The Critical Role of Communications in Diversity & Inclusion

Presented to America's Service Commissions:
August 17, 2020

HELLO!

Thenera Bailey, BusD

Kimberly Wise, MPH, MA

THE SISGI GROUP

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) continue to be both a priority and a challenge in today's workplaces. But aside from being a legal and moral obligation, diversity actually makes for more successful, profitable organizations and happier employees –

communication has a critical role to play.

Keep it Authentic

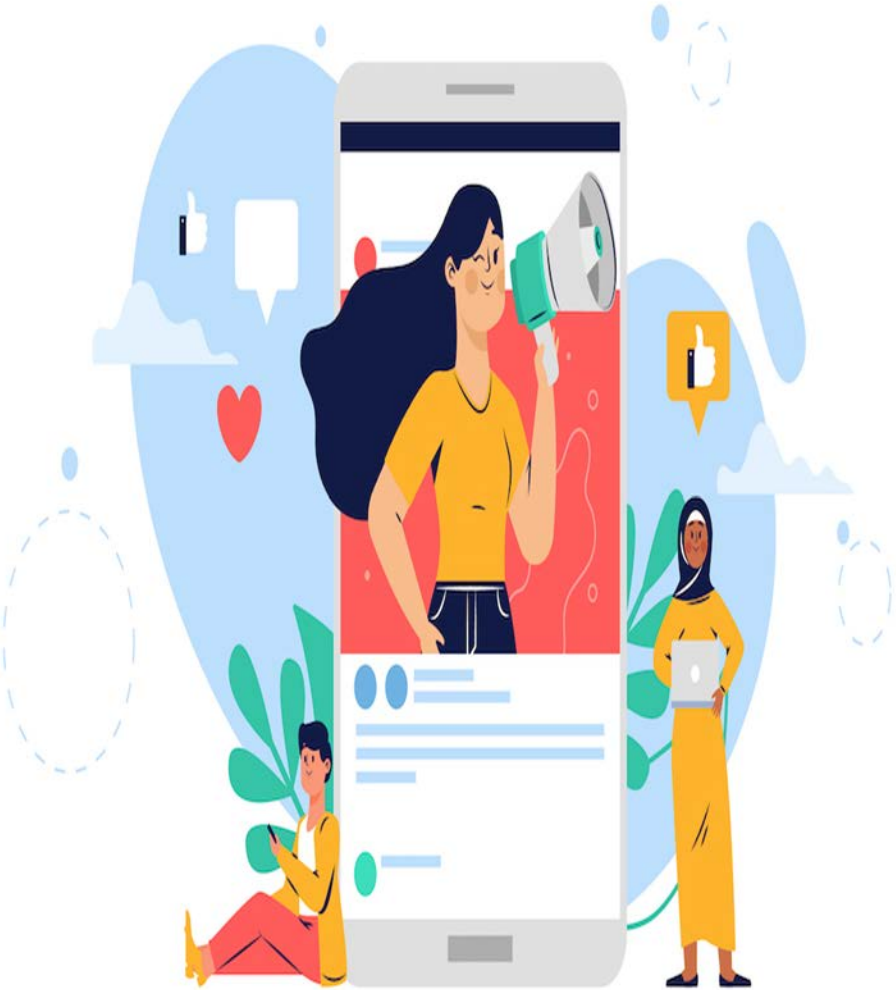
- Make D&I efforts relatable and authentic to not undermine your commitment
- Ensure it is communicated correctly and genuinely
- Tell the stories that resonate with your audiences and lean into their experiences to be inclusive

This will require a culture and mindshift

Good intentions doesn’t mean you won’t mistakes

1.
THINGS TO DO NOW

First steps to move towards inclusive communications and marketing



Guiding Statement

- Basic Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) statement for the company that informs all communications
- Includes goals and examples for clarification

Building JEDI Centric Communications

All communications and marketing materials produced should reflect the vision for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This means that materials should strive to include people of all ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious affiliations, abilities, and ages, for example, in a way that makes no assumptions about the receiver of the communications.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Inclusive Language

