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The Royal Canadian Legion's EDI Awareness Program – EDI Foundations

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

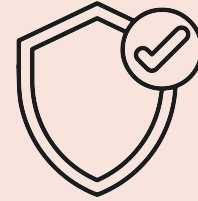
We humbly recognize that the lands we participate on today are the ancestral and traditional territories of numerous Indigenous communities, who have cared for this land since time immemorial.

We also acknowledge and honour the long and often overlooked history of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples who have served—and continue to serve—in the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP. Indigenous service members have defended this country in times of war and peace, often while facing barriers to recognition, equal treatment, and the benefits they were promised.

In the spirit of remembrance, respect, and reconciliation, we commit to learning from this history and to creating spaces where all Veterans, families, and community members feel welcome, valued, and supported.

A portion of this workshop's proceeds will be donated to True North Aid, an organization dedicated to providing Northern Indigenous communities with humanitarian support.

Our Ethos



Safe Space



Brave Space



Present Space

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01

Learn what equity, diversity, and inclusion are and how they connect with the Legion's vision and mission.

02

Explore how we can embrace “A veteran is a veteran is a veteran” while welcoming differences.

03

Build practical skills to promote an inclusive, welcoming and fair environment for everyone.

What is EDI?



WHAT IS EDI?

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WHAT IS EDI?



Equity: do all have access?



Diversity: who's at the table?



Inclusion: do all feel welcome?

Note: The Royal Canadian Legion uses the acronym EDI, intentionally placing Equity first as a reminder of the powerful role that fairness and access plays in enabling and sustaining diversity and inclusion. The sequencing of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in this example is for storytelling purposes, only.

“

Diversity is who's in the room. Equity is how fair the room is. Inclusion is whether people feel they belong there.

We need **all three for the Legion's mission to truly reach everyone it serves.**

OUR MISSION

To serve Veterans, which includes serving Military and RCMP members and their families, to promote Remembrance and to serve our communities and our country.

Why is EDI Important?





1920s - 1950s

The Founding Generation

World War I and II, Korean War veterans

Predominantly white, male, European-origin

Primarily veterans of overseas conflict

Shared wartime experience shaped branch culture



1960s - 1980s

Expansion Era

Cold War veterans, UN Peacekeeping Operations

Gradual diversification in participation

Membership expanded to all CAF/RCMP members, reservists and their families

Branches became local social hubs rooted in tradition



1990s - 2010s

Modern Service Cohort

Peacekeeping, domestic operations, Afghanistan

Legion diversity likely increased during this period, reflecting broader changes in Canada's military and veteran population.

Inclusion of all Canadian citizens and other non-traditional pathways

More urban, professional, and generationally diverse



2020 - 2040

The Emerging Legion

Diverse service: cyber, domestic, global coalitions

Veterans and members increasingly reflect Canada's diversity

Broad, community-integrated model

Expectation of inclusive, psychologically safe spaces

Supporting & developing young Canadians

As the Legion has opened its doors to more people - different generations, forms of service, and community members - *what do you think the organization has gained?*

Discrimination Rates Across Canada



25 %	People with Disabilities
30 %	Women
30 %	Younger adults (18-34)
36 %	Non- binary people
40 %	Indigenous people
50 %	Black people
51 %	Racialized people

Source: [Statistics Canada](#), Future Skills Centre, Environics & Diversity Institute [Experiences of Discrimination at Work](#) and [Women and Gender Equality Canada](#)

Oppression Across Canada:



39 %

2SLGBTQIA+ people report experiencing violence or other forms of discrimination

30 %

of the total complaints received by the Human Rights Commission between 2015 and 2020 have been related to race or religion (53% increase)

Source: [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#) and [Women and Gender Equality Canada](#)

Oppression Across Canada:



25 %

Indigenous people are living in poverty, compared with 11% of the non-Indigenous population

4 %

People experiencing homelessness are Veterans

Source: Canadian Poverty Institute, Veterans House Canada and Stats Canada (2021)

The Big Business Benefit

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Organizations with Impactful EDI Strategies are:

22 % More productive

3X More likely to be high-performing

36 % More innovative & agile

40 % More likely to have a good reputation

50 % More likely to attract & retain talent

What is Diversity?



A veteran is a veteran is a veteran.

What does this mean to you?

