights that protect individuals and groups from those behaviors that interfere with freedom and human dignity” (APA, 2017, p. 165).

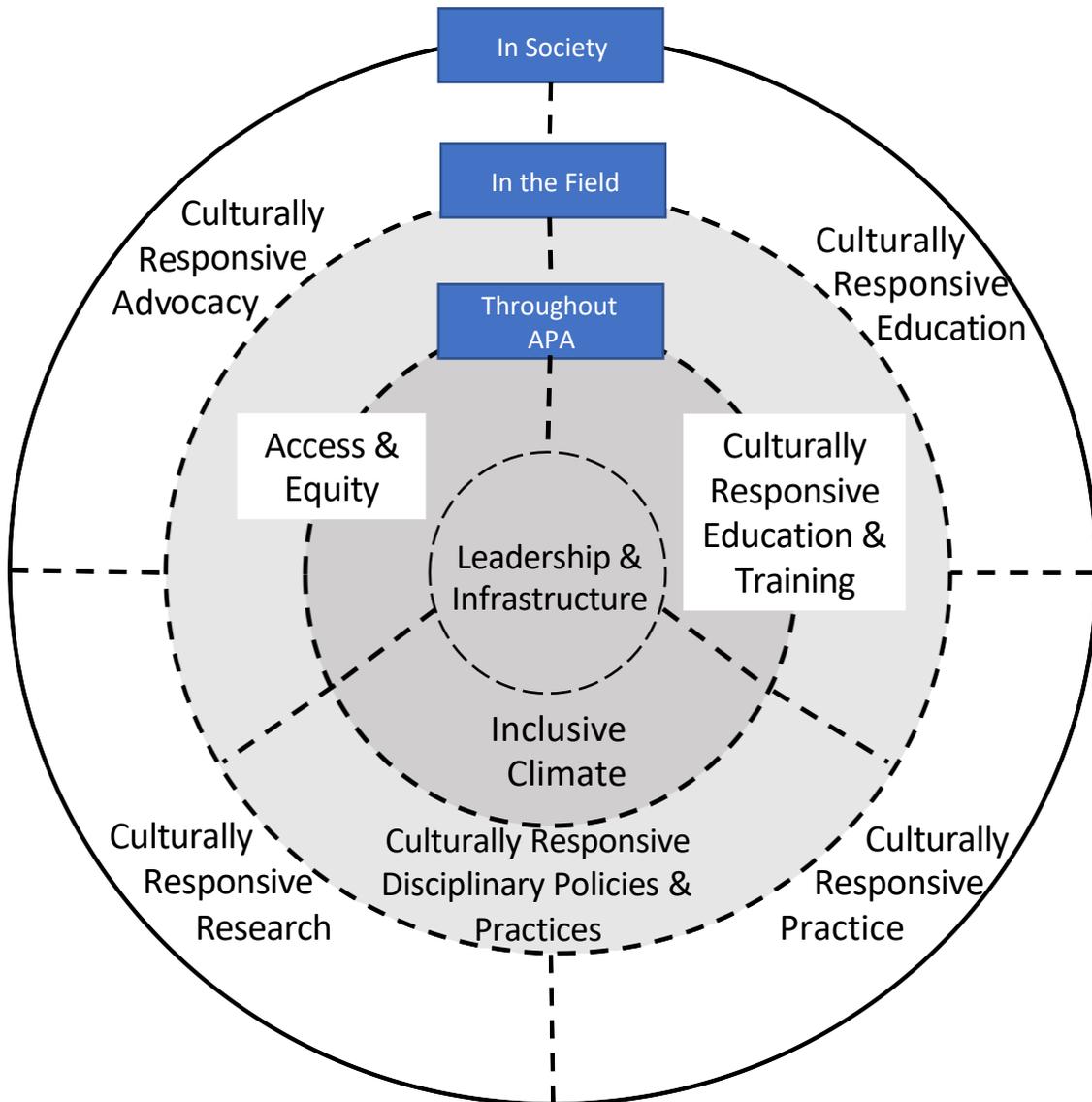
⁷ *Social justice* – commitment to creating fairness and equity in resources, rights, and treatment of marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal power in society (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007).

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of APA's EDI framework address the basic assumptions that are associated with best practices in organizational EDI work. (See Hayles, 2013; Williams, 2013). The guiding principles are a prerequisite for APA to achieve success in EDI.