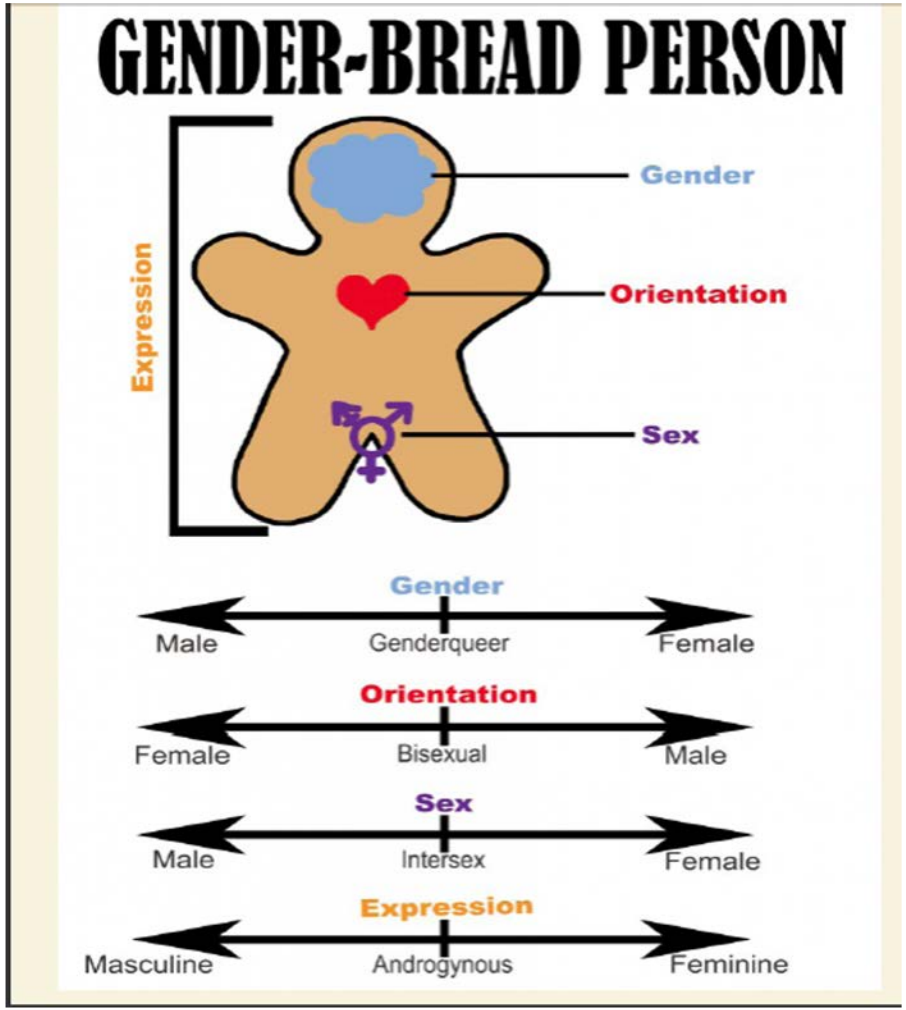
Visual or verbal communication that does not stereotype or demean people based on personal characteristics including gender, gender expression, race, ethnicity, economic background, ability/disability status, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

BIPOC

Black
Indigenous
People of Color

Race and Ethnicity

- Don't use **minority** and **minorities** (Historically Underrepresented Groups is better)
- Refer to racial and ethnic groups specifically
  - **Black/African American** – Black, not black
  - **Latinx** – ungendered alternative to "Latino" and "Latina
  - **Asian American/Pacific Islander** - Other variations include Asian Pacific American (APA), Asian Pacific Islander (API) and Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA)
- Important to learn learn tribes of indigenous people to truly be inclusive



