

Intersectionality 101: A Discussion for Managers

Prepared by Amilah Baksh, MSW, RSW of Shifa Services

Key Concepts

Intersectionality was coined in 1989 by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap. Intersectionality is an analytical framework that **does not** support an “oppression Olympic”-style competition of who has it the worst, but rather allows us to understand **how** various systems of oppression interact with one another to produce distinct forms of discrimination and marginalization.

Power can manifest in tangible ways, such as access to wealth greater material resources, physical strength, weapons, information, decision-making, control of the media, and in non-tangible ways, such as **discursive** power, i.e. what is viewed as real or legitimate knowledge?

Oppression is the domination of subordinate groups in society by a (politically, economically, socially and culturally) more powerful group. This does not require forceful subordination or evil intent – although these can be present. Oppression can occur at the individual, institutional and cultural level.

Some tips for managing with Intersectionality in mind:

Individual level: Address the impact of implicit bias in hiring and firing; challenge stereotyped assumptions by calling in/calling out

Cultural level: How do workplace dynamics impact employees from marginalized groups? Challenge what is accepted as “kitchen culture” when it is harmful.

Institutional and Systemic: How do specific rules or policies affect those at the intersections? Identify and address systemic barriers which disproportionately target people with non-dominant identities.

Further Readings:

Media & Activity:

[The Urgency of Intersectionality TEDxTalk](#) by Kimberlé Crenshaw

[Power Flower activity](#) (optional: solo or in group)

Books:

On Intersectionality: Essential Writings by Kimberlé Crenshaw

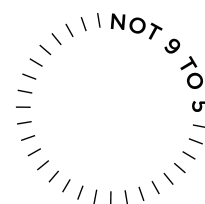
Intersectionality by Patricia Hill Collins & Sirma Bilge

Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons by Anna Carastathis

Me and White Supremacy by Layla Saad



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