



# U.S. Masters Swimming Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Handout / Reference Materials  
June 29, 2021 Webinar

Diversity & Inclusion  
Education for LMSC Volunteers

# Diversity & Inclusion Education Materials Overview

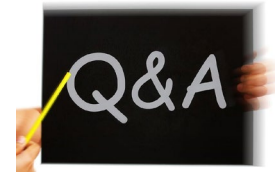


- This packet was developed by the Diversity & Inclusion Committee as an informative presentation to Coaches on Diversity and Inclusion, that draws from and expands on the relevant material from level 1 & 2 Coach Certification.
- With help from the Coaches Committee, it was presented to Coaches in 2020 and has been updated to be presented to LMSC Volunteers in 2021.
- This packet includes discussion questions as a take-home assignment for you & your colleagues at your LMSC to think about together.
- D&I Committee will be scheduling a series of interactive sessions on specific topics, so you can share your answers to the discussion questions, get more information, or ask for help with specific issues.

# Welcome Everyone!



- The webinar will begin in a few minutes; please stand by as everyone gets connected
- All attendees will be muted throughout the presentation and un-muted for the Q&A segment
- You can submit questions to the moderator via the Q&A 'Chat' window



# Diversity & Inclusion Presenters



Jeff Comming  
&  
Diana Triana



# Diversity & Inclusion Presenters



**Jeff Commings** is Co-Founder (and coach) of Dolphins Of The Desert Swimming Academy, the host of USA Swimming's "Deck Pass Live" and a freelance journalist. Jeff is the first African-American to earn an individual medal in swimming at a major international competition (bronze medal in the 100-meter breaststroke, representing the United States at the 1991 Pan American Games in Havana, Cuba). He currently resides in Tucson, AZ. Jeff has helped run the board elections for the Arizona LMSC and has been a delegate for Arizona at three USMS conventions.

**Diana Triana** is an entrepreneur, linguist licensed judiciary interpreter who holds several contracts for different state and federal government agencies. She was born and raised in Bogota, Colombia, has lived in different places around the world and for the past 15 years she calls Austin Texas her home. She is an active volunteer with professional organizations seeking language justice and equality in the legal system. Diana has been an active volunteer in the South Texas LMSC for many years. She has served on her LMSC Board, and volunteered for positions at the national level, including the USMS BOD. Diana is a USMS certified coach and coaches with her team, Red Giant Masters. In 2015, USMS selected Diana along with Richard Garza to be the coaches for the Pan American Masters in Medellin, Colombia.

# Agenda



- Definitions of Terms:
  - Diversity & Inclusion, Implicit Bias and Discrimination
- Importance of Diversity and Inclusion
- Valuing Specific Types of Diversity
  - Description of Issues (1-9)
  - Assessing Your LMSC (Suggested *Future* Discussion Questions) (A-E)
- Next Steps
- Links to Additional Resources and D&I Contact Info

# Definitions: Diversity & Inclusion, Equality & Equity



- ★ **Diversity** means human differences that include, but aren't limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.
- ★ **Inclusion** means all people, regardless of their diversity, have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities.
- ★ **Equality** is treating every person the same and giving each person the same opportunities.
- ★ **Equity** is treating every person as an individual and giving each person support based on that person's needs and abilities.

## Definition: Implicit Bias

- ★ An **Implicit Bias** is an unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group. These biases, including both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily without the individual's awareness or intentional control, yet they affect beliefs and decisions.
  - Due to implicit biases, people may attribute certain qualities or characteristics to all members of a particular group, a phenomenon known as **stereotyping**. These biases are different from known biases, or **prejudices**, that individuals may choose to conceal for reasons of social and/or political correctness. Implicit biases often begin at a young age and most of us, for the most part, are totally unaware we have them. It is important to remember that implicit biases operate almost entirely on an unconscious level.



# Implicit Bias vs. Discrimination



## ★ Implicit Bias vs. Discrimination

- **Implicit bias** and racism are related concepts but are not the same thing. Implicit bias is an unconsciously held set of associations about a particular group while racism is prejudice against individuals from a specific racial group and can be either explicit or implicit.
- Other forms of **discrimination** that can be affected by implicit biases include sexism, homophobia, ageism, and ableism (discrimination against disabled people). By becoming aware of our own implicit biases and actively resisting them, we can avoid perpetuating harmful discriminatory stereotypes and prejudices.