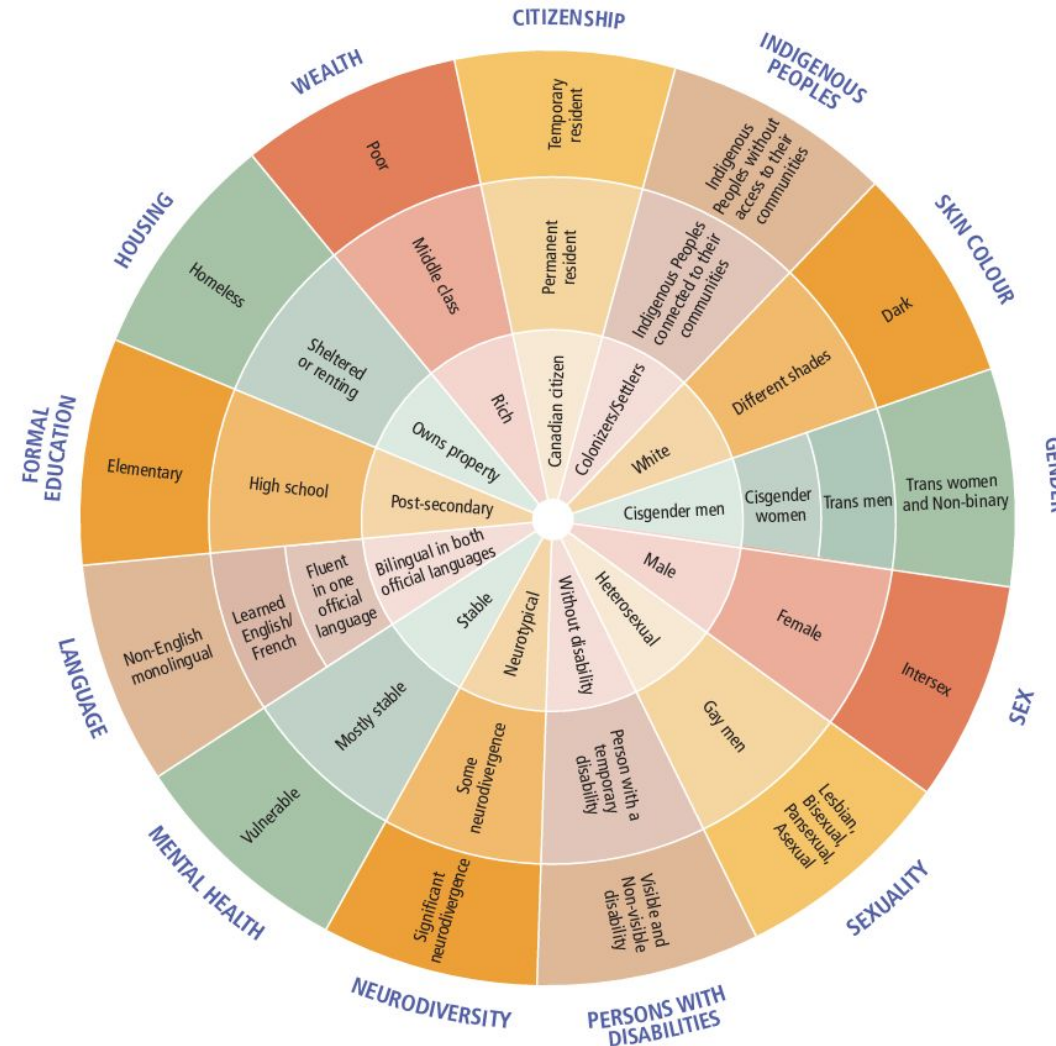
Our Expanding Community

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Understanding Identities

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Source: [IRCC Anti-Racism Strategy 2.0](#)

Understanding Identities



Intersectionality:

The idea that people have many identities at the same time, and those identities together shape their experiences.

Masking:

When someone hides or downplays part of who they are in order to fit in or feel accepted.

Tokenism:

When one person from an underrepresented group is highlighted or singled out and ends up being seen as representing that whole group.

