

Diversity & Inclusive Language

Best Practices for Effective and Respectful Communication

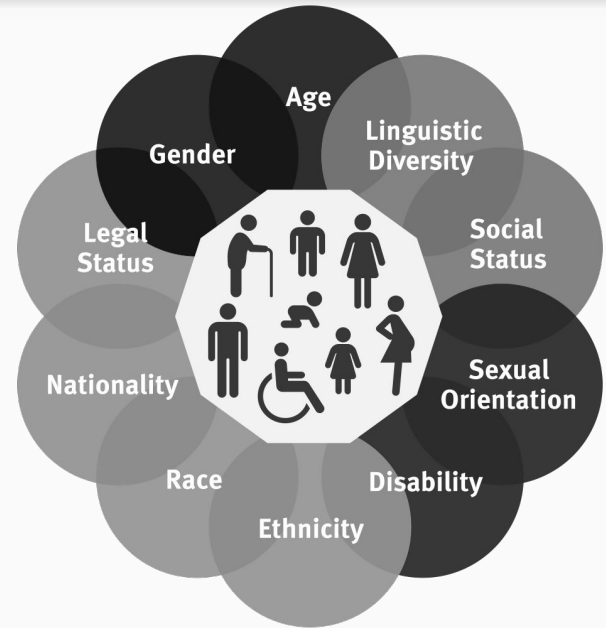
Presented by: Kaitlyn Martinez

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What is Diversity & Inclusive Language?

- **Diversity and Inclusive Language** involves using words and expressions that respect and acknowledge the varied identities, experiences, and backgrounds of individuals. This includes recognizing differences in race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, and more.
- **Valuing diversity and using inclusive language promotes inclusion, offering diverse perspectives that help drive innovation and success in the workplace.**
- Embracing diversity and practicing inclusive language ensures that all individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered.



A photograph of three office workers in a meeting. A man in a white shirt is on the left, looking towards two women. The woman in the center is smiling and looking at the man. The woman on the right is looking at a computer monitor. The background is a dimly lit office with computer monitors.

Inclusive Language for Race & Ethnicity

Incorrect: "The Hispanic employee."

Correct: "The Latino/Latina employee" or "The employee of Latinx descent."

Explanation: "Latino" and "Latina" are gendered terms that refer to people of Latin American origin, while "Latinx" is a gender-neutral term that is increasingly used to be inclusive of all gender identities. It's important to respect how individuals identify themselves and be open to using the terminology they prefer.

Using Inclusive Language for Age

Why This is Important:

Age should be seen as an asset, reflecting a person's experience and expertise, rather than something that should define or limit them.

It's always best to focus on **experience**, **role**, or **career stage** rather than age, as this avoids stereotypes and highlights the value each employee brings.



For Young Workers:

Avoid: "Young worker" or "Millennial worker" (which can be overly general and dismissive).

Correct: "Early-career employee" or "Entry-level employee."



For Middle-Aged Workers:

Avoid: "Middle-aged worker" (can sound limiting or vague).

Correct: "Mid-career employee" or "Experienced employee"



For Older Workers:

Avoid: "Old worker" or "Senior worker" (can feel disrespectful or imply limitations).

Correct: "Veteran employee" or "Seasoned professional."



Inclusive Language for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Gender Neutrality:

- Use **they/them** when unsure of pronouns or referring to a hypothetical person.
- Avoid gendered terms like "guys" for mixed-gender groups.
- Replace "husband/wife" with **spouse** or **partner**.
- When in doubt, ask for preferred pronouns.

Descriptive Language:

- Use **gender identity** and **sexual orientation** as modifiers, not nouns (e.g., transgender person, cisgender person, lesbian woman).
- Avoid terms that assume sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

Incorrect: "Opposite sex."
Correct: "Different sex."

Incorrect: "You guys."
Correct: "Everyone"

Using Inclusive Language for Disability



Incorrect: "Confined to a wheelchair."

Correct: "Uses a wheelchair."

Incorrect: "The disabled" or "handicapped."

Correct: "People with disabilities."

- Use **person-first language** that focuses on the individual before the disability.
- Avoid derogatory or limiting terms, and be sensitive to the diverse types of disabilities people may experience.
- **Focus on abilities, not limitations.** Every person is whole, regardless of ability.
- **Respect individual preferences**—when in doubt, ask how someone identifies.
- **Use empowering language**

Embracing Inclusive Language for a Better Workplace

- Inclusive language promotes **respect, fairness, and equality** in communication.
- It fosters **respect**, creates a **welcoming environment**, and helps to promote **mutual understanding** in the workplace and society.
- By practicing inclusive language, we contribute to **respectful and collaborative** workspaces.

"Words shape our culture—let's use them to uplift and include."