Gender and Sexual Orientation

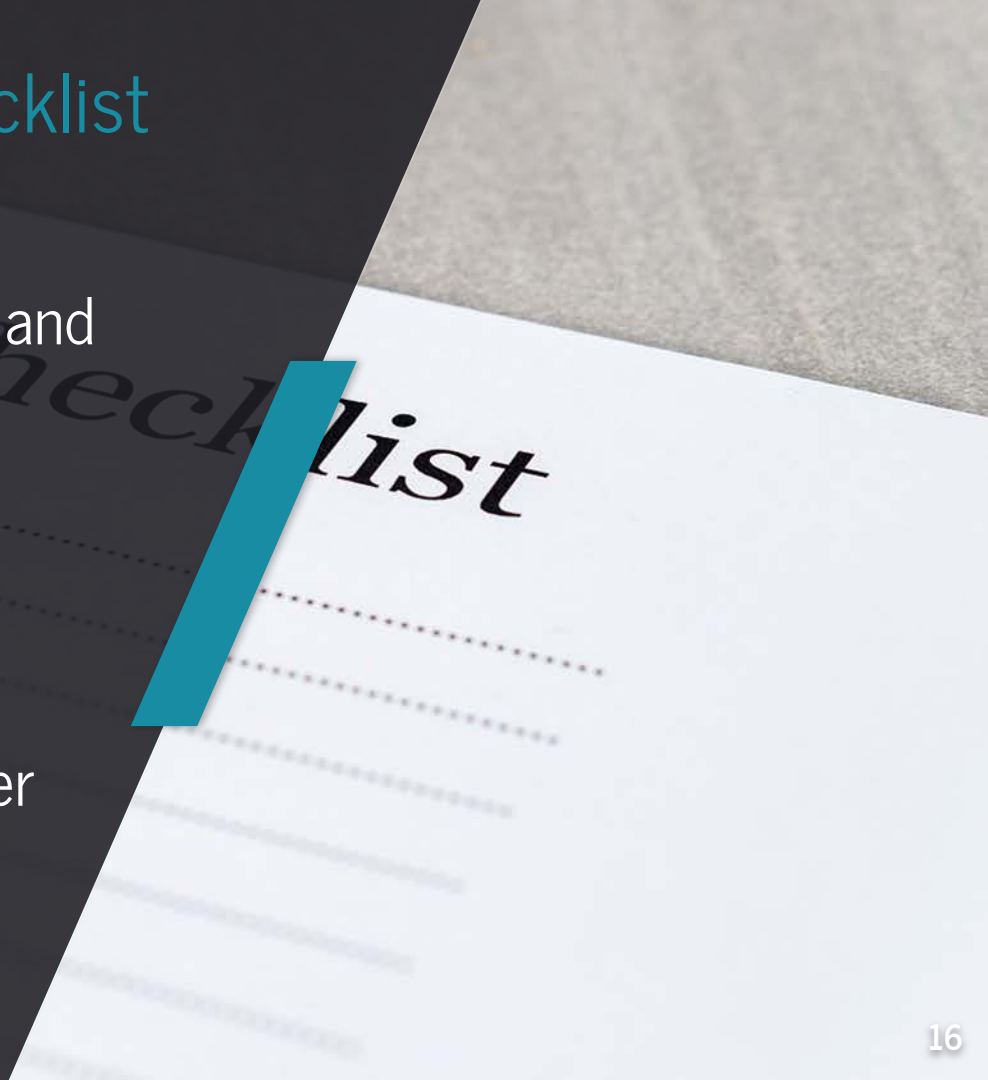
- ❑ Ask preferred pronoun
- ❑ Use gender-neutral terms
- ❑ Use they/them/their
- ❑ Only mention gender or sex when it is necessary to do so.
- ❑ **LGBTQIA/LGBTQ+** More inclusive than LGBT

Other Important Considerations

- ❑ Never use 'at-risk' (or alternatives) as an adjective
- ❑ Normalize Pronoun Use
- ❑ Use Census Data to Inform
- ❑ Avoid Tokenism
- ❑ Amplify Voices and Representation
- ❑ Partner instead of Savior