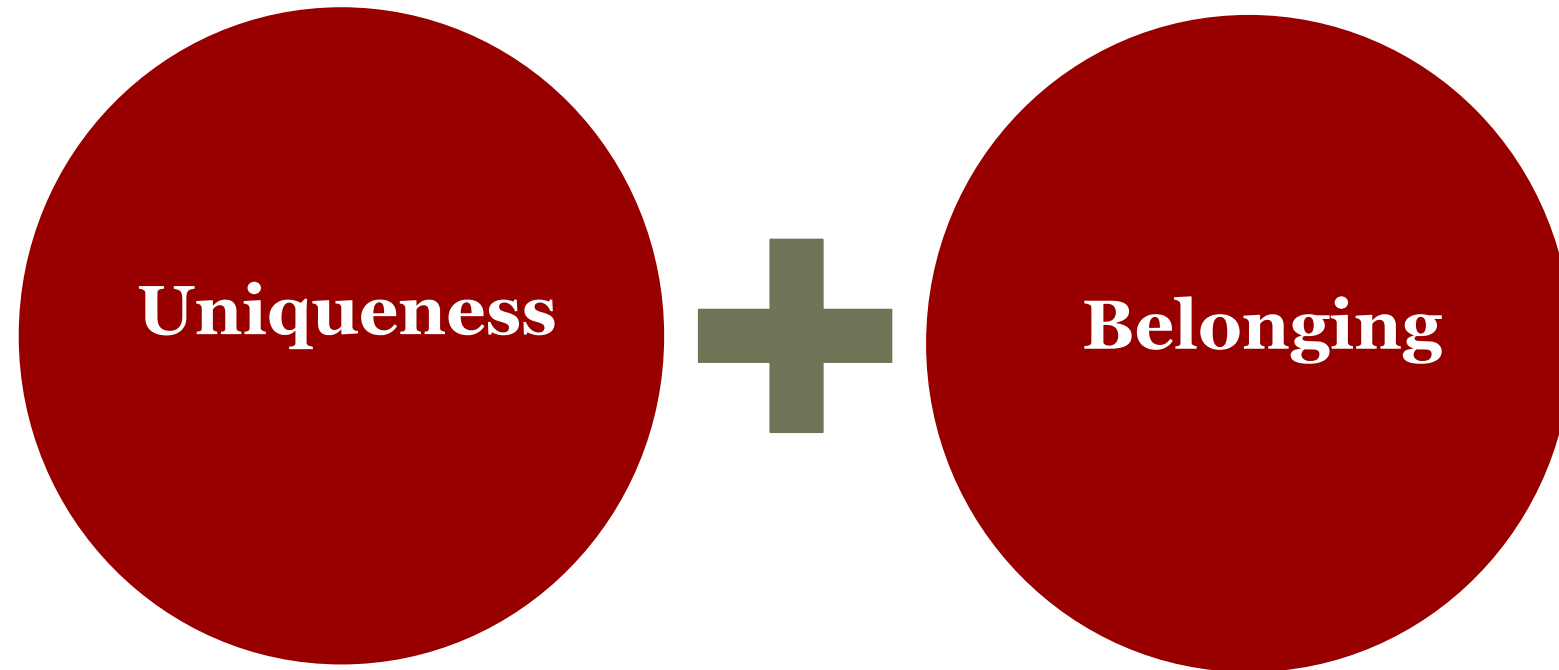
Break

<<5:00>>

What is Inclusion?



The Inclusion Formula



Thinking about your own branch or Legion community, what are some things that help you feel that you **can be unique and that you belong?**

Promoting Inclusion: Allyship Actions

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Adapted from: Karen Catlin: Better allies: everyday actions to create inclusive, engaging workplaces (Better Allies Press, 2019)

1

Sponsoring

Boosts Visibility

- Talks about expertise + impact
- Recommends
- Shares career aspirations

2

Championing

Takes a Backseat

- Defers to others with humility
- Advocates for representation
- Gives up their seat

