



U.S. Masters Swimming Coaches Committee and Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Handout / Reference Materials 7/23/2020

Diversity & Inclusion
Peer-to-Peer Training for Coaches

Diversity and Inclusion

Coaches Peer-to-Peer Overview



- This packet was developed by the Diversity & Inclusion Committee as an informative presentation on Diversity and Inclusion, that draws from and expands on the relevant material from level 1 & 2 Coach Certification.
- For the 7/23/2020 Coaches Peer-to-Peer session, the Coaches Committee has selected topics to be presented and other slides will be skipped in the interest of time. During the Q&A, you may ask questions on any topic.
- This packet includes discussion questions as a take-home assignment for you & your colleagues at your Club to think about together.
- In the future, the D&I Committee will be scheduling a series of interactive sessions on specific topics, so you can share more of your answers to the discussion questions, get more information, or ask for help with specific issues.

Diversity and Inclusion Welcome!



- The webinar will begin in a few minutes; please stand by as everyone gets connected
- All attendees will be muted throughout the presentation and un-muted for the Q&A segment
- You can submit questions to the moderator via the 'Q&A' window

Diversity and Inclusion

Introductions



- Jeff Commings is Co-Founder (and coach) of Dolphins Of The Desert Swimming Academy, the host of USA Swimming's "Deck Pass Live" and a freelance journalist. Jeff is the first African-American to earn an individual medal in swimming at a major international competition (bronze medal in the 100-meter breaststroke, representing the United States at the 1991 Pan American Games in Havana, Cuba). He currently resides in Tucson, AZ. Jeff has helped run the board elections for the Arizona LMSC and has been a delegate for Arizona at three USMS conventions.
- Diana Triana is an entrepreneur, linguist licensed judiciary interpreter who holds several contracts for different state and federal government agencies. She was born and raised in Bogota, Colombia, has lived in different places around the world and for the past 15 years she calls Austin Texas her home. She is an active volunteer with professional organizations seeking language justice and equality in the legal system. Diana has been an active volunteer in the South Texas LMSC for many years. She has served on her LMSC Board, and volunteered for positions at the national level, including the USMS BOD. Diana is a USMS certified coach and coaches with her team, Red Giant Masters. In 2015, USMS selected Diana along with Richard Garza to be the coaches for the Pan American Masters in Medellin, Colombia.

Diversity and Inclusion

Introductions



- Jeff's swimming experience spans USA Swimming, NCAA, Olympic Trials and US Masters Swimming:
 - Jeff was part of the USA Swimming national team from 1989 to 1994. He attended the University of Texas – Austin on a full scholarship under the tutelage of Olympic Coach Eddie Reese. His highest placing at the NCAA championships was third in the 100 breast his sophomore year. He would end his college career an eight-time All-American and four-time conference champion in the Southwest Conference.
 - Jeff placed in the top 10 at the 1992 and 1996 U.S. Olympic Trials in the 100 breaststroke. He also competed in the 100 breast at the 2012 Olympic Trials at age 38, becoming the third-oldest male to ever compete at Trials.
 - Jeff discovered Masters Swimming in 1999, and began competing in Masters the following year. His first USMS national record came at his first national championships in 2003 in the 100 breaststroke. He has set the national record in the 50 and 100 breaststroke, as well as the 100 individual medley, in four consecutive age groups. He has broken more than 20 individual and relay Masters world records in the past 15 years.
- Diana started swimming at an early age and swimming has been a constant variable throughout her life wherever she has lived. She considers herself a fitness swimmer, avid cyclist, and competitive triathlete.

Diversity and Inclusion Webinar Outline



- Definitions of Terms
- Importance of Diversity and Inclusion
- Valuing Specific Types of Diversity (*Topics selected by Coaches Committee from larger presentation prepared by D&I Committee*)
 - Description of Issues
 - Assessing Your Club (*Suggested Future Discussion Questions*)
- Links to Additional Resources and D&I Contact Info
- Participant Questions/Discussion

Diversity and Inclusion

Definition of Terms



- **Diversity** is: human differences that include, but aren't limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.
 - Our organization, parent clubs and workout groups increasingly consist of individuals from various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, each with different abilities.
- **Inclusion** means: all people, regardless of their diversity, have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities.