# What To Do About Implicit Bias & Discrimination



- **Focus on seeing people as individuals.** Avoid defining people based on stereotypes. Spend time considering each volunteer on a personal and individual level.
- **Work on consciously changing your own stereotypes.** If you recognize that your response to a person might be rooted in biases, try to consciously adjust your response.
- **Adjust your perspective.** Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. In other words, try to see things from another person's point of view.

# Importance of Diversity and Inclusion



- U.S. Masters Swimming believes that successful implementation of diversity, equality & inclusion ensures that colleagues, staff, coaches, members, volunteers, and athletes are valued, treated fairly, and are encouraged to succeed.
- Increasing the number of individuals from under-represented groups in our sport is necessary, but it is not sufficient. We must maintain a culture that supports the success and retention of all individuals.
- Diverse backgrounds and diversity of thought produce a myriad of positive outcomes, including more innovative solutions to complex problems, more productive collaborations, and richer experiences.
- The benefits of an inclusive culture apply to all USMS members. When diversity, equality & inclusion are prominent in our LMSCs and our clubs, we all benefit.

# Valuing All Types of Diversity

We will review issues specific to each topic (1-9) then provide some discussion questions (A-E) for you to think about and apply to your LMSC

A 1. Racial & National Origin / Cultural Diversity

B { 2. Gender Diversity  
3. Sexual Orientation Diversity

C { 4. Age Diversity  
5. Physical Ability / Mental Health / Intellectual Ability / Neurological Attributes Diversity

D { 6. Socioeconomic Diversity  
7. Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity  
8. Political Belief Diversity

E 9. Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your LMSC



# 1. Racial & National Origin/Cultural Diversity



- America has become a racially diverse nation with more than 59 million immigrants arriving in the U.S. over the past 50 years alone. According to the Pew Research Center, by 2055, the U.S. is projected to not have a single racial or ethnic majority.
- Immigrants to the U.S. from all parts of the world bring a mix of cultures. Cultures are how groups of people congregate and share their way of being part of a community with like-minded individuals. Often, they share common beliefs and customs.
  - Just like teaching or coaching swimmers, there is not only one “right way” to do something. Embracing cultures other than our own should be an accepted practice.
  - Most immigrants to the US speak English, but there may be communication issues: pronunciation, speed and/or use of slang.



## ***A. Discussion Questions:*** **Racial & National Origin/Cultural Diversity**

1. What is the ethnic makeup of your LMSC board? Do you have non-white members in your elected LMSC representatives? In your volunteer roles?
2. What barriers do you think exist that might prevent more non-white members from joining your LMSC Board? What can you do to knock down such barriers?
3. Where do your elected LMSC representatives live; do they represent a variety of geographic areas within your LMSC? How can you encourage representation from areas that are not well represented?
4. Do you have non-native English speakers on your LMSC board? If so (or if a potential new member with limited English-speaking ability wants to join) what options can you offer to include them? How do you communicate 'Roberts Rules of Order' in a variety of languages?

***Think about these questions related to not only your LMSC board but also events sponsored or supported by your LMSC (social events, meets, etc).***

## 2. Gender Diversity



- As an introduction to any conversation about gender diversity, it is important to first touch on gender identity and the understanding of how this is separate from sex and/or sexual orientation.
- One's "sex" references to your biological makeup and the sex you were assigned at birth. Gender, on the other hand, is your innermost identification of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither, which may be the same or different from your sex.

