

## Introduction

At its core, diversity is about building relationships that respect an individual's inherent worth and dignity. At the heart of any relationship is communication—be it between employees at work or between a husband and wife. If you've ever had to say, "I'm sorry. I misunderstood you," then you know that most of us need help communicating.

This lexicon is a valuable tool that will help your employees engage in meaningful dialogue. It's pocket-sized for convenience. Keep it handy, write in it, bend its pages, and bookmark it with sticky notes. Conversation about diversity often involves words that are charged with emotion. Not everyone comes to the table with the same understanding of words, even of the common terms we use every day. It is absolutely imperative for all of us to speak with precision and clarity. Only then can there truly be a shared pool of knowledge, a shared experience that transcends background, education, and upbringing.

If you have any kind of diversity training at all at your company or organization, you will see the value of this handy reference. It's inexpensive (especially at the bulk-purchase price) and easy to incorporate into any existing training program. And there's nothing like it available.

We hope you'll find it as useful as we have since putting it together.

## Diversity Words, Terms and Phrases

**Ability** – The skill or competence needed to perform certain tasks.

**Ableism** – The set of beliefs, both cultural and individual, that assigns different values to people who have developmental disabilities, resulting in differential treatment toward them.

**Aboriginal People** – People belonging to the indigenous nations of North and South America.

**Accent** – A way of speaking which is typical of a group of people from a particular geographic region.

**Acceptance** – Approval and recognition of those whose race, religion, nationality, etc. are different than one's own.

**Accessibility** – The extent to which an employer's facility is easily accessible and does not inhibit the mobility of individuals with disabilities.

**Acculturation** – The process of becoming comfortable with borrowing the traits of and functioning within a different culture while retaining one's own cultural identity.