Diversity and Inclusion

Definition of Terms (Continued)



- An **Implicit Bias** is an unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group. These biases, including both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily without the individual's awareness or intentional control, yet they affect beliefs and decisions.
 - Due to implicit biases, people may attribute certain qualities or characteristics to all members of a particular group, a phenomenon known as **stereotyping**. These biases are different from known biases, or **prejudices**, that individuals may choose to conceal for reasons of social and/or political correctness. Implicit biases often begin at a young age and most of us, for the most part, are totally unaware we have them. It is important to remember that implicit biases operate almost entirely on an unconscious level.

Diversity and Inclusion

Definition of Terms (Continued)



- **Implicit Bias vs. Discrimination**
 - Implicit bias and racism are related concepts but are not the same thing. Implicit bias is an unconsciously held set of associations about a particular group while racism is prejudice against individuals from a specific racial group and can be either explicit or implicit.
 - Other forms of discrimination that can be affected by implicit biases include sexism, homophobia, ageism, and ableism (discrimination against disabled people). By becoming aware of our own implicit biases and actively resisting them, we can avoid perpetuating harmful discriminatory stereotypes and prejudices.

Diversity and Inclusion

What To Do about Implicit Bias & Discrimination



- **Focus on seeing people as individuals.** Avoid defining people based on stereotypes. Spend time considering each swimmer on a personal and individual level.
- **Work on consciously changing your own stereotypes.** If you recognize that your response to a person might be rooted in biases, try to consciously adjust your response.
- **Adjust your perspective.** Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. In other words, try to see things from another person's point of view.

Diversity and Inclusion

Importance of Diversity and Inclusion



- Why Is It Important?
 - U.S. Masters Swimming believes that successful implementation of equality and diversity ensures that colleagues, staff, coaches, members, volunteers, and athletes are valued, treated fairly, and are encouraged to succeed.
 - To be clear, increasing and maintaining the numbers of under-represented individuals in our sport is necessary, but it is not nearly sufficient. We must maintain an inclusive culture that supports the retention and success of underrepresented members across all boundaries.
 - The benefits of such an inclusive culture apply to all USMS members and to society at large. When diversity and inclusiveness are prominent in our clubs, we all benefit.
 - Our competencies in understanding and embracing diversity are more and more important as our communities become more diverse.
 - Diverse groups and diversity of thought produce a myriad of positive outcomes, including more innovative solutions to complex problems, more productive collaborations, and richer coaching experiences.

Diversity & Inclusion

Valuing Specific Types of Diversity



- For each topic, we will review issues specific to that topic then provide some discussion questions for you to think about and apply to your club
 - Racial & National Origin / Cultural Diversity
 - Gender Diversity
 - Sexual Orientation Diversity
 - Age Diversity
 - Physical / Mental Health / Intellectual / Neurological Abilities or Attributes Diversity
 - Socioeconomic Diversity
 - Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity
 - Political Belief Diversity
 - Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your Club

Diversity & Inclusion

Racial & National Origin / Cultural Diversity



- America has become a racially diverse nation with more than 59 million immigrants arriving in the U.S. over the past 50 years alone. According to the Pew Research Center, by 2055, the U.S. is projected to not have a single racial or ethnic majority.
- With the influx of immigrants to the U.S. from all parts of the world, they bring a mix of cultures. Cultures are how groups of people congregate and share their way of being part of a community with like-minded individuals. Often, they share common beliefs and customs.
 - Just like teaching or coaching swimmers, there is not only one “right way” to do something. Embracing cultures other than our own should be an accepted practice within our Masters programs.
 - In the 2000’s, over 90% of immigrants to the US speak English, but there may be communication issues due to pronunciation, speed and/or use of slang.

Diversity & Inclusion – *Discussion Questions*

Racial & National Origin / Cultural Diversity



- What is the ethnic makeup of your club/workout group? Do you have non-white members in your coaching staff? Your volunteer roles?
- What brings your non-white members to your group? What attracts them to your program—and, is this different from your white swimmers?
- Is the retention of non-white swimmers different from your white members? And, if so, do you know why they leave?
- Do you have non-native English speakers in your program? If so (or if a potential new member with limited English-speaking ability wants to join) what options can you offer to include them? How do you communicate ‘the language of swimming workouts’ in a variety of languages? (Examples, buddy system, white boards, translation aps, etc.).
- What barriers do you think exist that might prevent more non-white members from joining your program? What can you do to knock down such barriers?

