



NYWEA Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee

2022 In Review

2023 Plan and Goals

NYWEA Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee charges

- 1 • Foster a **sense of belonging among** all members of the water sector. Work with program committee to ensure there is content for all. Review NYWEA events to ensure that they are truly inclusive for all.
- 2 • Assume responsibility to make the **InFLOW** program a success. Establish contacts at schools, create background materials, form criteria for participants, and develop schedules and evaluations for participants at NYWEA events.
- 3 • Encourage **operator engagement**. Explore the challenges and seek answers to the general lack of engagement of operators within NYWEA (beyond Ops Challenge).
- 4 • Encourage engagement and look for **partnerships with other professional organizations** that represent underrepresented populations.
- 5 • Seek **partnerships with community organizations** in underrepresented neighborhoods and among underrepresented populations (community boards, youth groups, churches, NGOs, etc.)
- 6 • Promote **Equity within Civil Service** (addressing barriers to entry, visibility of announcements, and availability of exam preparation materials)

2020-2022 Accomplishments

- Winter 2020 Clearwater Mag – DE&I theme
- ~10-12 active members
- Maintained bi-weekly (2x/month) meeting schedule
- Pilot launch of NYWEA InFLOW at 2021 Spring Conference
- NYWEA DE&I Committee Introduction and Civil Service Panel Discussion at 2021 Spring Conference
- **DE&I themed discussion and activities during opening session of NYWEA 2022 Spring Conference**
- **Spring 2022 Clearwater Mag – Water Equity theme**
- **InFLOW STEMpath and CareerTech tracks at the NYWEA 2022 Winter and Spring Conferences**
- **JEDI Workshop (hybrid) featuring topics on Unconscious Bias and Neurodiversity – November 2022**
- **Incorporated WEF's DE&I toolkit/fact sheet resources available on the NYWEA website (DEI Fundamentals, Bias, LGBTQ+, Microaggressions, Racism, Inclusive Leadership, Inclusive Leadership Behaviors)**
- **10 scholars committed to February 2023 InFLOW STEMpath**
- **NYWEA is significantly more advanced than other MAs in the DE&I sector. We are one of the first MA's to have executed both a STEMpath and CareerTech InFLOW track!**

InFLOW 2023



2022's InFLOW participants tour NYC's Newtown Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) with Pam Elardo, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Wastewater Treatment New York City Department of Environmental Protection.



2022 InFLOW participants outside the Newtown Creek WRRF.



2022 InFLOW participants tour Onondaga County's Syracuse Metropolitan WRRF.

The New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA) presents the **Introducing Future Leaders to Opportunities in Water (InFLOW)** program for 2023. The program's aim is to enhance diversity and inclusion in the water work force by engaging scholars from under-represented demographics in NYWEA programs and conferences to increase their interest in and awareness of opportunities of work in the water sector, to increase probabilities for employment, and to aid long-term success in the sector. This scholarship program is modeled after the Water Environment Federation (WEF)'s InFLOW Program, which consists of two tracks: STEMpath and CareerTech.

Participation in the InFLOW program will include:

- Introduction to water sector careers;
- An assigned mentor to guide each scholar through the program;
- Opportunities to network with water professionals across New York state;
- Complimentary registration for the NYWEA 95th Annual Conference at the NYC Marriott Marquis in February or the Spring Technical Conference in Saratoga Springs, NY, in June;
- Site visit to a water resource recovery facility;
- Complimentary NYWEA and WEF student membership for 1 year; and
- Stipend for participation in the program.

This program is an excellent opportunity for students to meet potential employers, network with water/wastewater professionals across the state, learn about NYWEA student scholarship opportunities and explore different career paths within the water sector.

STEMpath

STEMpath invites promising college and university students from historically underrepresented groups in environmental programs to attend New York's largest water quality conference, the NYWEA Annual Meeting in New York City each February.

CareerTech

CareerTech partners with community-based organizations to expose scholars in job readiness programs to the variety of rewarding career possibilities in water quality.

If you know students that would be a good fit for the STEMpath program and would be interested in learning more about careers in the Water/Wastewater sector or the science of water quality, please email info@nywea.org with their contact information by November 15, 2022 for the February 2023 InFLOW Program!

