

## Inclusive Communities: Definitions and Key Questions

Look up the meaning of these words and write your own definitions. Follow your interests and reputable sources to learn more about animal advocacy.

**person-first language:** when referring to a person with a disability, place the individual ahead of the disability or condition (Example: “person with Downs Syndrome” or “person who uses a wheelchair”)

**race:** a group that shares outward physical traits, such as skin color

**ethnicity:** a group that shares non-physical attributes, such as nation of origin, cultural identity or tribe

**Racism:** using race to create and support beliefs and systems that discriminate against some people and give privileges to other people. Racism is maintained by individuals, groups, and institutions.

**Nonracist:** not having feelings of hurtful prejudice or discrimination based on race

**Anti-racism:** actively noticing, questioning, and opposing racism by taking action to address and speak out about racism through your words and actions

**Kwanzaa:** a nonreligious festival observed by many African Americans to celebrate cultural heritage and traditional values

**Hanukkah:** a Jewish festival that lasts 8 days and includes lighting eight lights to commemorate the rededication of the Temple

**Diwali:** a Hindu festival of lights that marks the beginning of the fiscal year in India

**Mental health:** includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices

## Key Questions

1. In what ways have you felt or observed someone else excluded or not valued?
2. What are the dominant cultures in your community? How are people in non-dominant groups treated?
3. What can be done differently to make all young people feel included and valued?
4. Think of a time that you were left out of something for a reason outside of your control. Maybe you couldn't ride a rollercoaster because of your height, or you couldn't run track because of your asthma. How did that make you feel? Now that you know more about disabilities all around us, identify ways that your group's space can be more accessible to everyone.
5. Do you think it is okay to notice and talk about differences in people's skin color? Why?
6. What is the difference between anti-racism and not being racist? What makes it harder to be anti-racist as a young person? How does anti-racism relate to what you've learned about inclusion?



7. What commonalities are there between celebrations around the world? e.g., candles or light, giving, large meals, family, etc.
8. Remember that there may also be students in your group who don't celebrate holidays at all (for religious reasons or otherwise). Does your classroom/organizational culture respect the boundaries and comfort of those learners?
9. In what ways can we prioritize our mental health like we do our physical health?
10. In what ways do difficult conversations help grow our cultural competence? What does a world look like without difficult conversations?
11. What makes it difficult to use your voice? What are the potential rewards of using your voice?

