

## **Equity Diversity and Inclusion**

### **What do we understand by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I)?**

#### **DIVERSITY**

Diversity is the presence of differences between individuals which include both visible and non-visible differences (CIPD, n.d.). We understand the need to for these differences to be acknowledged, valued, and respected.

#### **EQUITY**

Equity is recognising that individuals do not all start with equal access or advantages, and that identity-based barriers exist in our society, and within organisations. We want to ensure that we act equitably, and we commit to the ongoing process of addressing these imbalances (NACE, n.d.).

#### **INCLUSION**

Inclusion is creating an environment where all individuals with diverse identities feel valued, respected, and welcomed.

#### **BELONGING**

Belonging is being listened to, heard and genuinely included. Belonging takes place in a safe space of safe exchange where we can exercise the right to speak and also understand our duty to listen. To belong is to be accepted and valued as we are, with no requirement to change oneself to be accepted or 'fit in' (Brown, 2010).

**Our vision is that equity, diversity, and inclusion are central to all of IRISi's work and are reflected in our internal and external work, and our diverse workforce.**

### **Our commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

**We recognise gender-based violence is both a cause, and consequence of women's inequality.** The context in which gender-based violence occurs is impacted by multiple intersecting forms of oppression such as ageism, ableism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, and biphobia. These forms of oppression intersect with gender inequality and as a result, some groups of women experience more frequent or more severe violence and face more challenges to accessing support. Furthermore, these forms of oppression can directly influence the dynamics of abuse experienced by women. For instance, black and minoritised women often experience more severe abuse for longer and face additional barriers to accessing support than white women (Siddiqui, 2018) and disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse, sexual assault, or rape than non-disabled women (SafeLives, 2017).

**We acknowledge that the VAWG sector, just like society at large, is rife with prejudice.** We want to open up space as individuals, and as an organisation, to reflect upon how we can

embed an anti-prejudice approach within our work. We commit to the values outlined in the VAWG sector anti-racism charter (Anti-racism working group, 2021).

**IRISi is seeking to actively work to challenge oppression and discrimination.** By ensuring our training incorporates a thorough understanding of these issues, we can foster in our network, and in the wider reach of healthcare professionals, to be engaged and aware of additional barriers for marginalised women to seeking support. This can have a direct impact on breaking down these barriers and positively impact upon these communities of women to get the help they need sooner. We have created an ED&I working group to ensure that ED&I is embedded and considered throughout all processes and structures within the organisation, from the internal policies, procedures, and recruitment to the external training we deliver, events we attend, and how we collaborate with others.

**We want to create a working environment and work culture where every individual can feel safe and has a sense of belonging.** This enables people on an individual, team and organisational level to be empowered to achieve their full potential. This is part of the bigger picture of how we want to feel about the community in which we live and what we feel is important in society. We acknowledge the work environment itself impacts upon the work we do, and thus how IRISi is viewed by others in society. We are seeking to address the structural and intersecting inequalities of the past and the present to help build a more diverse society based on respect, inclusion and belongingness. We strive for this to be reflected in all the work we do, and this is central to the IRISi ethos. We work together to bring out the best in people and celebrate our differences. We support one another to each do our best in the acknowledgement that no-one is perfect, nor should they be. We understand that individuals' moments of failure are part of each person's journey of continuous learning and act as facilitators in the process that will transform failures into learnings.

**By creating an inclusive workplace culture, we enhance our reputation as an organisation, a partner and an employer.** IRISi will be better able to attract and retain the very best people from the widest pool of available talent. Feelings of inclusion can boost both retention and productivity. IRISi wants to provide a sense of belongingness for all.

**We want to enhance innovation and collaboration at IRISi.** It makes sense that the greater the variety of minds at IRISi, and the more supported we feel, the greater the mix of skills, experiences, perspectives and ideas we can bring together. This will inform decision making, planning and strategising as well as day to day role fulfilment, leading to better programmes and increased productivity.

**Our commitment to ED&I will result in better, more effective, more innovative services that better meet the needs of a wider range of end beneficiaries.** We believe by working in this way, our programmes can have more impact for all our stakeholders from survivors through to health care professionals, commissioners and policy makers. We will attract a

wider and more diverse range of partner organisations to work alongside, building stronger partnerships with a wide range of experts and increasing the scope, reach and standard of our work. This means ultimately that our work, programmes and associated benefits will reach more and more survivors.

**Ultimately our diverse team is continuously striving for better outcomes for all those we engage with and work with: survivors, health care professionals, specialist partners, commissioners, our staff team and board members.**

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### *References*

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