3

Amplifying

Amplifies Voices

- Gives credit
- Reinforces points
- Gives a platform

4

Advocating

Builds Support

- Provides information
- Makes introductions
- Collaborates and gives credit

5

Upstanding

Challenges Inequity

- Addresses biases
- Challenges systems, policies and practices
- Takes action

6

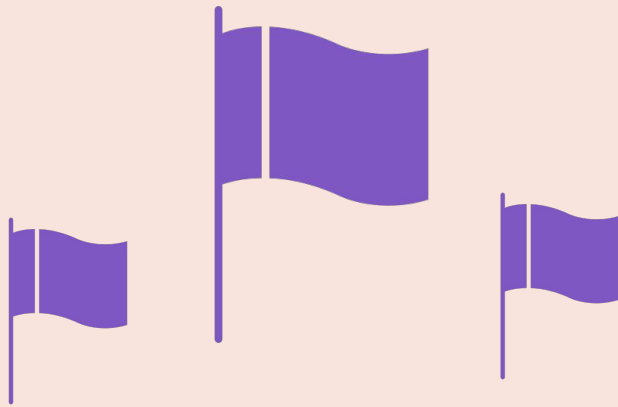
Actively Listening

Creates a Safe Space

- Believes others' experiences
- Validates
- Holds space

Watch this video

Purple Flags



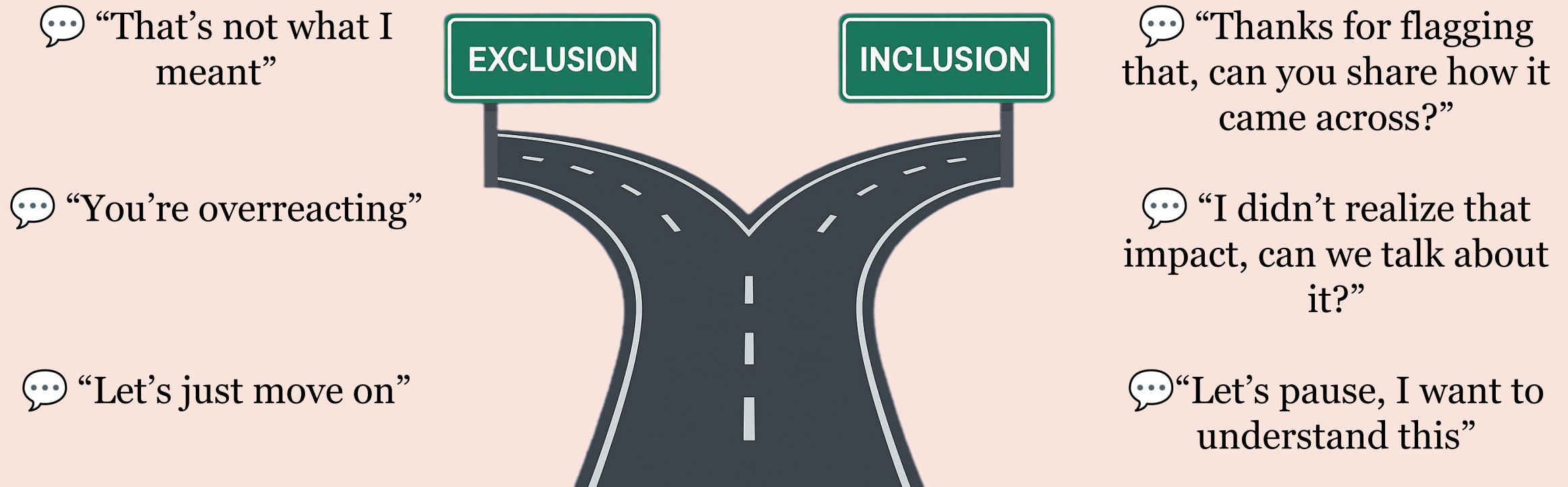
Raising a Flag

- 1 **Ask** a question
- 2 Share another **perspective**

Responding to a Flag

- 1 **Acknowledge** the moment
- 2 **Listen** and ask questions
- 3 Commit to **doing better**

Conversation Ramps: Turning Discomfort to Discussion



PRACTICE

At a branch social event, members are introducing themselves around a table. One of the members about to introduce herself is a woman wearing medals.

Another member calls out:

“So great of you to join our branch, are those your husband’s or your father’s medals?”

The woman smiles politely and says “no, they’re mine.” She becomes quiet for the rest of the event.

→ How do you respond?



PRACTICE

A branch is organizing volunteers for an upcoming Remembrance Day event, an Indigenous Legion member shares an idea:

“I think it would be meaningful to include a land acknowledgement and include a smudge before the event. It’s an important way for me to show respect for my community.”

Someone replies:

“I don’t think that’s appropriate here. That’s not really what we do at our branch.”

➔ How do you respond?



PRACTICE

During a casual conversation at the branch, members are sharing stories about their service. A younger veteran mentions their experience in a more recent deployment.

