



# THE INTERNATIONAL FOCUSING INSTITUTE

*Building on the work of Eugene T. Gendlin since 1979*

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Approved by the Board of Directors, December 2022

*This statement was written by the Board of Directors of The International Focusing Institute (TIFI), with input from our members. It is a statement intended to cover the governance and operations of TIFI. While it is not binding on our members, the Board hopes that all members of the community will join us in the spirit of this statement.*

It is inherent to Focusing to respect all persons as individual human beings. The heart of experiential listening is to put aside assumptions and pre-conceived ideas as much as possible, in order to respect a person for who they are. Each person is influenced by their various identities, situations and communities but never defined by them. Historically and to this day, there are many groups and individuals that are discriminated against. Some of the significant ones include those based on sexual orientation and gender, age, race and ethnicity, national origin, economic status or caste, religious affiliation and beliefs, appearance, and physical ability or disability. We recognize that none of us is immune to biases which make us elevate one group above another. Therefore, we strive to be ever more conscious of our individual and group prejudices.

TIFI is an international non-profit organization with members in more than 50 countries. We are richly diverse internationally. We aspire to be still more diverse, equitable and inclusive, and to make our operations, governance and programming ever more open to all people. Rigid social structures that do not honor the breadth of human diversity are antithetical to our work.

Our efforts include:

- Seeing diversity, equity and inclusion as ongoing processes, and remaining open to what might be more fitting to the moment, endeavoring afresh as new understandings emerge
- Being willing to stay with the discomfort that can arise when we are confronted with our failure to be diverse, equitable and inclusive

- Navigating through any tensions which arise in a compassionate way, using our tools of Focusing and Thinking at the Edge
- Seeing diversity, equity and inclusion as connected to our mission “to keep Focusing alive and available to everyone”
- Intentionally expanding offerings to meet the needs of underrepresented constituents
- Reducing barriers to participation for those living on low incomes and those with disabilities
- Learning to become more aware of biases, unquestioned assumptions and habits which may create unwelcoming or unsafe spaces