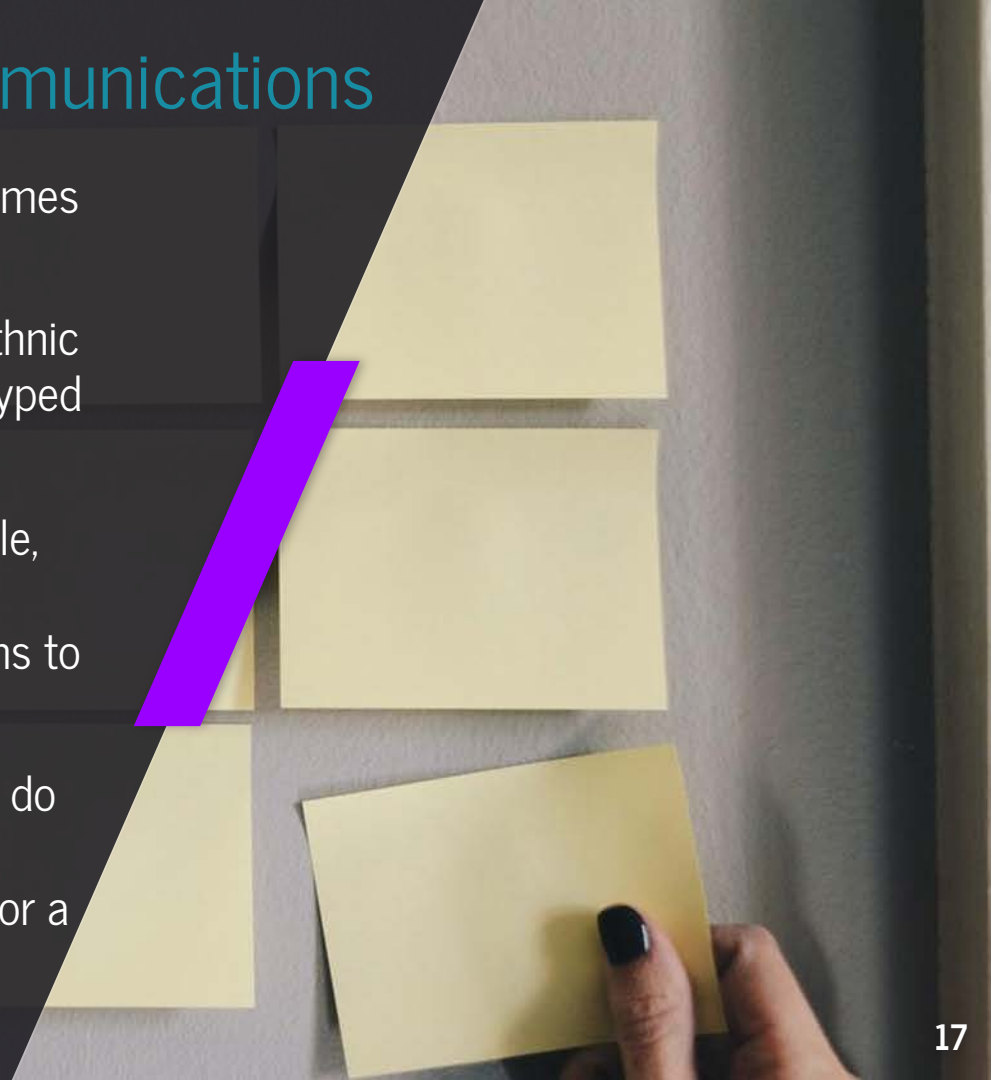
Create Communications Checklist

- ❑ Have I checked for bias?
- ❑ Does this reflect the community and the population?
- ❑ Does this follow our values and statements?
- ❑ Have I run this by the inclusion/ JEDI group?
- ❑ Am I speaking for someone rather than amplifying their voice?