## 2. Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions

- The language around gender continues to change rapidly. Words and their definitions vary as our understanding of gender and sexuality evolves. USMS recognizes that learning which words or phrases are most respectful and accurate is useful.
  - Gender
  - Gender Diversity
  - Gender Expression
  - Gender Identity
  - Gender Dysphoria
  - Genderqueer



## 2. Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions

*These terminology change rapidly and we recognize that even this list of terms and definitions might undergo significant change in the future.*

- **Gender** refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviors that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity. (APA guidelines). Transgender is the broad term for someone whose sex and gender do not correspond; cisgender refers to people whose sex and gender identity are the same.
  - *Be aware that USMS does have a policy relating to Competition for Transgender athletes.*  
[https://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/transgender\\_policy.pdf](https://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/transgender_policy.pdf)
- **Gender Diversity** refers to the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex. This term is probably the most popular way to describe people without reference to a particular cultural norm, in a manner that is more affirming and potentially less stigmatizing than gender nonconformity. (Gender Spectrum, 2013; <https://www.genderspectrum.org/understanding-gender>).
- **Gender Expression** is the way in which a person expresses their gender identity, typically through their appearance, dress, and behavior. This includes physical appearance, choice of clothing and accessories, and behavior that communicates aspects of gender or gender role. Gender expression may or may not conform to a person's gender identity.

## 2. Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions

*These terminology change rapidly and we recognize that even this list of terms and definitions might undergo significant change in the future.*

- **Gender Identity.** Gender identity is internal, a person's gender identity is not essentially visible to others. A person's deeply-felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or an alternative gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender non-conforming, boygirl, ladyboi) which may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics.
- **Gender Dysphoria** refers to discomfort or distress that is associated with a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics) (Fisk, 1974; Knudson, De Cuypere, & Bockting, 2010b).
- **Genderqueer** refers to a person whose gender identity falls outside of the gender binary (i.e. identifies with neither or both genders). Genderqueers may also use the term "gender fluid" as an identifier but typically reject the term "transgender" because it implies a change from one gender category to another.

## 3. Sexual Orientation Diversity

- **Sexual orientation** is how a person may feel toward another person in a sexual, romantic, or affectionate way.
  - It should not be confused with gender identity, which is more about inner identity and about self-feelings.
- An individual's sexual orientation may be lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual, or asexual. A person may be attracted to men, women, both, neither, genderqueer, or androgynous. Sexual orientation is distinct from sex, gender identity, gender role and gender expression.
- **Pansexual** "is most commonly used in the world outside academia as a sexual identity and sexual orientation term similar to 'bisexuality,' but more inclusive of trans people. It also shows an awareness of the implied gender binary in the term 'bisexual.'" (Elizabeth, 2013, p. 333)

## ***B. Discussion Questions:***

# **Gender Diversity & Sexual Orientation Diversity**

1. Are the genders of your LMSC board and other volunteers representative of the genders of your LMLSC membership? What barriers to you see in your LMSC for one gender or another?
2. What terminology do you use with your volunteers and board members? He/she/they (His, her, their)? How conscious are you of terminology regarding gender? What inquiry do you make to determine your volunteers' preferences as to how they wish to be referred?
3. Does your LMSC board welcome volunteers regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation? Are there any barriers that might prevent LGBTQIA+ individuals from volunteering? If your board meets in person, are there facilities (such as restrooms) that are welcoming to transgender individuals?

***Think about these questions related to not only your LMSC board but also events sponsored or supported by your LMSC (social events, meets, etc).***

## 4. Age Diversity

- Swimming is a lifetime activity and USMS welcomes people of all ages (18 and older) to participate.
- We welcome young people (30's and younger) to our programs and want them to have a great social and athletic experience yet they are a small number of our members.
- The largest USMS age group is 50-54, and nearly 50% of our members are aged 40-60 years.
- As athletes age, some look to swimming for health benefits and friendship when they can no longer participate in other, higher-impact, activities.



## 5. Physical Ability / Mental Health / Intellectual Ability / Neurological Attributes Diversity

- Everyone has strengths *and* challenges. A person's ability is the resource to perform well at something. A person's disability is the limit or challenge he or she faces. A disability does not mean that a person is not able to perform a task or do a job. It only means that they face certain limitations or challenges.
- Per the Americans with Disabilities Act: "An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. "
- We are used to coaches working with athletes of different skill levels or even adaptive or non-traditional athletes. We must also create an environment for volunteers that allows each person to maximize their contributions to the group/team goals and objectives based on their abilities and attributes.



