The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

Diversity is a reality created by individuals and groups from a broad spectrum of demographic and philosophical differences. It is extremely important to support and protect diversity because by valuing individuals and groups free from prejudice, and by fostering a climate where equity and mutual respect are intrinsic.

"Diversity" means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

* Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment.
* Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own.
* Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
* Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
* Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

Diversity includes, therefore, knowing how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to age, ethnicity, class, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, as well as religious status, gender expression, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, and work experiences. Finally, we acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but also can be fluid, we respect individual rights to self-identification, and we recognize that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.

<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition.html>