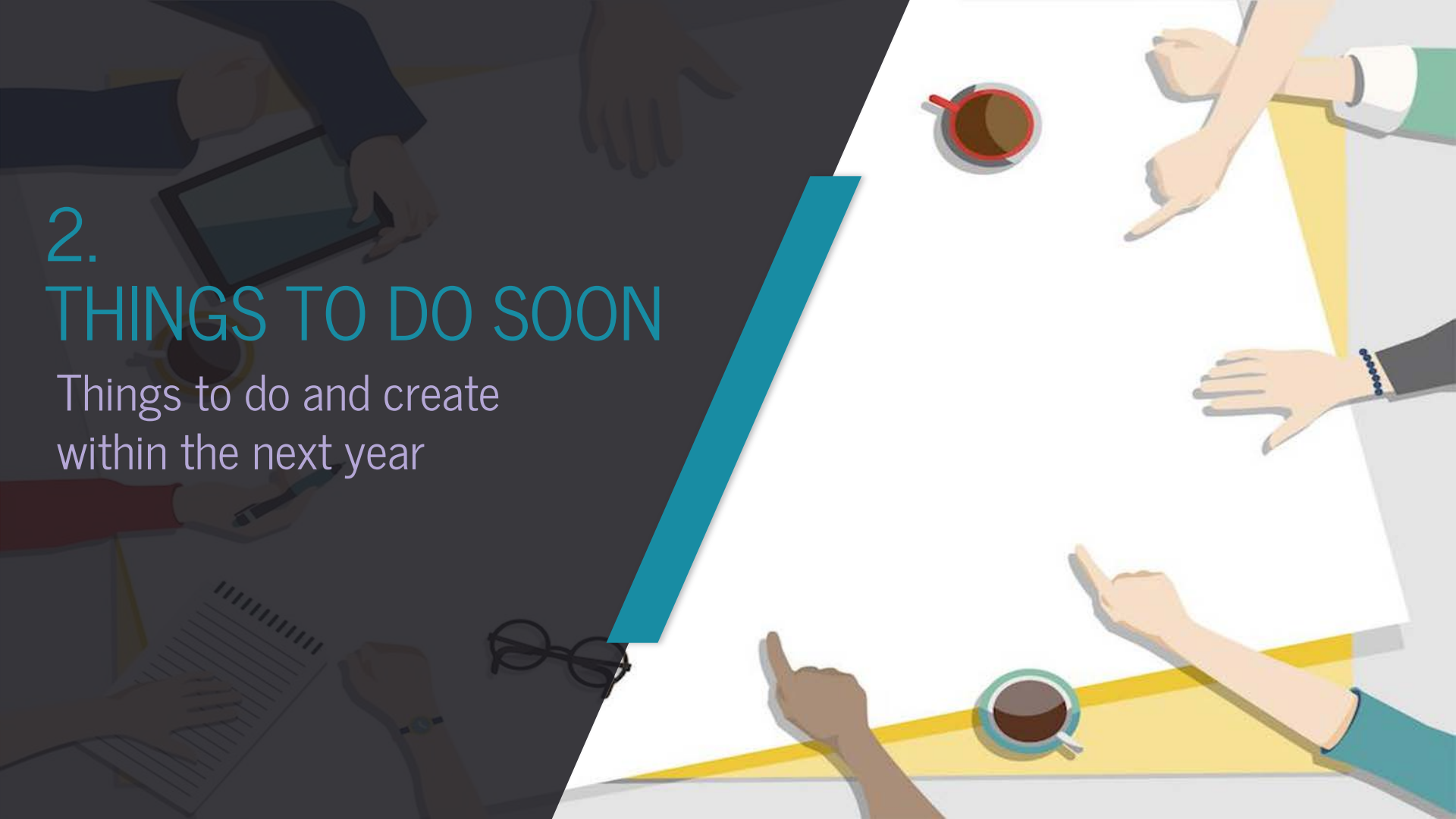
Run a Bias Check on All Communications

- Are the pronouns used an equal number of times (roughly)?
- Are the pronouns he and she, or racial and ethnic role models used in reference to non-stereotyped roles?
- Are "people referenced first" as in, for example, "people with diabetes," or have labels or conditions been used inappropriately as nouns to describe a group?
- Does someone on our team already know, or do we need to ask which term is preferred for national origin, race or gender identification for a specific audience?