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Diversity



- As an introduction to any conversation about gender diversity, it is important to first touch on gender identity and the understanding of how this is separate from sex and/or sexual orientation.
- One's "sex" references to your biological makeup and the sex you were assigned at birth. Gender, on the other hand, is your innermost identification of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither, which may be the same or different from your sex.

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions



- The language around sexuality and gender continues to change rapidly. Words and their definitions vary as our understanding of sexuality and gender evolves. USMS recognizes that learning which words or phrases are most respectful and accurate is useful.
 - Gender
 - Gender Diversity
 - Gender Expression
 - Gender Identity
 - Gender Dysphoria
 - Genderqueer
 - Pansexual
 - Sexual Orientation

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions

These terminology change rapidly and we recognize that even this list of terms and definitions might undergo significant change in the future.



- **Gender** refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviors that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity. (APA guidelines). Transgender is the broad term for someone whose sex and gender do not correspond; cisgender refers to people whose sex and gender identity are the same.
- **Gender Diversity** refers to the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex. This term is probably the most popular way to describe people without reference to a particular cultural norm, in a manner that is more affirming and potentially less stigmatizing than gender nonconformity. (Gender Spectrum, 2013; <https://www.genderspectrum.org/understanding-gender>).
- **Gender Expression** is the way in which a person expresses their gender identity, typically through their appearance, dress, and behavior. This includes physical appearance, choice of clothing and accessories, and behavior that communicates aspects of gender or gender role. Gender expression may or may not conform to a person's gender identity.

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions

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- **Gender Identity.** Gender identity is internal, a person's gender identity is not essentially visible to others. A person's deeply-felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or an alternative gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender non-conforming, boygirl, ladyboi) which may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics.
- **Gender Dysphoria** refers to discomfort or distress that is associated with a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics) (Fisk, 1974; Knudson, De Cuypere, & Bockting, 2010b).
- **Genderqueer** refers to a person whose gender identity falls outside of the gender binary (i.e. identifies with neither or both genders). Genderqueers may also use the term "gender fluid" as an identifier but typically reject the term "transgender" because it implies a change from one gender category to another.

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Diversity – Language/Definitions

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- **Pansexual** “is most commonly used in the world outside academia as a sexual identity and sexual orientation term similar to ‘bisexuality,’ but more inclusive of trans people. It also shows an awareness of the implied gender binary in the term ‘bisexual.’” (Elizabeth, 2013, p. 333)
- **Sexual orientation** refers to the sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted. An individual’s sexual orientation may be lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual, or asexual. A person may be attracted to men, women, both, neither, genderqueer, androgynous or have other gender identities. Sexual orientation is distinct from sex, gender identity, gender role and gender expression. Transgender is an umbrella term that incorporates differences in gender identity wherein one’s assigned biological sex doesn’t match their felt identity. This umbrella term includes persons who do not feel they fit into a dichotomous sex structure through which they are identified as male or female. (Meier & Labuski, 2013)

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Diversity



- Note that a person's Gender assigned at birth, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation are unique attributes and may or may not be mutually exclusive.
 - Be aware that USMS does have a policy relating to Competition for Transgender athletes.
https://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/transgender_policy.pdf

Diversity & Inclusion

Sexual Orientation Diversity



- Sexual orientation is how a person may feel toward another person in a sexual, romantic, or affectionate way. It should not be confused with gender identity, which is more self-centric and about your inner self-feelings.
- Sexual orientations are classified as groups of individuals who have attractions in a sexual nature to genders that may be the same or different than theirs, a combination of both or none at all.

Diversity & Inclusion – *Discussion Questions*

Gender Diversity & Sexual Orientation Diversity



- What is the male/female representation among your team/workout group? If this gender composition for your group varies 'significantly', what accounts for any disproportionality? What barriers to you see in your program for one gender or another?
- What terminology do you use with your swimmers? He/she/they (His, her, their)? How conscious are you of terminology regarding gender? What inquiry do you make to determine your athletes' preferences as to how they wish to be referred?
- Does your team welcome a diversity of members regardless their gender identity and gender expression? Do your team welcome members and honor their differences regardless of sexual orientation?
- Do you have any transgender members? Has a transgender person inquired about whether they could join your program? If so, what would you want to know about/from this person and how would you help this potential member join your program? Does your facility have practices that would help you include a transgender member?