Another member laughs and says:

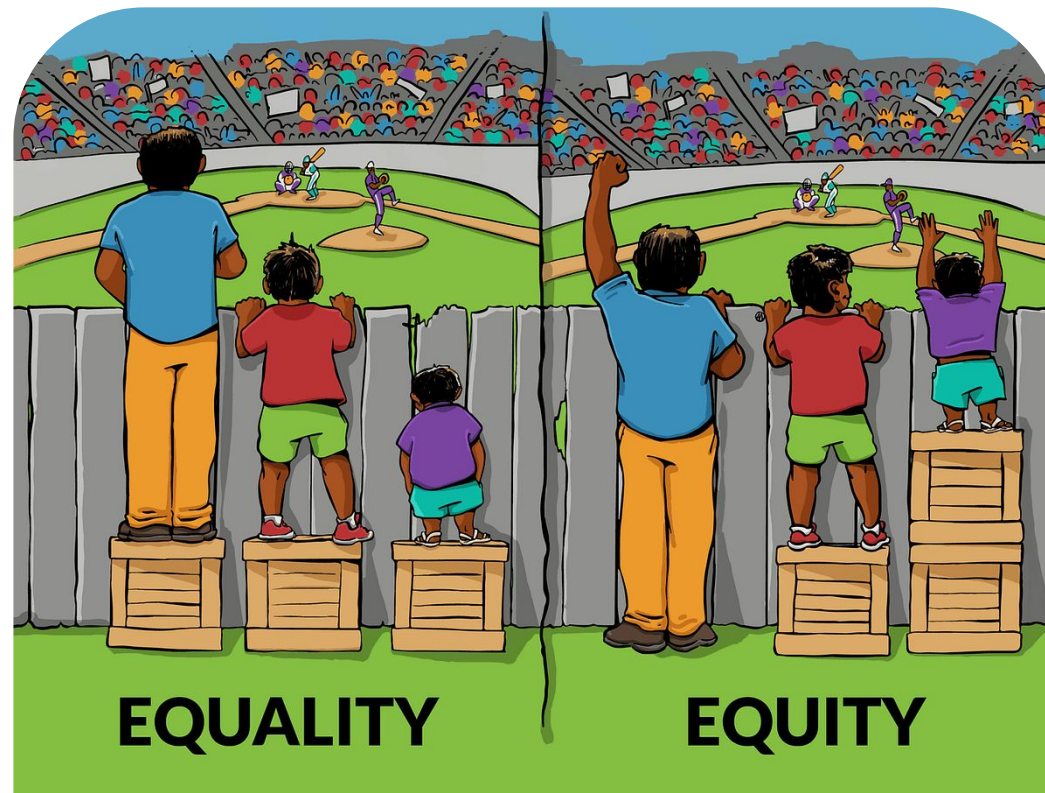
"That's not like the real service some of us saw back in the day."

The group chuckles, but the younger veteran goes quiet.

→ How do you respond?



What is Equity?