2.
THINGS TO DO SOON

Things to do and create
within the next year

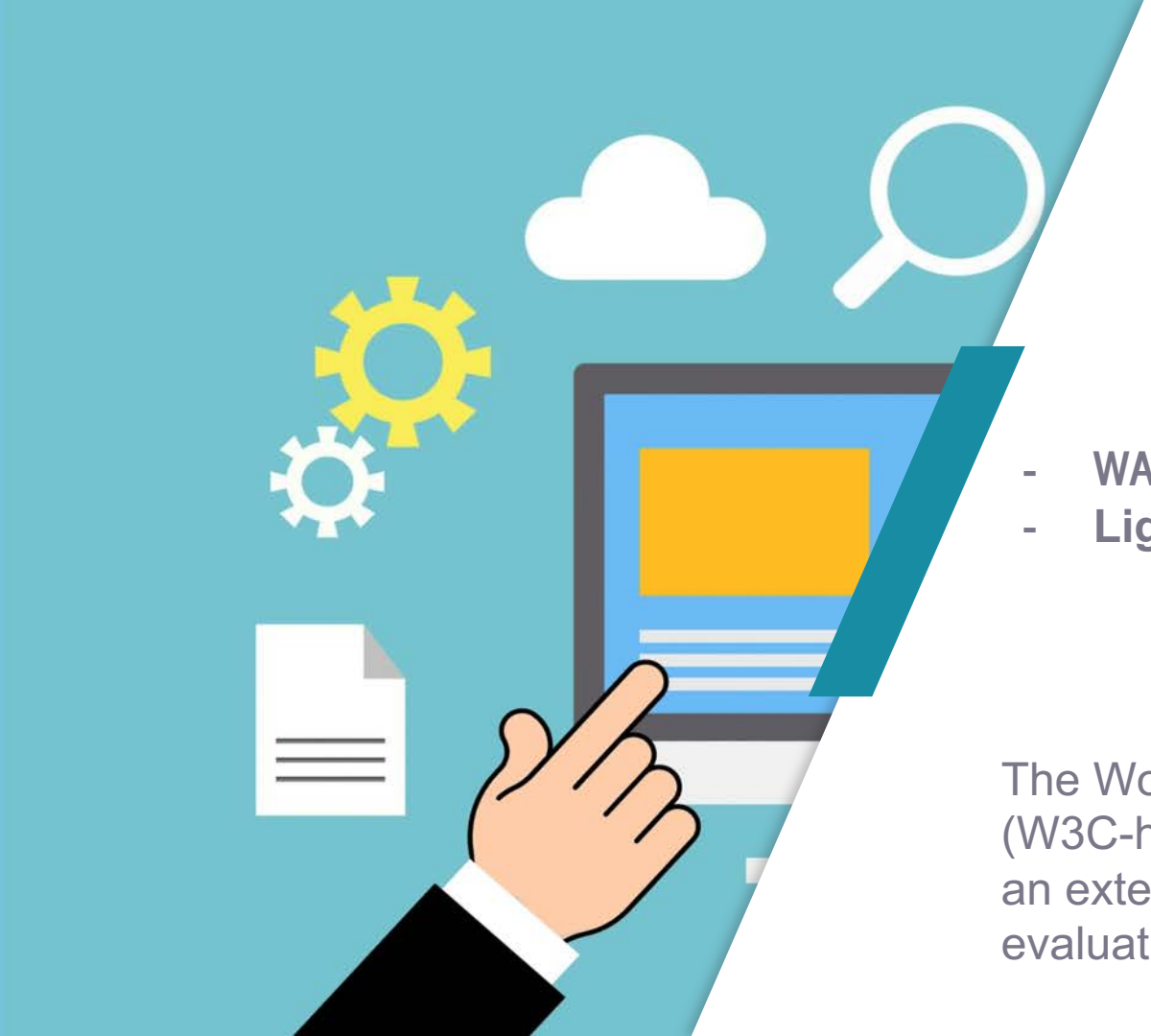


Create Communications Standards & Guidelines

- Focus group a values statement related to JEDI specific to your community
- Templates with images bank
- Website is reflective of the community and fully accessible for people with disabilities
- Standby statements in the event you make mistakes
- Inclusion Brand Guidelines

Work with your local Disability Association for best practices and resources in your community.

General Accommodations
https://askjan.org/



Websites/Blogs/Online Platforms Accessibility

- **WAVE** -
- **Lighthouse -**

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C-https://www.w3.org/) maintains an extensive list of web accessibility evaluation tools.

3.
Long Term Investment

True inclusion requires long term strategies and investment

JEDI Cultural Mindset

- All Staff Trained
- Lead With Inclusion and Anti-Racism
- Inclusion Committee with Local Stakeholders
- Mission and Values Guide Your View Towards Justice

Not One Size Fits All...

Follow-up with us for specific strategies for your community or organization

Questions?

Thenera Bailey, BusD

tbailey@sisgigroup.org

Kimberly Wise, MPH, MA

kwise@wisehealthcommunications.com