



Diversity and Inclusion

Presenters
Jeff Commings and Megan Shovlin

Agenda

- Introductions
- Breakout Exercise 1
- What does diversity and inclusion mean in U.S. Masters Swimming?
- Breakout Exercise 2
- Questions and Answers
- Resources



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Jeff Commings

- Head Coach, Dolphins of the Desert Masters, Tucson, AZ
- Arizona LMSC (1,329 members)
- Chair, USMS Diversity & Inclusion Committee since 2022
- USMS At-Large Director, Southwest Zone
- Many USMS and world Masters records
- USA National Team in the 1990s



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Megan Shovlin

- Atlanta Rainbow Trout Masters, Atlanta, GA
- Georgia LMSC (902 members)
- Georgia LMSC Diversity & Inclusion Chair
- Division I swimmer at Loyola University, Maryland, breaking six individual school records
- While living in Seoul, competed in the 2019 World Masters Championships in Gwangju, South Korea



Breakout session

What do you think diversity and inclusion means in U.S. Masters Swimming?

- Small groups of 2 to 4 people each
- Introduce yourselves (name, club, location), your LMSC, volunteer role, why are you attending this session

Group 1: PULL BUOY

Group 2: KICKBOARD

Group 3: GOGGLES

Group 4: PADDLES

Group 5: FINS



What does diversity and inclusion mean in U.S. Masters Swimming?



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Diversity

“The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.”

Oxford English Dictionary



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Diversity

Diversity in sports is not:

- Filling a quota
- Achieving “token representation”
- Finding parity in gender or race

Diversity in sports is:

- Celebrating the different backgrounds of all athletes, volunteers, and coaches
- Elevating opportunities for people in underrepresented backgrounds
- Fostering an environment in which talent from all walks of life is encouraged
- Promoting leadership that includes people from multiple backgrounds



Inclusion

“The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other (unrepresented) groups.”

Oxford English Dictionary



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Inclusion

Inclusion in sports is not:

- Only saying you support inclusion
- Allowing inherent bias to exclude people from various backgrounds
- A “program”

Inclusion in sports is:

- A value that teams should use to inform nearly every major decision
- Creating a policy that spells out the culture that teams practice daily
- Engaging with the community to understand barriers that might hinder participation



Breakout session

PULL BUOY GROUP SCENARIO: An athlete on your team wishes to be addressed using “they” and “them” pronouns. How do you relate this to the entire team, and how does it affect the way a coach talks to athletes as a group?

KICKBOARD GROUP SCENARIO: Your team is participating in Try Masters Swimming month. But, several older members (many of whom founded the team) resist it because it will “bring in the Tik Tok millennials.” How do you address this sentiment among your athletes?

GOGGLES GROUP SCENARIO: An athlete in a wheelchair wishes to join your team, but the facility present barriers that would prevent the athlete from accessing the locker room and exiting the pool. How does the team administration work with the facility staff to offer accessibility for the athlete?

PADDLES GROUP SCENARIO: A swimmer has moved to your area and wants to join your swim team. Their primary language is not English. How do you make them understand the practices and feel included in group activities?

FINS SCENARIO: A male USMS member comes to an awards ceremony or other social event appearing to be a woman, wearing a dress. How would you handle another member suggesting this person not be eligible to volunteer with the LMSC going forward?



How can you promote diversity and inclusion at the LMSC/local level?

Create a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator/Committee as part of the LMSC board!

The role is simple:

- Identify areas of concern in your LMSC that could use a stronger focus on promoting diversity and inclusion
- Help celebrate clubs or individuals who are doing great work in supporting D&I through social media posts (through the USMS or LMSC channels)
- Share best practices with coaches, club leaders, athletes, and volunteers through training and communication
- More information under “**Diversity and Inclusion Chair**” on the “**LMSC Volunteer Roles**” page at usms.org [D&I LMSC Coordinator Role](#)





Questions & Answers

Don't be afraid. Ask away.
(If you're thinking it, someone else
probably is too!)

Resources

For information on the LMSC Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator role: scan the QR code

[Diversity and Inclusion | U.S. Masters Swimming \(usms.org\)](https://www.usms.org/diversity-and-inclusion)

