



INCLUSIVE RESEARCH PRACTICES

Inclusive research is key to fostering innovation, improving research quality, and addressing the needs of diverse populations. To achieve these benefits, research processes must be inclusive at every stage, from recruiting research teams to designing projects to sharing final conclusions. Below are simple steps to promote inclusive practices within research projects:

Written by
The Barthwell Group

1

Promote diversity within research teams

- Simplify your research team's recruitment process by identifying recruitment requirements with potential value-adds instead of rigid academic or professional criteria (e.g., degrees from prestigious educational institutions or years of experience at professional organizations). Instead, focus on identifying individuals with diverse work and life experiences who can add value to your project.
- Create long-term mentorship and sponsorship programs for researchers from underrepresented groups.
- Include sources of diverse talent in your recruiting process. For positions that are appropriate for those just graduating, identify colleges and universities with relevant academic programs that serve diverse populations and make sure that you post open positions to their job boards. For lateral hires, build relationships with diverse individuals in your field so that when a position opens up, you have a pre-existing pool of qualified candidates that may be interested.

2

Embrace research participants as collaborators

- Involve target communities as early as possible to include their views and experiences in designing the research project.
- Provide accommodations for diverse perspectives by offering remote participation options, translation services, etc. This enables your sample group to be as representative of the overall community as possible.
- Be transparent about your research methodologies and funding sources.
- Adopt community-based participatory research methods that emphasize trust, power-sharing, co-learning, and mutual benefits.
- Acknowledge and compensate participants appropriately.
- Share findings with the people who helped generate them.



3

Be mindful of research methodologies

- Avoid convenience sampling. Collecting data only from individuals who are most conveniently accessible to the researcher fails to provide results that are representative of the overall community.
- Consider alternative research methods to generate more accurate findings when collecting data from marginalized communities. These groups often experience “survey fatigue” from being constant subjects of study and may be less receptive to conventional tactics. Instead, consider using:
 - Engaged participant observation, in which researchers immerse themselves in the community being examined, and document the interactions, behaviors, and dynamics of participants.
 - Photovoice, in which participants use photographs to identify and explain issues of importance to them.
- Create safe spaces for individuals to share their perspectives and experiences.
- Account for intersectionality: the way in which different aspects of an individual’s identity (such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, class, etc.) intersect to create unique experiences and effects.

4

Prevent bias and confounding variables

- Designate equal probabilities of selection to participants.
- Define research questions clearly.
- Standardize researcher interactions with participants.
- Consolidate the data analysis process.
- Be transparent about funding sources and other conflicts of interest.

5

Foster a welcoming environment for everyone involved

See tip sheet on “Fostering an Inclusive Environment”



6

Strive for continuous improvement

- Solicit feedback on your research team's experiences. Use this feedback to reflect and improve.
- Seek opportunities for professional development and learning to enhance your understanding and awareness of DEIA. Learning opportunities may include workshops, conferences, and / or certification programs.

Sources:

- American Chemical Society: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7453409/>
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- Social Research Organization: <https://the-sra.org.uk/SRA/SRA/Blog/Howtomakeresearchmoreinclusive.aspx>
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- Center for Intersectional Justice: <https://www.intersectionaljustice.org/what-is-intersectionality>