

Inclusive Language for Internal and External Communications

(Print, Digital and Verbal)

Whether your message is printed, tweeted, emailed, blogged or spoken, follow these guidelines to make sure your words resonate and connect with your intended audience. Inclusive language speaks to everyone!

- 1. Choose universal terms:** use terms and examples that are universal or that reflect a wide range of realities (e.g. Use “parent or guardian” instead of “mother and father”; use “staffing the table” instead of “manning the table”).
- 2. Choose terms that fully value people:** avoid terms that stereotype or diminish or that are based on a socially constructed gender/sex binary (e.g. Use “athletes” or “volunteers” depending on the context instead of “ladies and gentlemen”. Avoid referring to children and especially to adults as “girls” or “boys”).
- 3. Use people-first language:** recognize the person instead of defining someone by a single characteristic (e.g. Use “Directors” instead of “the Muslim Directors”. Use “coach” instead of “female coach”). If a characteristic is required and relevant then refer to it as a characteristic rather than defining the person by it (e.g. “the Directors on the Board who are Muslim”; the “coach who is female”).
- 4. Use the term(s) preferred by the person or group:** respect and use the term(s) preferred by the individual or group of that identity (e.g. People of Indigenous descent may prefer Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Native or something completely different). Ask and learn.
- 5. Use inclusive examples:** ensure that examples given are as inclusive as possible (e.g. choose names that reflect a variety of ethnicities, faiths and genders, like Fatima, Xiaoping and Suzanne).
- 6. Say individual’s names properly:** correctly pronouncing an individual’s name is a sign of respect. There are websites where you can hear the proper pronunciation of people’s names (e.g. check sites like www.hearnames.com). Listen, repeat, practice out loud.
- 7. Be an ally:** speak up when people use devaluing or discriminatory expressions and terms. Help and support them to use inclusive language too.

Respectful



People-First



Reflect
Widest Variety
of Identities
Possible

