Diversity in tech: A toolkit

The @Work Toolkit is a collection of additional resources and tips that might be useful when discussing the topic with your team.

Published on April 5, 2022—3 min read

Definitions

"Leaky pipeline" myth: The leaky pipeline metaphor is premised that the lack of diversity in tech can be attributed to the passive "leaking" and attrition of Black, Indigenous, and people of color, leading some people to believe that there just aren't enough diverse candidates to hire. But the metaphor doesn't account for the biases and blockages along the way for those entering into the field, as well as the hurdles for those already working in positions in tech.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, (and) people of color.

POC is used as an umbrella term for people of color. While the term is believed to originate from the 18th century, over the years, it has been used to signal solidarity around progressive, organizing circles. BIPOC, which is an acronym for Black, Indigenous, and people of color, is a term that has been gaining popularity more recently, and intended to acknowledge that not all people of color face the same levels of injustice. Both terms have been met with mixed reactions. Some people believe that the term POC or BIPOC overlooks the experiences of Black, Indigenous and other racial and ethnic groups by lumping them together.

(Sources: Merriam-Webster.com; Slate.com; The New York Times)

Did You Know

"People need to leave their little bubble of comfort and meet new people who are from different communities, from different backgrounds, think differently, look differently. Until people start doing that, you are going to have a pipeline problem, but that's your own fault."
— Pariss Chandler, founder and CEO, Black Tech Pipeline

How to have honest conversations

Encourage all to speak the truth*: Conversations about race require risk. They ask us to speak honestly about our internal beliefs, emotions, and stances and not just say what we imagine our peers want to hear. We often forgo having conversations about race because we fear offending our coworkers, appearing uninformed, or being "too emotional." Silence, particularly from people of Color in the workplace, can often be read as agreement. Support environments in which all employees are encouraged to speak frankly. One way to start an honest, risky conversation is to validate the experiences of a coworker, especially someone who is expressing a concern about being excluded. Allow the person to own their experience and speak without interruption.

*Adapted from Singleton, Glenn E. *Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for achieving equity in schools.* Corwin Press, 2014.