



Barriers to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Esports

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Below are highlighted talking points developed during a DEI Roundtable discussion. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a starting point for talking inclusivity in competitive gaming.

Awareness

- Lack of fundamental understanding of the experiences marginalized genders, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Lack of understanding around generational issues that create barriers
- Lack of discussion around privilege

Generational

- Lack of Access
 - Computers
 - High Speed Internet
 - Esports Programs
- Lack of knowledge/education even if you have resources
 - I.E. giving out tablets to elementary schoolers is useless unless provided with education on how to use them

In Game

- Stereotyped roles
 - Women into support roles
 - People into the same gender/background as themselves
 - Linguistic profiling in voice chat
 - Higher pitched voices
 - Other languages
- Lack of representation in characters/avatars
 - Hyper-sexulization of female characters
 - Exoticization of POC characters
 - Relegation to non-main character roles or tokenism

Competition

- Skill level perception
 - Seen as less skilled because of their identifiers
 - I.e. Require more protection



QUEER WOMEN OF ESPORTS

- **Stereotype Threat**
 - May have the same skill level, but do not participate because they believe themselves not as good as their counterparts
 - Won't enter tournaments
 - The higher they are aware of the stereotypes, less likely to participate
- **Accessibility of competitions**
 - Accessible
 - Finances involved in travel
 - For youth programs, chaperone availability

Cancel Culture

- **Reactionary**
- **Not focused on growth and learning**
- **Give space for people who have caused harm to learn and the space to repair**
 - But do not rely on those who have been harmed to teach
- **Provide a judgement free space to learn**
 - Once again, not reliant on those who have been harmed or marginalized

Teams

- **Attitude**
 - "Just be cool"
 - "Don't rock the boat"
- **Recruitment**
 - Methods of recruitment
 - Language
 - Area of the school
- **Lack of Code of Conduct**
- **Access to Reporting**
- **Pronouns**
- **Gaming**
 - Lack of representation in characters
 - Last minute adds to make the LGBTQ+ community "happy"
 - Hyper-Sexualization of female characters

Institutional

- **Culture**
 - Hiring practices reliant on who you know
 - Navigation of workplaces is reliant on knowledge of "white culture"
- **Lack of overall governing body**
- **No universal training/accreditation for DEI consultants**



QUEER WOMEN OF ESPORTS

- Focus on “Tier-Level Esports”
 - Means a focus on PC games, less FGC participation
- Short-sighted/reactionary protocols and programs
 - Lack of follow through
 - Only focus during Black History Month or Pride Month
 - Reactionary to internal issues or accusations, rather than genuine desire to improve
- Lack of developer support
 - FGC made the scene, not the developers
 - Support versus neutral versus actively shutting things down

Research

- Gaming-focused
 - Not esports
- Female-focused
 - Which inevitably means white, straight cis-female focused
- Location focused
 - US, S. Korea
- Socio-economic focused research
 - Studies that look at information of PC game users will be drastically different than those who primarily game on consoles