Equity and Equality

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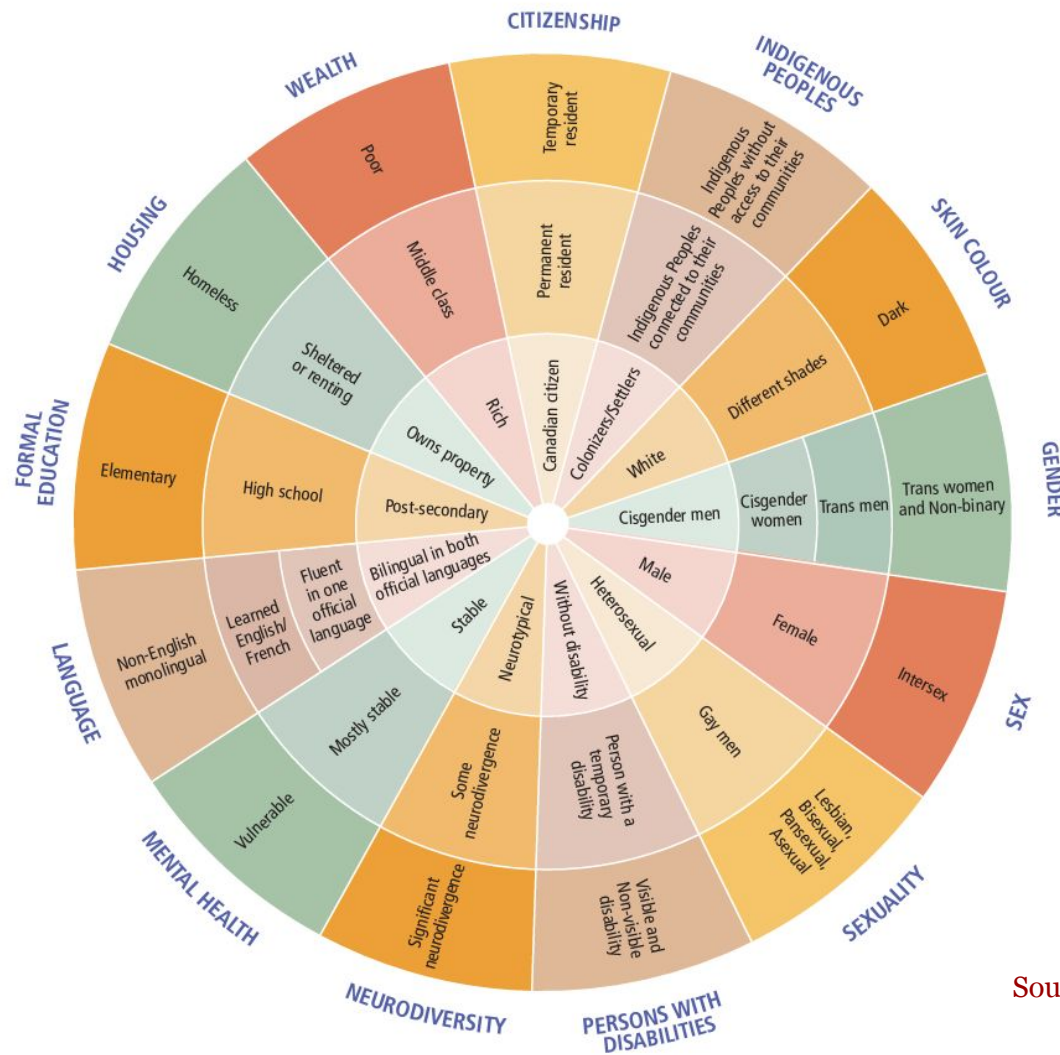
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Privilege isn't the presence of perks and benefits.
It's the **absence** of obstacles and barriers.

-Marie Beecham

Understanding Identities

**In what areas
might people at the
Legion experience
Headwinds?**



Source: [IRCC Anti-Racism Strategy 2.0](#)

Breakout Discussion

<<4:00>>

A Legion branch is hosting a Remembrance event and a community social night.

The branch announces: “All volunteers must attend planning meetings in person at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. If you can’t attend, you can’t take on a lead role.”

1. Is this rule equal?
2. Is it equitable?
3. Who might this unintentionally disadvantage?
4. What could the branch do differently to uphold fairness while still meeting operational needs?

“It’s never about lowering the bar,
only **lowering the bias**”

- *Brooke Graham*

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Advancing EDI at The Royal Canadian Legion

The Legion EDI Awareness Program – EDI Foundation



Next Steps

- Continued roll-out of this program in French and English through November
- Short Learning moment video to be launched at August Convention
 - Available in French and English
 - FAQ documents to support
 - Q&A webinars in September and October



Small group discussion:

1. What are our key take-aways?
2. How will we share across our Command?

Call To Action

1. Spread the word: Communicate these messages and insights across your Command
2. Champion the upcoming Learning Moment and encourage participation

**Please help us improve this program and EDI
at The Legion by participating in this
anonymous survey**

English



Français



EDI Foundations: Recap

1. EDI helps the Legion strengthen its mission

Equity, diversity, and inclusion help ensure the Legion remains welcoming, relevant, and accessible to the evolving Legion.

2. People carry many identities and experiences

Diversity refers to the unique experiences of individuals and this shapes how people feel in a community.

3. Inclusion expands our community

Inclusion is built when people can bring their unique experiences while still feeling welcomed, respected, and connected to the Legion community.

EDI Foundations: Recap

- 4. Equity means fairness, not just treating everyone the same**
Sometimes treating everyone the same can unintentionally create challenges. Equity helps ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to participate and contribute.
- 5. Purple Flags help us notice moments that might exclude someone**
A simple question or different perspective can help keep the space respectful.
- 6. Small actions shape the culture of the Legion**
How we welcome people, share opportunities, and respond to each other makes a big difference.



Thank You!

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