NYWEA is a nonprofit, educational organization of over 2,500 water quality professionals representing diverse specialties, all working to enhance water quality and protect water resources. Learn more at NYWEA.org.



New York Water Environment Association, Inc.

ClearWaters

Striving for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Also inside: Introducing NYWEA's 93rd President

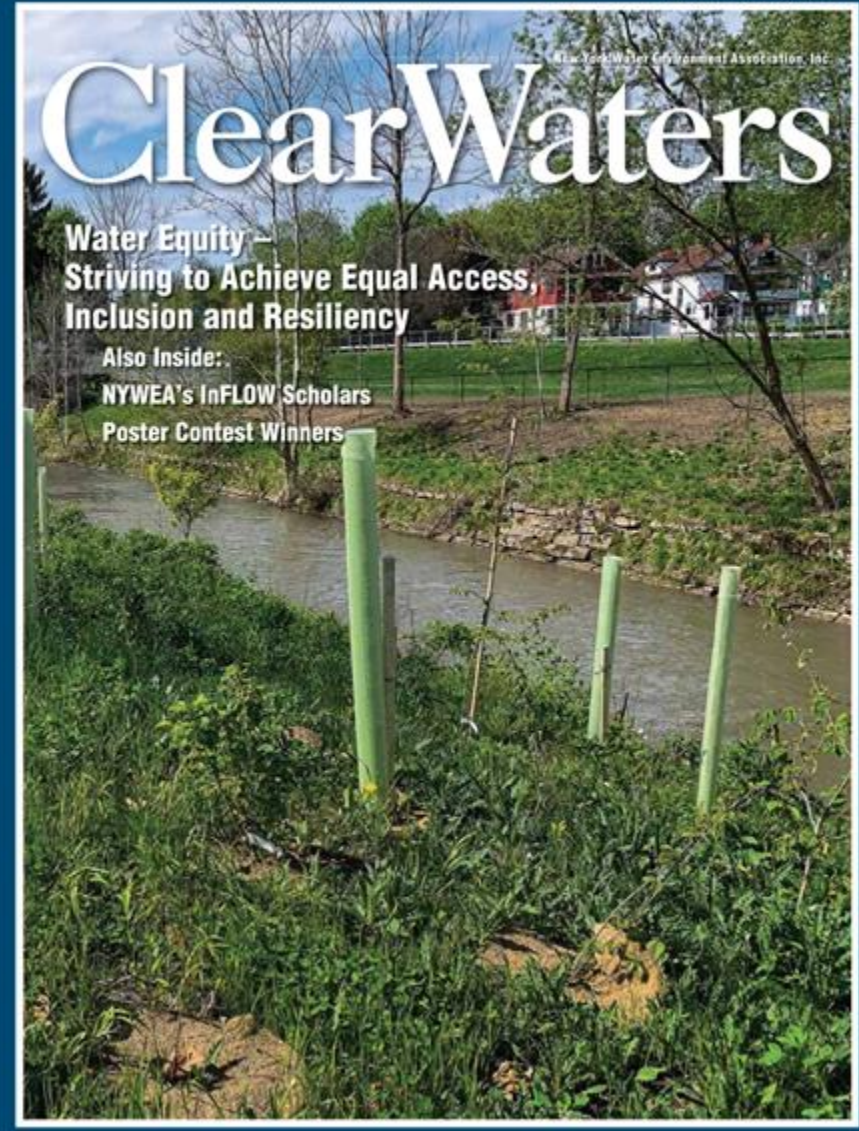


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ClearWaters

Water Equity –
Striving to Achieve Equal Access,
Inclusion and Resiliency

Also Inside:
NYWEA's InFLOW Scholars
Poster Contest Winners





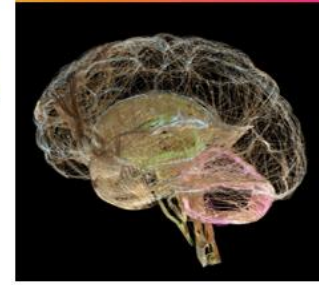
Thank you to all of the water professionals who participated in today's Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI) Workshop – both in person and virtually, co-hosted by NYWEA's DE&I Committee and the [Syracuse University CSCS / Environmental Finance Center](#). Special thanks also to our guest speakers, Dr. Sim J. Covington, Jr., Chief Diversity Officer at [Finger Lakes Community College](#) and [Beverli A. Marshall, DBA, ICMA-CM](#), General Manager at [Valley Sanitary District](#). We appreciate the valuable discussions held today and look forward to continuing the conversation!

