

Royal Canadian Legion EDI Learning Moment Frequently Asked Questions

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This Frequently Asked Questions document was developed to support you after watching the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Learning Moment Video developed for the Royal Canadian Legion by [Empowered EDI](#).

This FAQ is here to help answer common questions that arise about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, guide your continued reflection on what you learned, and support you in putting the tools and practices from the video, like purple flags, into everyday use at your Branch. Keep it alongside your participant guide as a resource to come back to whenever you need it.

What is EDI?

1. What does EDI stand for?

EDI stands for equity, diversity and inclusion. The Royal Canadian Legion intentionally places equity first because fairness and access are important foundations for meaningful diversity and inclusion.

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2. What is diversity?

Diversity is about the mix of our different identities, backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. This includes things we may notice, such as age or mobility, and things we may not see, such as sexual orientation, mental health, religion, personal history or service experience.

3. What is inclusion?

Inclusion is about whether people feel welcomed, respected and that they belong. A group can be diverse without being inclusive. Inclusion means people can participate, contribute and be themselves without feeling that they have to hide or minimize important parts of who they are.

4. What is equity?

Equity is about fairness. It means recognizing that people may face different barriers and may need different supports to have a fair opportunity to participate. Equity is not about lowering standards. It is about identifying and removing unnecessary barriers and bias.

5. What is the difference between equality and equity?

Equality means giving everyone the same thing or treating everyone in the same way. Equity means considering what people need to have a fair opportunity to participate. Treating everyone the same can sometimes create an unfair result if people start from different circumstances or face different barriers.

Why does EDI matter to the Legion?

6. Is EDI a new direction for the Legion?

No. The Legion has evolved throughout its history. Its membership and community have expanded across generations, forms of service, identities and backgrounds. EDI is part of the ongoing work of ensuring that the Legion continues to serve Veterans, Military and RCMP members and their families, promote Remembrance, and serve communities and our country.

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7. Why do we need to talk about EDI if a Veteran is a Veteran?

The shared bond of service is important. At the same time, Veterans are not all the same. Two people may both have served honourably and still have very different experiences of recognition, belonging, access and support. The phrase “a Veteran is a Veteran” can remind us of our shared connection, while EDI helps us recognize the different experiences people may bring to that shared community.

8. Does focusing on differences divide people?

The intention is the opposite. Understanding differences can help us build stronger connections. People often feel more connected when they can be recognized as whole people, not only as members of one broad group. EDI does not ask us to stop seeing what we have in common. It asks us to notice where people may have different experiences and to make sure those differences do not become barriers to belonging.

9. Why should the Legion care about EDI?

Because the Legion's mission is about people and community. If some Veterans, families or community members experience barriers to participation or do not feel welcome, the Legion may not be reaching everyone it is here to serve. EDI helps the Legion remain welcoming, relevant and accessible as Canada and the Legion community continue to evolve.

Understanding identity and difference

10. What is the social identity wheel?

The social identity wheel is a tool that helps us think about the many identities and experiences that shape who we are. These can include age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, mental health, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, family status and many other parts of life. We all have multiple identities.

11. What does intersectionality mean?

Intersectionality means that our different identities and life experiences overlap and can shape how we experience the world. For example, a Veteran may also be a woman, an Indigenous person, a person with a disability, a caregiver or a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Allies) community. These identities do not operate separately. Together, they may shape the barriers a person experiences and the support they may need.

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12. What is masking?

Masking is when someone hides, downplays or changes part of who they are in order to fit in or feel accepted. For example, someone may avoid talking about a disability, their family, their faith or another part of their identity because they are worried about how others will respond.

13. What is tokenism?

Tokenism is when a person from an underrepresented group is included or highlighted mainly to create the appearance of diversity, without meaningful changes to the culture, systems or sharing of power. One person cannot represent an entire community, and no one should be expected to speak for everyone who shares one aspect of their identity.

Creating a sense of belonging

14. What does it mean to belong?

Belonging means feeling genuinely welcomed, respected and connected. It is more than simply being allowed to attend. People experience belonging when they feel their presence matters, and they can participate without having to hide important parts of themselves.

15. How can I help someone feel included at my branch?

Small actions matter. Welcome people when they arrive. Introduce yourself and help them meet others. Ask about their interests and experiences without making assumptions. Make room for different perspectives. Notice who is being left out of conversations or opportunities. Ask what would help people participate. Inclusion is built through everyday interactions.

16. What if I do not know the right words?

You do not need to know everything before you begin. Be respectful, ask questions when appropriate, listen to the answer and be willing to learn. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it and move forward. A genuine effort to learn is usually more helpful than avoiding people or conversations because you are afraid of saying the wrong thing.

