

Enhancing Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in Continuing Care:

A menu of options representing emerging initiatives



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CONTEXT

Impact: Why is DEI Needed in Continuing Care?

The aging population is not only growing but it is also becoming more diverse in regard to race, ethnicity, physical ability, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and primary language. In 2017, 4.6% identified as East or Southeast Asian, 3.1% as South Asian, 1.3% as Black, 0.7% as West Asian or Arab, 0.3% as Latin American, and 2.3% from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Stauch, 2021).¹ Among all older adults in the Canadian population, 30% were foreign-born and 63% of immigrant older adults who arrived from 2012-2016, reported that they were unable to speak the official languages (Government of Canada, 2021).² Available data estimates that there are around 16,000 to 81,000 LGBTQ2S+ older adults in Alberta as recently as 2020 (Government of Alberta, 2020).³

What is Continuing Care?

Alberta Health Services (AHS) defines continuing care as “a range of services that support the health and well-being of individuals living in their own home, a supportive living or long-term care setting. Continuing care clients are defined by their need for care, not by their age or diagnosis or the length of time they may require service” (Alberta Health Services (AHS), n.d.).⁴

What is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

Diversity includes the variety of unique characteristics, dimensions, and qualities that we all possess. Race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, physical abilities, and lived experiences, can all make up individual diversity (Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion (CCDI), 2022).⁵

Equity refers to everyone getting treated according to their diverse needs in a way that enables everyone to participate, perform, and engage to the same extent (CCDI, 2022).⁵

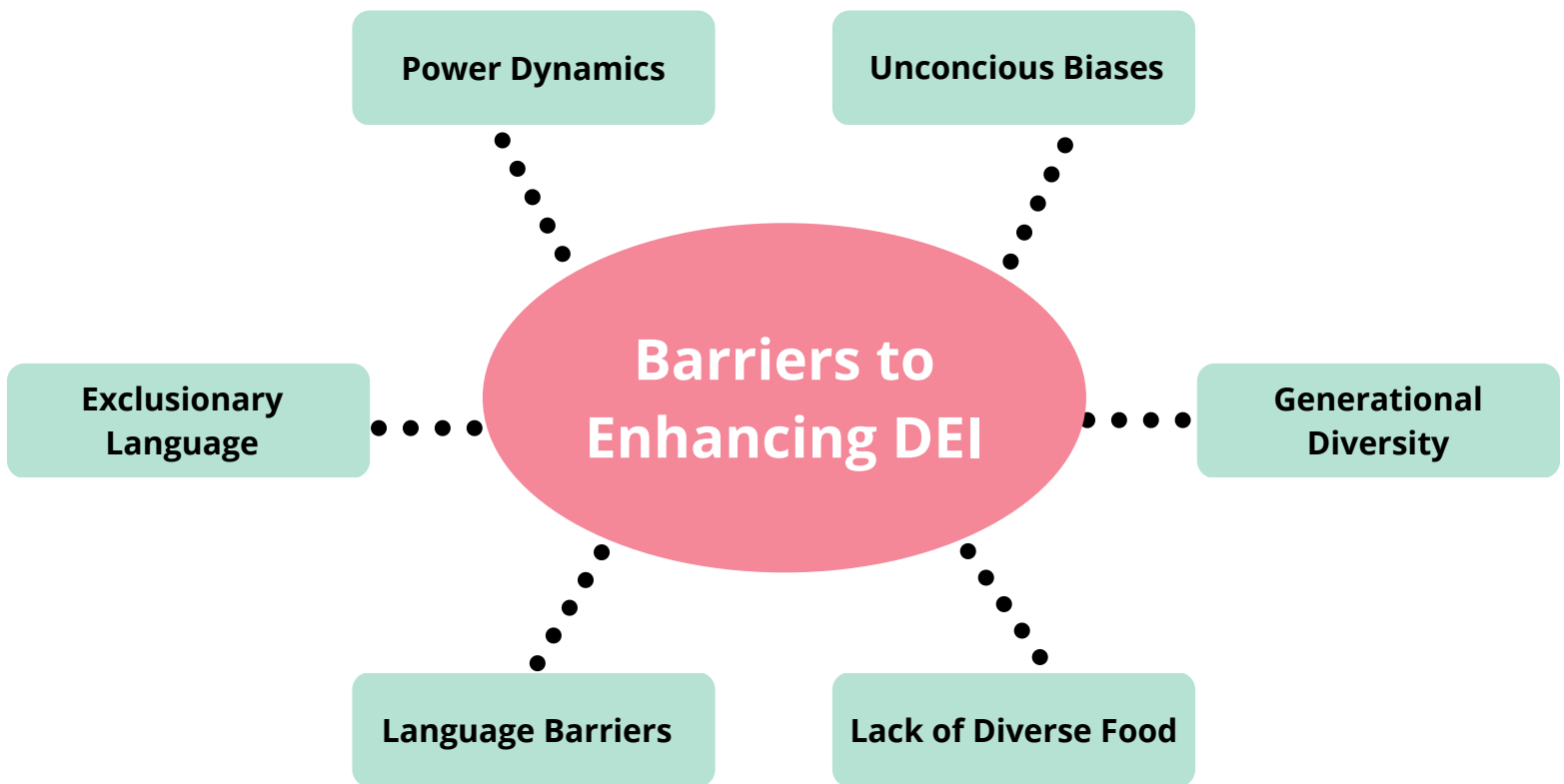
Inclusion is all about creating a culture that embraces, accepts, and respects diversity. It should be an equitable effort to meet diverse needs of individuals so that they feel valued, respected, and able to contribute their best effort to reach their full potential (CCDI, 2022).⁵

Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit/menu is to help continuing care organizations better meet the needs of diverse residents and diverse care workers within their care homes, and to introduce concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion to racially privileged and generationally diverse residents through a gentle and sensitive approach. This toolkit builds on my research that addressed the barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and impacts of lack of DEI.

Barriers

DEI is not a one size fits all, it is a journey, a process. It requires an understanding of the barriers that prevent it before taking direct action. There not only needs to be a system where diverse care workers are providing inclusive and safe care for residents, but there also needs to be a system where privileged residents (i.e., white, CIS, men) are acknowledging and supporting the diversity among care workers and fellow diverse residents.



Legend

This toolkit is organized as a menu of options that places micro and gentle approaches in the form of communication, exposure, and immersion at the forefront of approaching DEI initiatives; and macro change at the organizational level.

Communication

The communication section of this toolkit emphasizes communicating information and making information known through minimal awareness.

Exposure

Whereas communication is indirect interaction, this section stresses the importance of diversity exposure through minimal direct interaction.

Immersion

Immersion focuses on direct interaction. Immersing residents, care workers, and visitors in culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse activities. This gives them the opportunity to engage and become comfortable with differences in race, gender, religion, language, and generational experiences.

Organizational Readiness

Having done the micro approaches (communication, exposure, and immersion) which represent your 'starters,' organizational readiness includes a macro level approach to initiating change. At this stage, an organization is ready to exert greater effort and action.

What is an 'add on'?

An 'add on' represents an additional element, suggestion, topic, and/or recommendation that can be added to the 'main' initiative

COMMUNICATION

AWARENESS SIGNAGE

Visible posters on stereotypes, discrimination, & anti-racism. Plastering pride and transgender flags.

'GOLDEN RULE' POSTERS

Posters that list the key guiding principle for religions and/or cultures.

'WHAT WOULD YOU DO?' POSTERS

Intended to depict microaggressions and encourage residents, care workers, and visitors to engage in personal reflection.⁶

WELCOME POSTERS

Welcome signage in different languages. 'Hate free' and 'safe zone' signs.

DIVERSITY HOLIDAY/EVENTS CALENDAR

A diversity calendar all around the organization that keeps track of special days for residents and care workers.

DEI BULLETIN BOARD

A great way to visually represent diversity for the whole organization to see and learn from.



EXPOSURE

WORLD MAP

Plastering a world map to represent cultural/ethnic diversity.