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Workplace Neurodiversity: Appreciating the Differences

Dr. Beverli A. Marshall
ICMA-CM, CSDM



"Imagine a bunch of apples met an orange, but instead of just saying it's an orange, they called it an Apple Deficiency Syndrome fruit"
- Wendy Graves



Agenda

- What is **Neurodiversity**
- Recruiting
- Onboarding
- Ongoing Support
- Q & A
- Resources



Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workshop for Water Professionals

Presented by the [New York Water Environment Association](#) and the [Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center](#)

Agenda

November 15, 2022

- 8:45 Light breakfast and coffee available for in-person attendees
- 9:00 **Welcome & Introductions** Khris Dodson, Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center
- 9:05 **Working Together Across Differences: A Talk from Dr. Sim J. Covington, Jr.**, Chief Diversity Officer at Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC)
- 11:00 **Break**
- 11:15 **Neurodiversity in the Workplace:** Beverli A. Marshall, General Manager, Valley Sanitary District, Indio, CA
- 12:15 **Lunch & Reflection.** Lunch served for in-person attendees. Remarks from the NYWEA DE&I Committee Chairs [Walt Walker](#), [Water Equity Practice Leader](#), [Greeley and Hansen](#) and [Michelle Hess](#), 4A Water Resource Recovery Operator, City of Canandaigua. Reflections and networking encouraged.

Adjourn at 1pm.



WEF DE&I Toolkit/Factsheets

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Statement from NYWEA's Board of Directors (PDF)

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) created a series of downloadable fact sheets in PDF to help frame the DEI conversation and provide additional context and insights into different aspects of DE&I.

- DEI Fundamentals
- Bias
- LGBTQ+
- Microaggressions
- Racism
- Inclusive Leadership
- Inclusive Moderator Guide
- Inclusive Leadership Behaviors

We join WEF in our commitment to creating an organization that acknowledges and celebrates our unique differences including education, career background, age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability status, accent, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage and religion, parental status, marital status, veteran, personality type, political perspective, and all other characteristics of DE&I.

<https://www.nywea.org/SitePages/About/default.aspx>

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What is DEI?

Why does WEF need DEI?
The "case" for DEI typically falls into the categories of the business case and the moral imperative.

The **business case** refers to the positive outcomes in productivity and innovation associated with an increase in diversity. As the demographics of countries change, diversity is growing as a crucial element to better serving customer needs. WEF is no different in that our members expect us to benefit from the greatest diversity of perspectives to solve for water. For WEF, that means making room for newer and different voices and listening better.

The **moral imperative** for diversity is tied to the concept of equity (see owl). It's based on the idea that it is the right thing to do to alleviate some of the long-standing historical injustices that marginalized communities have faced over time. WEF members expect us to respect and value **all** our members, independent of any "dimensions of diversity." (see right).

WEF DEI Member Feedback
In a 2020 WEF DEI member survey we learned that although many of you value WEF's interactions, some of you don't always experience the respect you deserve. We are committed to learning and taking action.

People asking for change included engineers, operators, scientists, non-technical professions and emerging professionals as well as those from smaller utilities and companies. There are women fed up of proving their credentials, people of color tired of being asked where they come from and largely invisible LGBTQ+ members tired of homophobic jokes. We can do better.

You don't need a PE or PhD to be a valued WEF member or volunteer. Water is for all of us.

Adapted from Gunderswarter and Kowen's "Four Dimensions of Diversity"

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How to Shift Leadership Behaviors in Support of DEI

We asked WEF's Board of Trustees and DEI Committee Chairs to share their learnings and how they've shifted their behaviors to support DEI efforts. We've shared them in three separate steps that they've taken to integrate DEI concepts into their leadership activities, both in their work and their WEF volunteer activities. Who had they learned about creating deeper connection with people, challenging assumptions, and different ways in which to communicate or include other people in their project teams or meetings? Read on for their responses.