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17. Do I have to agree with everyone to create an inclusive environment?

No. Inclusion does not mean that everyone must have the same opinions, beliefs or experiences. It means people should be treated with dignity and have a fair opportunity to participate. People can disagree while still listening respectfully and avoiding comments or behaviour that demean, exclude or target others.

Purple flags: What to do when something feels “off”

18. What is a purple flag?

We use the term "purple flag" to signify a moment where we can pause and transform a potentially harmful or exclusionary interaction into a constructive learning opportunity. It's a constructive way to invite others to reflect on their words and respond with more awareness.

19. How do I raise a purple flag?

Purple flags are metaphorical; you can raise one simply by saying “I’d like to raise a purple flag”. From there, you can ask a question, share another perspective or help reframe the situation. For example: “What did you mean by (x)?” “I wonder if there is another way to look at this.” “I have learned that comments like that can unintentionally make people feel excluded.” The goal is to create space for reflection and a better conversation.

20. What if I am not sure whether something was offensive or exclusionary?

You do not need to have perfect certainty before asking a respectful question. You can say, “I want to pause for a moment. Can we talk about what was just said?” or “I am not sure how that came across, but I wonder if we should take a second look at it.” Curiosity can be a useful starting point.

21. What if someone raises a purple flag about something I said or did?

Try to pause rather than immediately defend your intention. Listen to how the comment or action affected the other person. You can say, “Thank you for letting me know. I did not realize it came across that way. Can you help me understand where I made a

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misstep?” You may not have intended harm, but the impact can still matter. Learning from the moment and doing better next time is the important part.

22. What if I disagree with the person raising the purple flag?

You can disagree about the interpretation while still listening respectfully. Try to understand what the person experienced and why the comment or action raised a concern. The goal is not to win an argument. It is to keep the conversation respectful and consider whether something could be done differently.

23. What if I am worried about making the situation worse?

Keep it simple. You can pause the conversation, ask a respectful question and listen. If the issue is serious, ongoing or involves harassment, discrimination or safety concerns, follow the appropriate Legion policies and reporting processes. A purple flag is a learning tool, not a replacement for formal processes when those are needed.

24. What if the person who made the comment says they were only joking?

You can recognize that they may not have intended harm while still acknowledging the effect the comment may have had. You might say, “I understand you were joking. I also noticed that the person became quiet afterward. Maybe we should check in and make sure they are okay.” Humour does not always land the way we intend.

Equity, barriers and fairness

25. What does it mean to look for barriers?

It means asking whether a rule, practice, event or tradition unintentionally makes it harder for some people to participate. For example, a branch might require everyone to complete a paper-based form in order to volunteer for an event. This may seem fair because everyone is given the same form. However, that process could create barriers for someone with a visual, physical or learning disability, or for someone who needs an accommodation to complete it.

26. Does equity mean giving some people special treatment?

Equity means making sure people have a fair opportunity to participate. Sometimes that requires different supports or different ways of doing things. The goal is not to give

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someone an unfair advantage. The goal is to remove unnecessary barriers so that people can contribute and participate more fully.

27. What does privilege mean in this context?

Privilege can be understood as the absence of barriers that other people may face. Someone may not experience certain obstacles because of aspects of their identity or circumstances. This does not mean their accomplishments are not real or that their life has been easy. It simply means that some barriers may not have been part of their experience.

28. What are headwinds and tailwinds?

These are ways of thinking about how different circumstances can affect a person's journey. A tailwind is a factor that makes progress easier, sometimes without us noticing it. A headwind is a barrier or disadvantage that makes progress more difficult. Two people may be heading toward the same goal while facing very different conditions along the way.

29. Does removing barriers mean lowering standards?

No. Equity is not about lowering the bar. It is about lowering unnecessary barriers and reducing bias. The Legion can maintain important standards while also asking whether the way a requirement is designed unintentionally excludes people who could otherwise participate and contribute.

Lived Experiences

30. I have experienced exclusion or discrimination myself. Does EDI recognize that?

Yes. EDI is about recognizing that people can experience barriers for many different reasons. Veterans, family members and community supporters may experience exclusion based on race, Indigenous identity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, mental health, religion, socioeconomic circumstances or other aspects of identity. Experiences can also overlap.

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31. What can I do if I experience exclusion or discrimination?

If you feel safe and comfortable to do so, let the person or people know that their behaviour is harmful and ask them to stop. You are also encouraged to speak with leadership within your branch or Command for additional guidance or support. Please note that any incidents involving violence, harassment, and/or discrimination must be reported.