- APA's leadership is itself diverse and actively champions EDI throughout the organization. (See Cox, 2001; Holvino et al., 2004; Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly, 2006; Smith, 2009).
- APA is committed to disrupting structural injustices that cause inequities based on age, gender, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion and spirituality, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status, and immigration status, and their various intersections. (See Young, 2013).
- APA recognizes that all human beings have biases and prejudices and that the task for all constituents is to develop awareness of biases, to strive to mitigate and diminish their impact, and to develop skills to engage and work effectively with people and communities from diverse and underrepresented social identity groups. (See Banaji & Greenwald, 2013).
- APA fosters an organizational culture and norms in which injustice, inequity and exclusion are discussed candidly, proactively and constructively, even when such dialogues are difficult. (See Borrayo, 2008; CDWG, 2017).
- APA actively seeks to engage the perspectives and voices of social identity groups that are or have been disenfranchised or marginalized. (See APA, 2005).
- APA establishes strategic EDI goals and monitors and evaluates the achievement of those goals in an iterative fashion. (See Smith, 2009; Williams, 2013)
- APA cultivates a culture of evidence and a learning orientation, in which qualitative and quantitative data are routinely collected in order to assess the status of EDI, and in which there is an orientation towards ongoing growth, development and continuous improvement. (See APA, 2008; Cox, 2001; Holvino et al., 2004; Smith, 2009, 2012; Williams, 2013).
- APA uses organizational strategies and tools to support the EDI agenda, for example, accountability mechanisms and reward systems to incentivize constituents to engage in EDI work. (See APA, 2008; CDWG, 2017; Cox, 2001; Holvino et al., 2004; Kalev et al., 2006; Sue, 2008; Williams, 2013).
- APA understands that equity, diversity, inclusion, human rights and social justice are never fully achieved; that they must be continually sought after, re-examined and re-committed to; and that new areas of inequity and exclusion will inevitably emerge and need to be addressed. (See Adams et al., 2013).

Figure 1. The APA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Model



The APA EDI Model has three levels, as articulated in the vision statement: 1) *the Association itself*, including leaders, members and staff; 2) *the field of psychology*, including pipeline⁸ programs, educational/training programs, and institutions, offices and programs that shape and determine disciplinary policies and practices; and 3) *the people and communities throughout society* whom psychological research, scholarship, education, advocacy and practice benefit. This tripartite approach differentiates internally-focused work (APA) and externally-focused work (the field of psychology and society).⁹

Figure 1 depicts the EDI Model, which is influenced by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) that addresses the nested contexts in which individual human development occurs. In this case, there are three concentric circles, with APA at the center and the field of psychology and society in the surrounding circles. The positions of the three circles reflect that APA has internal constituencies with which it engages, while much of APA's work aims to shape and influence the field of psychology, which then fosters the application of psychological work throughout society. APA's efforts radiate outward through these three levels. However, the influence is bidirectional: APA both affects and is affected by the field and society. For example, the Association's knowledge of how best to serve communities that have been marginalized is intimately tied to the information and input that APA solicits and receives from and about these communities.

The categories of EDI work that have been identified across institutions and industries have tended to fall into the following broad domains: 1) Leadership, commitment and infrastructure; 2) Access, success and equity; 3) Organizational climate¹⁰; 4) Core work of the institution (Henderson, 2014; Shorter-Gooden, 2014; Smith, 2009; Williams, 2013). This common set of broad domains provided the foundation for the 11 domains in APA's EDI model that are represented within the three levels. The core EDI work of APA as an institution is identified in the model as research, practice, education, and advocacy that is culturally responsive. Two of the domains repeat across levels. The dashed lines between the domains indicate that they are not always completely distinct.

In the center of the APA Level is the domain of *Leadership & Infrastructure*, which denotes the central importance of a leadership structure for EDI and an organizational infrastructure that supports the work. The other three domains in the APA Level are: 1) *Culturally Responsive Education & Training*--education and training, provided in a culturally responsive manner, for APA leaders, members and staff in order to develop their cultural responsiveness in their APA work; 2) *Access & Equity*--diverse composition and equitable outcomes within APA for leaders, members and staff of diverse social identity groups; and 3) *Inclusive Climate*--the experience of APA as welcoming, engaging and affirming by leaders, members and staff of all social identity groups and intersections. It is important to note that the APA Level addresses the experiences and outcomes for APA's volunteer governance leaders, for members, and for the staff at all levels. Sustained work toward excellence in all four domains, across the breadth of APA, will ensure that APA is an equitable, diverse and inclusive organization.

The Field of Psychology Level represents the array of disciplinary policies and practices as well as the pipeline, academic and internship programs and institutions that serve a gatekeeping function, that educate and train prospective psychologists, and that provide post-doctoral, continuing education and professional support for existing psychologists. APA will use its influence to

⁸ *Pipeline programs* are programs (for example, in secondary schools and colleges) that foster increased access by underrepresented groups to education, training or a profession; thus, widening the metaphorical pipeline.

⁹ It is recognized that these three categories are not entirely distinct. For example, it is not uncommon in graduate programs that students are educated *and* that communities are served through training clinics.

¹⁰ *Climate* – the degree to which community members feel included or excluded in the work group, organization or community (Williams, 2013).

advocate for *Culturally Responsive Disciplinary Policies & Practices* in all areas of the discipline, including in science and in the profession, for *Access & Equity* throughout the field, and for *Culturally Responsive Education & Training* for all students/trainees/post, p-docs across the range of content, curricula and training/degree programs.

The Society Level is the sphere in which the mission to advance psychology to benefit society and improve people's lives is realized. The Level is comprised of four domains--*Culturally Responsive Research, Culturally Responsive Education, Culturally Responsive Advocacy, and Culturally Responsive Practice*. The latter domain includes clinical, counseling, school, community, consulting, organizational and other professional services, as well as leadership roles. The Society Level signifies that APA's ultimate goal is to shape the creation and communication of psychological knowledge and information, the practice of psychology, and the policies that impact psychological well-being and access to psychological information and services in ways that benefit all, including marginalized and disenfranchised individuals and communities.