Diversity & Inclusion

Age Diversity



- Swimming is a lifetime activity and USMS welcomes people of all ages (18 and older) to participate.
- We welcome young people (30's and younger) to our programs and want them to have a great social and athletic experience yet they are a small number of our members.
- The largest USMS age group is 50-54, and nearly 50% of our members are aged 40-60 years.
- As athletes age, some look to swimming for health benefits and friendship when they can no longer participate in other, higher-impact, activities.

Diversity & Inclusion



Physical / Mental Health / Intellectual / Neurological Abilities or Attributes Diversity

- Everyone has strengths and challenges. A person's ability is the resource to perform well at something. A person's disability is the limit or challenge he or she faces. A disability does not mean that a person is not able to perform a task or do a job. It only means that they face certain limitations or challenges.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act defines disabled as: "An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. "
- Most Masters coaches work with athletes exhibiting different levels of swimming skills and endurance. Many work with adaptive or non-traditional athletes. A positive and creative approach to design workout plans adaptable for all levels will create and maintain a positive environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued, so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to the group/team goals and objectives. This practice ensures that all members have the opportunity to maximize their potential and enhance their self-esteem.



Diversity & Inclusion – *Discussion Questions*

Age & Physical / Mental Health / Intellectual / Neurological Abilities or Attributes Diversity

1. Do you attract younger swimmers to your program? Do you retain them?
2. Do you attract new members who are switching to swimming from a higher impact sport as they age? Are you able to retain swimmers as their physical and mental capabilities change with age?
3. Are there people in your program who have a visible disability or use an assistive devices that makes their disability visible? How have you addressed making the program/facility more accessible for them? What modifications to the workout have you made for them?
4. Has anyone in your program disclosed a non visible disability? How have you been able to make the program/facility more accessible for them? What modifications to the workout have you made for them? Have you made adaptations for swimmers who have not disclosed a disability?
5. When you divide your group into smaller groups or lanes, do you divide them strictly on speed or do you use other factors such as gender, age, or goals (for example, putting triathletes or butterflyers together)?
6. Do you have people in your program that work with people with disabilities? Have you sought their advice in working with swimmers?

Diversity & Inclusion

Socioeconomic Status Diversity



- Socioeconomic status is a characterization derived from a combination of education, income, and occupation.
- Social equity has been challenged in recent years through increasing income inequality. The widening gap between rich and poor contributes to economic segregation among regions and neighborhoods and has a direct impact in all sports. The potential for positive change lies in the willingness of coaches to advance social equity through a variety of ways. Coached activities should be inclusive and provide multiple modes of engagement creating pathways for achievement in an environment of accessibility and face-to-face time with the individuals.

Diversity & Inclusion

Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity



- Religious and ethics are teachings and practices of what might be interpreted as right or wrong, good or bad, virtuous or vicious, from a religious point of view. The definition of “religion” is controversial. A definition favored by the U.S. Supreme Court is that religions are traditions that are anything like Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism.
- Many different spiritual perspectives shape American society and the global swimming community whom we as coaches serve; therefore, we must be prepared to understand and relate with them in a respectful manner. Genuine respect is more than just tolerance. Respect for diversity should extend to genuine appreciation for diversity and to a competent response to the diverse backgrounds and situations of team members.
- The right to engage in religion goes together with the right of not engaging in religion. Thus, religious and nonreligious people have the responsibility to respect those who differ from them and promote the common good of the program, society, and world.
- Therefore, our approach in these subjects should be respectful about such contentious issues and dilemmas.

Diversity & Inclusion

Political Belief Diversity



- Swimmers may bring their political beliefs to the pool. Political beliefs don't make someone a better swimmer. Coaches should strive to make the swimming environment as politically neutral as possible. Political issues and debates are better left out of swim practice environment, and the coach must find ways to respectfully quiet swimmers prone to engage in political conversations during the workout.
- Adult swimmers bring all their experiences, goals, opinions, emotions, and external influences to the pool and it is thereby important for every Masters coach to be flexible, knowledgeable, organized, and empathetic while maintaining proper decorum for the benefit of everyone.