Examine your own biases.
To have bias is to be human, but that doesn't mean you have to let bias unconsciously drive your decisions. Take time to familiarize yourself with your own biases. Simply reminding yourself and others about bias can mitigate negative impacts of it. *—Tasnia*

"My feeling is, 'Who am I to lecture others about DEI?' so I candidly admit that **ten on enthusiastic advocate and learner** about it, but I have had a privileged upbringing and that is my responsibility to acknowledge this and let others understand that I am aware of it. *—Diego Reese, Board of Trustees*

"I am very intentional about saying 'y'all ve,' 'guys' and partner over a gendered description. Those are small inclusive ways to remind people everyone is welcome. It forces my mindset into the right frame for engagements in and outside our work. *—Steven Dringholt, House of Delegates Chair*

"I am more aware of microaggressions or unconscious bias, open trying not to make assumptions. *—Janet Hurley Caine, Board of Trustees*

Listen to understand.
I have definitely endeavored to be a much more understanding listener. I am more thoughtful in my listening to understand other than respond and to take time to process other than providing a primarily emotional instead of thoughtful response. *—Aimee Killeen, Vice President*

"In order to create an inclusive and equitable environment for others, I bring in allies who can help advocate for the collective benefit of the community. I also go out of my way to thank allies for supporting and providing feedback. Leaders who are not always appreciated and that their inclusive leadership behaviors are not always acknowledged. *—Megan Yoo Schneider, Co-Chair DEI Committee*

"We learned the importance of empathy. While being an understanding listener is important, it is also the opportunity to see DEI from a vulnerable perspective, we learned to step back and listen to all of us on a collective. *—Donnell Duncan, Co-Chair DEI Committee*

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Inclusive Committee Leadership

Why does WEF need inclusive leadership?

- ✓ To facilitate learning from each other
- ✓ To maximize professional development
- ✓ To network outside of your geography and company
- ✓ To drive innovation

Committee Leadership sets the tone for WEF work

Leadership in committees and taskforces sets the tone, and it directs the course of the work. It's a team effort and requires a good mix of people, experience and thought. **As leaders**, we must be willing to support all committee participants' learning styles, facilitate work meetings in which everyone can contribute, and develop group rapport that invites challengers to bring their concerns forward in order to innovate.

ASSESS YOURSELF AND YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Set the tone for a trusting environment. Do not look like you're the boss. You are not the expert on everything.
- Model awareness and self-management. Give a minute your own feedback by pointing and asking for feedback or advice.
- Listen to understand, not just to respond or defend. What can you learn from what is being said?
- Decide when you will speak first, and when it is better to speak last, to moderate your influence.

Facilitate Inclusive Meetings

Collaboratively develop agreed meeting norms, such as communication, decision making and application or invitation norms.

Determine how members join the group and make this information public and transparent.

Develop committee agreements that focus on mutual respect. For example:

- Invite diverse perspectives
- Listen before responding
- Raise hands and wait to speak until called
- One person speaks at a time
- Three before/one, or "four before more" rule of contribution in a meeting
- Post and remind participants of these agreements at the beginning of each meeting
- Consider appointing an upholder for agreement accountability
- Ensure in-person meetings are welcoming to newcomers. Consider stationing a greeter at the door and strategically placing leadership at different tables.

I have definitely endeavored to be a much more understanding listener. I am more thoughtful in listening to understand rather than respond and to take time to process rather than providing a primarily emotional instead of thoughtful response. *—Aimee Killeen, WEF Vice President*

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Race and Racism

What is race?
Race is a socially constructed categorization rooted in certain physical characteristics. Racial categorization was developed by European scientists as a means to justify colonization. We still center conversations around race because it has an outsized social impact in many countries with colonial histories.

What is racism?
Racism is a system that is built upon a hierarchy of power. Power is the ability to act or have influence over others.

Therefore, we can define racism as:

RACISM = RACIAL PREJUDICE + INSTITUTIONAL POWER

While the idea of race was invented without any real biological basis, over time it has been used to construct systems that subjugate and oppress. **Race was made very real through racism.** These systems continue in many aspects of society.