ADD ON:

Ask residents & staff to note/pin their country for everyone to see

DIVERSITY BINGO

Using concepts related to racism, gender, discrimination.

Opportunity to get to know fellow residents and care workers.

MOVIE NIGHT

A movie night on racism and discrimination with residents and staff

ADD ON:

- *Little Miss Sunshine*
- *Remember The Titans*
- *Ruby Bridges*
- *Fruitvale Station*

DIVERSE MEDIA

Have diverse TV programs and music playing in common areas where residents gather.

DECORATING THE ORGANIZATION

Having the care home reminiscent of a home, or what makes residents feel at home.

REFLECTION ROOMS

For individual reflection, prayer, meditation, and sensory safe spaces.

DIVERSE CAFE

A unique and casual experience to engage in dialogue with individuals through storytelling over coffee/tea.

BOOKCLUB

A bookclub on books that emphasize racism, sexism, discrimination, and stereotypes.

ADD ON:

- *So you want to talk about race* by Ijeoma Oluo
 - *Harbour Me* by Jacqueline Woodson
-

OFFERING CULTURALLY DIVERSE FOOD

Work with local vendors that supply ingredients from different ethnic backgrounds.

ADD ON:

Vendors could come in and let residents sample food for their input



IMMERSION

CULTURAL GALLERY

A cultural gallery with both care workers and residents sharing their cultures and ethnicities.

ADD ON:

A diversity lunch party by incorporating traditional foods

BUDDY PROGRAM

A program to help mitigate social isolation.

ADD ON:

- *Virtual Buddies:*
 - *pen pals, phone pals, virtual games players*
- *Language exchange between residents and care workers (can also be virtual)*

RESIDENT RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Exposing residents to diverse backgrounds, countries, and cultures through recreation.

ADD ON:

- *COUNTRY OF FOCUS:*
 - *Choose a country to celebrate – country info booth, traditional food, music, and tv programs*
- *ARMCHAIR TRAVEL:*
 - *Sensory experience/virtual tour to learn about foreign lands and important historic events*
- *COOKING CLUB:*
 - *Enjoyable way for residents to participate in the creation of a diverse meal.*

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

A sharing circle with residents, care workers and/or families.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Educational opportunities/ workshops for both residents and care workers.

ADD ON:

- *Lunch-and-Learns*
- *E-learning*

DIVERSITY DAY

Involve residents and care workers in hosting a diversity day.

ADD ON:

- *Each care worker and resident can bring something that represents their culture, identity, and/or ethnicity.*
- *A potluck to promote a sense of pride in those diverse backgrounds.*



ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

FORMAL DEI TRAINING

Ongoing education and training for care workers, staff, and leaders of the organization.

ADD ON:⁶

- *Cross cultural communication*
- *Indigenous & LGBTQ+ competency*
- *Unconscious biases & promoting bystander advocacy*
- *Include lived experience perspectives to increase impact of learning sessions (e.g. storytelling)*
- *Discussions surrounding history, immigration, settler colonialism, & experiences of LGBTQ+ communities.*

WORKPLACE NORMS

- Include preferred pronouns in email signatures and name tags.
- Begin meetings with land or territorial acknowledgement
- Include a DEI Moment in staff and resident council meeting agendas

DEI ADVOCACY GROUPS

Develop a diversity committee or advocacy group with membership that reflects the diversity of the care home/organization. Involve residents, family, care workers, stakeholders, and community members.

POLICY REVISION

Review policies to incorporate gender neutral and inclusive terms.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEASURES

Strategies to ensure principles of DEI are embedded, maintained, and support organizational values.

ADD ON:⁶

- *Satisfaction surveys: learn about how your organization/care home is perceived & determine if it's reflective of DEI.*
 - *ENSURE ANONYMITY*
 - *OFFER IN MULTIPLE FORMATS & LANGUAGES*
- *Exit interviews for providing insight as to why care workers/staff chose to move on, what they enjoyed, and what could be improved.*

INCREASING LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AMONG STAFF TO MEET RESIDENT LANGUAGE NEEDS



References

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