



# THE BRIEN CENTER

Diversity • Equity • Inclusion • Belonging

Your courage, our care.

## NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is an annual observance originating in the United States, where it is also known as African-American History Month. It has received official recognition from governments in the United States and Canada, and more recently has been observed in Ireland and the United Kingdom. It began as a way of remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora.

Students and faculty at Kent State University first proposed Black History Month in February 1969. The first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State a year later, from January 2 to February 28, 1970. President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month in 1976, during the celebration of the United States Bicentennial. He urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

The 2024 theme is "African Americans and the Arts" spanning the many impacts Black Americans have had on visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more.



### INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Black and African American are not always interchangeable. African American is typically used to refer to descendants of people from Africa who were enslaved. Some people prefer the term Black because they do not identify as African and/or American, because they can't trace their lineage back to Africa or because being Black isn't just about race, it's an entire culture. Some still identify as Black and African American and use the terms interchangeably for themselves, depending on the situation. Ultimately, people have different ways of identifying. A best practice is to listen for how someone identifies themselves and adjust your language accordingly.

### INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

International Transgender Day of Visibility (often referred to as TDOV or Trans Day of Visibility) is an annual event occurring on March 31st dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebration of their contributions to society. The event was created by transgender activist Rachel Crandall of Michigan in 2009 as a reaction to the lack of LGBTQ+ recognition of transgender people, citing the frustration that the only well-known transgender-centered day was the Transgender Day of Remembrance, which mourned the murders of transgender people, but did not acknowledge and celebrate living members of the transgender community. The first International Transgender Day of Visibility was held on March 31, 2009. It has since been spearheaded by the U.S.-based youth advocacy organization Trans Student Educational Resources.

Joe Biden officially proclaimed March 31, 2021, as a Transgender Day of Visibility, proclaiming in part, "I call upon all Americans to join in the fight for full equality for all transgender people." Biden was the first American president to issue a formal presidential proclamation recognizing the event.



### CODE-SWITCHING

The practice of changing the way one expresses themselves culturally and linguistically based on different parts of their identity and how they are represented in a group. It's important to recognize that for people of color, and the African American community especially, who have not been traditionally able to be their authentic selves at work, code-switching has been a survival tactic.

Questions/Comments/Suggestions for the DEI Committee?  
Contact Us: DEI@briencenter.org