32. I have served for many years and never experienced these issues. Why should I be concerned about them?

Your experience is valid, but it may not be the experience of everyone else. EDI invites us to make room for experiences that may be different from our own. You do not have to have personally experienced a barrier to care about whether someone else is facing one.

33. I do not want to be defined by my identity. Is EDI asking me to do that?

No. EDI is not about putting people into boxes. It is about recognizing that people are whole and complex. Your service or background may be an important part of who you are, but it is not necessarily the only part. You should be able to choose what you share about yourself.

34. What if I am concerned that EDI will take attention away from Veterans and their service?

The purpose of EDI is to strengthen the Legion's ability to serve Veterans, families and communities. The shared bond of service remains central. EDI asks us to consider whether all members of the Veteran community are equally able to access that sense of community, recognition and support.

35. What if another member is uncomfortable with this topic?

People learn at different speeds and may have different reactions. A helpful starting point is to listen and ask what concerns them. You can also focus on the practical goal: creating a Legion community where people are treated with dignity and have a fair opportunity to participate.

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Common EDI concerns

36. Is EDI about political correctness?

EDI is about fairness, respect, access and belonging. It is not about requiring everyone to speak or think the same way. It is about considering how our words, actions, rules and traditions affect people and whether they unintentionally create barriers.

37. Can I ask someone about their identity?

It may be okay in some situations and contexts, but you should have a good reason and respect their choice not to answer. People should not be expected to share, explain or prove their identity. If the information is not necessary for the conversation, it is often better not to ask.

38. What if I use the wrong name or pronoun by accident?

Correct yourself, apologize briefly if needed and continue. You do not need to make the moment about your embarrassment. If someone corrects you, a simple “Thank you” is usually enough.

39. What if I am concerned that I might offend someone?

You will not always get everything right. The answer is not to avoid one another. Be thoughtful, listen, learn and be willing to adjust. Respectful relationships are built through ongoing interaction, not perfection.

40. Does inclusion mean that traditions have to disappear?

Traditions can be meaningful and can help build community. The question is whether a tradition unintentionally excludes people or prevents them from participating. Sometimes a tradition can be expanded or adapted so that more people can take part while preserving what makes it meaningful.

41. Why not just treat everyone the same?

Treating everyone the same can be fair in some situations, but not all. If people face different barriers, the same approach may produce unequal results. Equity asks us to look at whether people have a fair opportunity to participate, not simply whether the same rule was applied to everyone.

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Next Actions to Advance EDI

42. How can I support the Legion's EDI efforts?

Complete our confidential and anonymous [EDI survey](#). Your participation will help the Legion better understand the diversity of its membership, learn about members' experiences, improve programming and identify barriers to belonging, participation and access.

The survey is administered and analyzed by the Legion's EDI partners at [Empowered EDI](#). Survey findings are reported in aggregate form, so individual responses are not reported or shared as identifiable responses. Every response helps build a fuller picture of the Legion community and supports actions to create a welcoming, inclusive and accessible community for everyone.

43. What can I do at my Branch?

You do not need a formal title or leadership role to contribute to an inclusive Legion. Consider choosing one action you can take in the next 30 days:

- Welcome someone new and introduce them to others.
- Ask who may be unintentionally left out when planning an event or activity.
- Use a purple flag when you notice a comment or practice that may exclude someone.
- Listen to a perspective or experience that is different from your own.
- Ask whether a meeting, event or volunteer opportunity is accessible to the people who may want to participate.
- Share what you learned from the Learning Moment with another Legion member.
- If you make a mistake, acknowledge it, learn from it and try again.

44. What is the most important thing to remember?

EDI is not about being perfect. It is about paying attention, staying open to learning and taking practical steps to make sure people feel welcome, valued and able to participate. Small actions shape the culture of the Legion.

45. Conversation starters for your branch

These questions can help continue the conversation after the Learning Moment:

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- What makes people feel welcome when they first come to our branch?
- Who might experience barriers to participating in our activities or volunteer opportunities?
- What is one branch tradition that helps people feel they belong?
- What is one practice we could review to make participation easier for more people?
- How could we make it easier to raise a purple flag respectfully?
- What is one action we can take in the next 30 days?

A final reminder

The Legion is a community built around service, remembrance and connection. Creating a welcoming community is ongoing work. We will not always get everything right, but we can keep learning, listening and improving together.

Every Veteran. Every family. Every community. Everyone should have the opportunity to feel that they belong.

For further information about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the Legion, visit the Legion Portal under Branch Resources – EDI File.