## ***C. Discussion Questions:***

### **Age & Physical Ability / Mental Health / Intellectual Ability / Neurological Attributes Diversity**

1. What strategies do you have to attract and retain younger volunteers?
2. What accommodations do you make for volunteers as their physical and mental capabilities change with age?
3. Are there people in your LMSC who have a visible or non visible disability? What accommodations do you make for volunteers with disabilities? If you have in person meetings, do the facilities support volunteers of all abilities (ramps, microphones, restrooms, etc).
4. Do you have people in your LMSC that work with people with disabilities? Have you sought their advice in working with volunteers and with swimmers?

***Think about these questions related to not only your LMSC board but also events sponsored or supported by your LMSC (social events, meets, etc).***

## 6. Socioeconomic Status Diversity

- **Socioeconomic status** is a characterization derived from a combination of education, income, and occupation.
- Social equity has been challenged in recent years through increasing income inequality. The widening gap between rich and poor contributes to economic segregation among regions and neighborhoods and has a direct impact in all sports. The potential for positive change lies in the willingness of coaches to advance social equity through a variety of ways. Volunteer activities should be inclusive and provide multiple modes of engagement creating pathways for achievement in an environment of accessibility and face-to-face time with the individuals.



## 7. Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity

- Religious and ethical value systems are teachings and practices of what might be interpreted as right or wrong, good or bad, virtuous or vicious, from a spiritual point of view. The definition of “religion” is controversial. A definition favored by the U.S. Supreme Court is that religions are traditions that are anything like Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism.
- Many different spiritual perspectives shape American society and the global swimming community whom we serve as volunteers; therefore, we must be prepared to understand and relate with them in a respectful manner. Genuine respect is more than just tolerance.
- The right to engage in religion goes together with the right of not engaging in religion. Thus, religious and nonreligious people have the responsibility to respect those who differ from them and promote the common good of the program, society, and world.

## 8. Political Belief Diversity

- Volunteers may bring their political beliefs with them. Political beliefs don't make someone a better volunteer. LMSC leaders should strive to make the volunteer environment as politically neutral as possible. Political issues and debates are better left out of volunteer environments, and the leader must find ways to respectfully quiet volunteers prone to engage in political conversations during activities.
- Adult swimmers bring all their experiences, goals, opinions, emotions, and external influences with them and it is thereby important for every LMSC Board leader to be flexible, knowledgeable, organized, and empathetic while maintaining proper decorum for the benefit of everyone.

## ***D. Discussion Questions:*** Social Class / Political / Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity

1. What is the approximate socioeconomic makeup of your LMSC, based on perceived income and occupation? Is your board representative?
2. Do certain aspects of being a part of your LMSC board limit volunteers in particular financial brackets from participating? This could include the USMS annual membership fee and location and time of meetings.
3. What is your LMSC volunteer policy regarding the discussion of political or religious topics? How do you mediate conversations to ensure all volunteers and athletes feel included and respected?
4. Do you currently have a Diversity & Inclusion coordinator for your LMSC? If not, do you have a plan to add that role?

***Think about these questions related to not only your LMSC board but also events sponsored or supported by your LMSC (social events, meets, etc).***

## 9. Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your LMSC

- U.S. Masters Swimming believes that successful implementation of diversity & inclusion ensures that colleagues, staff, coaches, members, volunteers, and athletes are valued, treated fairly, and are encouraged to succeed.
  - LMSC leaders need to create an inclusive culture for all volunteers, and ensure club owners and coaches are creating an inclusive culture for athletes at each club.
- To be clear, increasing and maintaining the numbers of under-represented individuals in our sport is necessary, but it is not nearly sufficient. We must maintain an inclusive culture that supports the retention and success of under-represented members across all boundaries.
- Our competencies in understanding and embracing diversity are more and more important as our communities become more diverse.
- Diverse groups and diversity of thought produce a myriad of positive outcomes, including more innovative solutions to complex problems, more productive collaborations, and richer coaching experiences.



## ***E. Discussion Questions:*** **Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your LMSC**



1. Are the leaders and the volunteers of your LMSC open to new ideas, regardless of where the new ideas come from?
2. Does your LMSC have a documented complaint and/or conflict resolution process that allows anonymous reporting of issues and concerns?
3. Is your LMSC able to attract a diverse collection of volunteers? Are you able to retain a diverse collection of volunteers?
4. How diverse is your volunteer corps, in terms of the categories we discussed today? What diversity & inclusion training have your volunteers and coaches completed? Are you planning to provide additional training in diversity & inclusion for your volunteers and coaches?