Misconceptions
There is no such thing as a "diverse" person. Groups can be diverse, not individuals. Even people who are color blind see light and dark. You can't not see skin color. Since racism relies on hierarchies of power, reverse racism does not exist by definition.

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LGBTQ+ (or LGBTQIA)

What are all the initials for?

Lesbians: women attracted to women
Gay: men attracted to men
Bisexual: people attracted to either men or women
Transgender: people whose gender identity and/or expression does not match their sex assigned at birth
Queer: umbrella term for people who do not identify as heterosexual or gender binary. Use with caution - originally a slur, now being reclaimed. Youth are more likely to identify as queer than older people.
Interact: term with six chromosomes, anatomy and/or a reproductive system not considered standard for either male or female
Awesab: doesn't experience sexual attraction
Ally: a straight or cisgender advocate/supporter

At work: addressing the "DOUBLE STANDARD"

Research by the HRC identified a common issue for LGBTQ+ workers. On the one hand, **80%** of all US workers agree it's normal to get to know each other by chatting about what you did at the weekend, and **80%** of non-LGBTQ+ workers also agree that their LGBTQ+ coworkers shouldn't have to hide who they are. **But, 59%** of non-LGBTQ+ workers think it's unprofessional to talk about sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. This is a double standard; non-LGBTQ+ workers may not recognize that we all have a sexual orientation and a gender identity.

How was your weekend? We celebrated Julie's birthday with the kids.
Great - we saw Tom's family and for once his Dad didn't make any anti-gay jokes!

Reflection: Does this Monday morning co-worker exchange seem inappropriate to you or do you, as a LGBTQ+ person, want to be able to talk about their families just like you?

A Workplace Divided, HRC Foundation, 2018 | Gallup: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329708/gallup-identification-issues-label-estimates.aspx>

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Microaggressions

Based on work of Dr. D. Sue and Dr. K. Nadal

Types of Microaggressions

Microinvalidations
Negating the feelings and experiences of others or minimized peoples.

Microinsults
Rude or discriminatory snubs or actions that can be slightly covert.

Microassaults
Explicit discriminatory comments or actions meant to harm the target.

Race
"Where are you from?" "No, where are you really from?"
"You don't sound black"
"You're so articulate"
"She's so aggressive" (to a woman of color).
"Can I touch your hair?"
"When I look at you, I don't see color." [This denies the very real daily experience of being treated differently.]

- Misidentifying people of some race/ethnicity
- Mistaking someone of color for a hospitality professional rather than a fellow attendee or staff member at a gathering.
- Failing to lean in to pronounce or continuing to mispronounce people's names after they have corrected you.
- Disregarding different religious traditions or their details

Meritocracy as a Microaggression
I believe the most qualified person should get the job.
Implies that job criteria are being ignored to give advantages to women or people of color. In reality, employment demographics are changing very slowly.

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Unconscious bias

What is it, why should we care and what can we do about it?

Bias can be explicit in that we are aware when we are expressing them, or implicit, that operate outside of our day-to-day awareness. **Unconscious bias is another term for implicit bias.**

Jennifer Eberhardt writes that "implicit bias is a kind of disturbing lens that's a product of the architecture of our brain and the disparities in our society."

To have bias is to be human

We all have preferences, or biases, based on our life experiences and belief systems. Humans are hardwired to be on the alert for danger, and just as we tend to feel safe around people we sense are familiar, we also tend to feel wary around those we perceive as different.

We might have bias about someone's accent, language or clothing choices. We might trust someone quickly because they remind us of an old friend. We might assume they are competent because they are tall, or incompetent due to their weight.

Why do we have bias?
Our brains create simplicity from chaos. They are constantly processing vast amounts of data, making meaning of different stimuli so that we can take action. The brain's job is to keep us safe by detecting patterns, avoiding danger and allowing us to thrive in the world. Over time, the brain notices patterns and categorizes these to remember what has kept us safe, and what has caused us pain. These categories become biases.

How can we mitigate against bias?

