

# ■ Key Terms & Definitions Quick Guide

## *Building a Foundation for Belonging*

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### **Why Common Language Matters**

Language shapes perception — and perception shapes culture. A shared vocabulary helps ensure that discussions about diversity and belonging remain clear, respectful, and aligned with organizational values.

### **Diversity**

The presence of differences among people — including backgrounds, perspectives, identities, and experiences — that make each individual unique.

### **Equity**

Ensuring fair access to opportunities, resources, and support. It means giving everyone what they need to succeed, not necessarily treating everyone the same.

### **Inclusion**

Intentional actions and behaviors that ensure all individuals feel welcomed, valued, and able to contribute their perspectives.

### **Belonging**

The emotional result of inclusion — when individuals feel safe, respected, and accepted as part of the team.

### **Culture**

The shared values, beliefs, and behaviors that define how people work and interact within an organization.

### **Psychological Safety**

A climate in which individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of embarrassment or retaliation. It's the foundation for innovation and collaboration.

### **Unconscious Bias**

Automatic attitudes or stereotypes that influence our understanding, decisions, and actions without conscious awareness. Recognizing bias is the first step toward more equitable leadership.

“Language is not just descriptive — it’s generative. The words we use create the culture we live in.”

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### Reflection Prompt

How might clarifying or redefining these terms help improve communication and trust in your team?

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