***Think about these questions related to not only your LMSC board but also events sponsored or supported by your LMSC (social events, meets, etc).***

# Valuing All Types of Diversity



We will review issues specific to each topic (1-9) then provide some discussion questions (A-E) for you to think about and apply to your LMSC

A 1. Racial & National Origin / Cultural Diversity

B { 2. Gender Diversity  
3. Sexual Orientation Diversity

C { 4. Age Diversity  
5. Physical Ability / Mental Health / Intellectual Ability / Neurological Attributes Diversity

D { 6. Socioeconomic Diversity  
7. Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity  
8. Political Belief Diversity

E 9. Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your LMSC



## Upcoming detailed interactive sessions

- This session has focused on sharing high-level information about all aspects of Diversity and Inclusion.
- We will schedule a series of more focused and more detailed webinars, that will allow for more group participation, questions, and interactivity.
- You may choose to attend one or more of these sessions, based on your interests, your questions and/or issues that your club is dealing with.
- The more detailed, interactive sessions will be:
  - A. Racial Diversity & National Origin / Cultural Diversity
  - B. Gender Diversity & Sexual Orientation Diversity
  - C. Age & Physical Ability / Mental Health / Intellectual Ability / Neurological Attributes Diversity
  - D. Social Class Diversity & Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity & Political Belief Diversity
  - E. Maintaining an Inclusive Culture at Your Club
- The first breakout will be Session C on Thursday July 29. Other sessions are TBD

## Diversity & Inclusion Best Practices

- D&I Best Practice write-ups available on the USMS website here:
  - <https://www.usms.org/about-usms/diversity-and-inclusion/how-clubs-can-improve-diversity-and-inclusivity>
- If you, your team, or LMSC did something noteworthy for Diversity and Inclusion, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee wants to hear from you! We are creating a collection of proven, distinct ideas, programs, and best practices that encourage all adults to swim. Email us at [Diversity@USMastersSwimming.org](mailto:Diversity@USMastersSwimming.org)



## LMSC Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator

- Several LMSCs have recently implemented a “Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator” on their board of directors
- Role write-up provided to LMSC Development Committee
- For more information, contact Ally Sega [ally98003@aol.com](mailto:ally98003@aol.com)

## Proposed D&I Legislation for 2021 Convention

- **Section 402.4 “Unsporting Conduct”**
- **Update 402.4.5 to apply to all “activities” (not just ‘events’) and to all people present, not just participants**
  - **402.4.5** Any intentional nonconsensual physical contact, obscene language or gesture, or other threatening language or conduct directed toward members, volunteers, staff or *bystanders* in connection with a USMS ~~event~~ **activity**.
- **Add 402.4.6 to prohibit discrimination, harrasement or offensive comments**
  - **402.4.6** Any discrimination, harassment, or expression regarded as offensive based on an individual’s age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, genetics, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by federal, state or local law, where applicable, directed toward members, volunteers, or staff in connection with a USMS activity. Age requirements for USMS membership shall not be considered a violation of this article.

# Resources / Contact Info



- Best Practices for Diversity & Inclusion:
  - <https://www.usms.org/about-usms/diversity-and-inclusion/how-clubs-can-improve-diversity-and-inclusivity>
- Coach Interviews:
  - <https://www.usms.org/about-usms/diversity-and-inclusion/how-coaches-can-improve-their-clubs-diversity>
- Diversity in Aquatics
  - <https://www.diversityinaquatics.org/team>
- USMS Transgender Athlete Competition Policy
  - [https://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/transgender\\_policy.pdf](https://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/transgender_policy.pdf)
- USA Parawimming
  - <https://www.teamusa.org/us-paralympics/resources>

## Contact Information:

Sarah Welch (Chair of D&I Committee): sarahwelch@comcast.net

Jeff Commings: jeffswim@aol.com

Diana Triana: trianaaurus@yahoo.com