- When making decisions about people, choose measurable, consistent criteria and stick to them.
- Become aware of your own personal biases and acknowledge where you have a preference before making a decision.
- Talk openly about team biases, ask a group to identify any "biasing" team vulnerabilities.
- Consider a bias "busting" prep meeting before important discussions, to remind the team of known biases and be prepared to pose and reflect.

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Moderator Guide

What's my role?

You're in charge! Moderators set the tone for conference sessions. As a thoughtful, skilled moderator, you create an inviting space for engagement, learning and connection that enhances participants' experience.

Own the Room:
Your confidence will set others at ease. Intuition is infectious: a genuine interest in the speakers and audience will quickly create a positive environment. Don't worry if you don't know too much about the topic; your job is to be a confident and capable host, not the expert.

Why is this important?

- Our decision making is not as objective as we think it is.
- We tend to expect people to agree with us and to hold similar sets of assumptions. If they do not, we may miscommunicate.

"Neither our evolutionary path nor our current culture dooms us to be held hostage to bias. Change requires a kind of open-minded attention that is well within our reach."
Jennifer Eberhardt, PhD

Be prepared:

- Check out the space early
- Make sure the speakers know where it is!
- Remind speakers to minimize jargon
- Introduce yourself to the Room Monitor

Own your biases, we all have them. Who are you more likely to greet or call out who you don't? Who does discomfort might you need to move through? How can you be a role model?

Consider power dynamics in the room - one there who might expect to be called upon? How will you manage them, so they don't dominate the Q&A?

Encourage a conversational tone by asking the presenters what excites them about their topic. Be prepared with a question or two that the speaker would appreciate being asked.

Speak introduction Essentials
Practice name pronunciation, confirm their pronouns and ask what they care about in their bio. Give a few highlights only!

Warm Up the Room:
Create a welcoming environment

As the moderator, it's your job to keep the session flowing. That doesn't mean the loudest people talking from start to finish. Welcome attendees from all backgrounds, technical and non-technical and foster connections by asking questions as the audience is gathering.

Who do we have in the room today? Any first-time attendees? Students? Emerging Professionals? Operators? New to the water industry? International?

- Have folks introduce themselves to their neighbors to break the ice - this is effective
- Encourage people to fill the front rows first. It helps speakers engage with the audience.
- Explain the format up front, so that folks know when they can engage with questions

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2023 Plan, Goals, & Action Items

- ❖ Reinforce the “**Why**” in the messaging for the general member base – **WHY** DE&I and the Committee’s work is important and **valuable** for the organization and industry, and how/why it is multi-dimensional
- ❖ Position new leaders (chairs) in waiting for the Committee
- ❖ February 2023 InFLOW STEMpath (NYC)
- ❖ DE&I / EJ panel session at WNYWEA GBEC in March 2023
- ❖ June 2023 InFLOW CareerTech (Saratoga Springs)
- ❖ DE&I as an available session topic/abstract, starting at Spring 2023 conference. Collaborate w/ NEWEA DE&I Committee for Joint Meeting ideas.
- ❖ Expand InFLOW with budget support from WEF grant and funding from the local chapters.
- ❖ Apply for WEF Grant to secure long-term InFLOW funding
- ❖ Up to two (2) standalone events facilitated by DE&I committee
 - Ex: empathy mapping, Overview of the WEF DE&I toolkit, Women of Water, JEDI Workshop
- ❖ Connecting in-person/virtually with other committees on a periodic basis to learn about their activity and share overlapping of goals
- ❖ Encourage more member storytelling – make DE&I / JEDI become personal for you
- ❖ Civil Service one-page informational flyer (for external distribution)
- ❖ Connect w/ other DE&I MAs for learning exchange
- ❖ YP Committee collaboration:
 - ❖ Engaging the YP Committee to encourage recruiting operators and recent grads to the YP committees at the chapter level
 - ❖ Support Career fair and mock interviews at conferences.
- ❖ Encourage conference attendance and participation from AWWA, NSBE, SHPE, SWE, and NY environmental justice organizations.
- ❖ Recommendations to the Board of organizational support to drive actions for DE&I charges: budget, external outreach to organizations, technology, **accountability** for other committees to engage with DE&I committee (to discuss shared objectives/actions)

You belong here.