Diversity & Inclusion – *Discussion Questions*

Social Class Diversity / Political Diversity /
Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity



1. What is the approximate socioeconomic makeup of your team, based on perceived income and occupation?
2. Do you find that your team attracts people from a certain socioeconomic background?
3. Do certain aspects of being a part of your team limit athletes in particular financial brackets from participating? This would include the monthly fees paid by members, the USMS annual membership fee, required apparel and gear, and location of facility.
4. How could your team create an environment where a potential athlete's socioeconomic situation would not deter them from joining?
5. What is your team policy regarding the discussion of political or religious topics? How do you mediate conversations to ensure all athletes feel included and respected?

Diversity & Inclusion

Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your Club



- U.S. Masters Swimming believes that successful implementation of diversity & inclusion ensures that colleagues, staff, coaches, members, volunteers, and athletes are valued, treated fairly, and are encouraged to succeed.
- To be clear, increasing and maintaining the numbers of under-represented individuals in our sport is necessary, but it is not nearly sufficient. We must maintain an inclusive culture that supports the retention and success of under-represented members across all boundaries.
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- Our competencies in understanding and embracing diversity are more and more important as our communities become more diverse.
- Diverse groups and diversity of thought produce a myriad of positive outcomes, including more innovative solutions to complex problems, more productive collaborations, and richer coaching experiences.

Diversity & Inclusion – *Discussion Questions*

Creating an Inclusive Culture at Your Club



1. Are the coaches and the leaders/owners of your club open to new ideas, regardless of where the new ideas come from?
2. Does your club have a documented complaint and/or conflict resolution process that allows anonymous reporting of issues and concerns?
3. Is your club able to attract a diverse collection of swimmers? Are you able to retain a diverse collection of swimmers?
4. How diverse is your coaching staff, in terms of the categories we discussed today? Are all of your coaches and on-deck personnel trained in diversity & inclusion?

Diversity and Inclusion

Upcoming detailed interactive sessions



- This session has focused on sharing high-level information about all aspects of Diversity and Inclusion.
- We will schedule a series of more focused and more detailed webinars, that will allow for more group participation, questions, and interactivity.
- You may choose to attend one or more of these sessions, based on your interests, your questions and/or issues that your club is dealing with.
- The more detailed, interactive sessions will be:
 - Racial Diversity & National Origin / Cultural Diversity
 - Gender Diversity & Sexual Orientation Diversity
 - Age & Physical / Mental Health / Intellectual / Neurological Abilities or Attributes Diversity
 - Social Class Diversity & Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity & Political Belief Diversity
 - Maintaining an Inclusive Culture at Your Club

Diversity and Inclusion

Conclusion / Next Steps



- Thank you for your time and attention today.
- Next Steps
 - Complete the follow-up survey
 - Sign up for more detailed session(s) on specific topics

Diversity and Inclusion

Additional Resources / Contact Info



- Additional Resources
 - Best Practices for Diversity & Inclusion:
<https://www.usms.org/about-usms/diversity-and-inclusion/how-clubs-can-improve-diversity-and-inclusivity>
 - Coach Interviews:
<https://www.usms.org/about-usms/diversity-and-inclusion/how-coaches-can-improve-their-clubs-diversity>
 - Diversity in Aquatics
<https://www.diversityinaquatics.org/team>
 - USMS Transgender Athlete Competition Policy
https://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/transgender_policy.pdf
 - USA Paraswimming
<https://www.teamusa.org/us-paralympics/resources>
- Contact Information
 - Sarah Welch (Chair of D&I Committee): sarahwelch@comcast.net
 - Jeff Commings: jeffswim@aol.com
 - Diana Triana: trianasaurus@yahoo.com

Diversity and Inclusion

Follow-Up Survey for Coaches



- *Before 9/1/2020, click this [link](#) to take the [online survey](#) (otherwise email D&I Chair [Sarah Welch](#) with questions/comments)*
- Are you interested in signing up for one or more of the more detailed interactive sessions?
 - Racial Diversity & National Origin / Cultural Diversity
 - Gender Diversity & Sexual Orientation Diversity
 - Physical / Mental Health / Intellectual / Neurological Abilities or Attributes Diversity
 - Social Class Diversity & Religious or Ethical Value System Diversity & Political Belief Diversity
 - Maintaining an Inclusive Culture at Your Club
- Do you have any questions that were not answered by today's Coaches Peer-to-Peer session?
- Are you dealing with any specific Diversity & Inclusion issues at your club that you need help with?