



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT[®]
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Student YMCA Advisors and Officers,

As we embark upon a new program year, the Kentucky YMCA is dedicated to ensuring our civic and service engagement programs reach as many Kentucky students as possible. The Y's mission statement affirms that we are for ALL, in order to strengthen the foundations of community. It is only through reaching all corners of our community that we can truly fulfill that mission. We are committed to opening our program doors to all who would like to explore the Y, and we're asking for your help in welcoming new community members.

It is easy to get into a groove, and roll along doing the same old thing, feeling pretty wonderful about the tried and true system. (*"Time to dust off that old Y manual, update last year's agenda, and do what we do best!"*)

Yet, what we at the Kentucky YMCA are continuously reminded that there is something quite brilliant and refreshing in purposefully doing things a little differently. A shake-up can breathe new life into already amazing things. The results are increased energy and creativity, new perspectives, bridges built, interpersonal connections broadened, and new people supported by our Y community.

As your Student YMCA year gets underway this month, I challenge you to look at your chapter and examine whether it represents your school's entire student body. Consider all of the possible dimensions of diversity (internal and external). How well does your Student YMCA Chapter hold up in regards to serving your entire school community? Chances are, there are holes; and therefore the foundation is not as strong as it could be. So, the next question is: how can you reach out to those who are not already in your midst, and encourage them to join you? What are some outreach opportunities you may have to spread the Y message and mission to a part of the student population you do not currently have represented?

- **Think the Y is just for government and volunteer enthusiasts?**
Well, evidence suggests that those who love STEM, arts/drama, languages, sports, technology, coding, outdoors, etc. also benefit and enjoy Y programs. Do you have students representing these interests?
- **Worried about affordability for those who may not be able to join other extracurricular clubs or activities?**
The Y is committed to financial assistance that affords opportunity to all Kentucky students, regardless of place or ability to pay.
- **Concerned that someone new to your community (or even the country), may not be up for Student Y programs?**
I can think of no better welcoming committee than our Y teens, and no more perfect way to get new students involved in the community than through the Student Y.
- **Not sure Y programs and conferences are designed for students with differing abilities?**
Together, we can help problem-solve possible logistical barriers to participation.

If I know one thing, it is that I can never guess who may or may not want to be a part of the Y. I am constantly surprised at the range of backgrounds, interests, and dimensions of diversity our community already contains. Unless we reach out, those who could enrich our programs even more may never get or take the chance.

Thank you for your dedication to our mission, and for all of the work you do to strengthen the foundations of your school and community. I am honored to work with the finest Kentucky has to offer in youth engagement and advocacy, and look forward to serving with you this year.

Yours in service,

Beth Malcom
President & CEO
Kentucky YMCA Youth Association



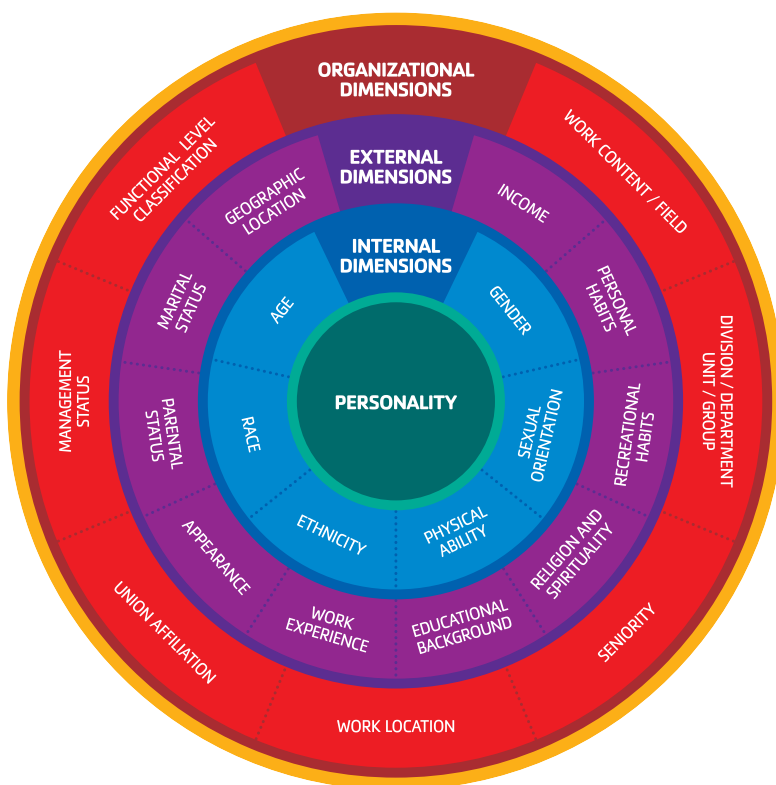
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ALL TOGETHER BETTER

The Many Dimensions of Diversity

The Y is made up of people from all walks of life who are joined together by a shared commitment to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

This Diversity Wheel diagram represents the various dimension of diversity. To truly be inclusive and welcoming to all, it is critical to understand the many factors that make up and influence an individual and their personality. If we hold too narrow a view of what constitutes diversity, we will miss opportunities to effectively engage, connect and serve ALL members of our communities.



Internal Dimensions include six core characteristics that all individuals possess. Each of these characteristics has a direct influence on how we experience the world around us.

External Dimensions include factors which help to shape who we are as individuals and provide additional connection points. These dimensions influence our moral and value systems, how we approach different situations as well as our expectations. In contrast with internal dimensions, many individuals have some control over external dimensions.

Organizational Dimensions contribute to how we experience our time with the Y. These dimensions help to shape how you approach your work and how you connect with others across the Y Movement.

For more information, visit the Diversity & Inclusion section on Exchange (yexchange.org) or call 800 872 9622.

From Implementing Diversity ©1996. Irwin Professional Publishing. The Diversity Wheel is adapted from Marilyn Loden's chart in her book "Implementing Diversity."