Inclusive Language Guidelines

Introduction

Overview

The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM) is committed to providing an intentionally inclusive learning, teaching, and working environment that is respectful and free from discrimination and harassment for all members of the CCNM community. In using language that is free from words, phrases, tones, or images that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped, or discriminatory views of particular people or groups of people, we are committing to use inclusive language.

The *Inclusive Language Guidelines* (Guideline) is part of a larger commitment toward realizing the College's goal that all members of the CCNM community are respected for their worth, dignity, integrity, and capacity, and that equitable treatment of all persons – regardless of age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, ethnicity, disability, family and marital status, gender, gender expression and identity, political belief, race, or sexual orientation – is in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *British Columbia Human Rights Code.*

Creating and maintaining a respectful and inclusive educational and workplace environment is a shared responsibility in the CCNM. Each of us has a responsibility to be sensitive to the diversity of our audience, whether talking informally with one person, drafting official College documentation (e.g., brochures, student guides), speaking in a lecture, or facilitating a meeting. We all have a responsibility to ensure that the content of our language is free of sexist, racist, homophobic, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive messages.

This Guideline thus has two main purposes:

- To assist faculty, staff, and students in using inclusive language as per the College's *Inclusive Language Policy.*
- To encourage awareness and educate members of the CCNM community about appropriate language use.

Language is a powerful and dynamic tool – it shapes and reflects our changing realities. Language is also not neutral. Rather, it is reflective of the identity of the communicator and

the culture and society in which it is used.

Language is constantly evolving in response to changes in culture and society as a whole. While CCNM will make every reasonable effort to update this document with the most current and appropriate methodology, this Guideline should not be treated as definitive or finite.

Definition of Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is sometimes referred to as non-discriminatory language. Inclusive language is language that is free from prejudice, stereotypes, or discriminatory views of specific people or groups. This means using language that does not deliberately or inadvertently exclude people from feeling accepted. It also means using language that recognizes all people as valued and equal participants in society.

Language is not always intended to exclude a person or a group, but it may unintentionally have that effect. It is important to acknowledge that many offensive and derogatory terms which may refer to specific groups continue to exist within our everyday language. Becoming conscious of how language impacts others can help prevent feelings of exclusion and discomfort within the CCNM community.

Inclusive language is appropriate and important in all situations, and should be used in all forms of communication including speech, language, publications, displays, posters, and teaching materials. This document gives examples of common usages of non-inclusive language, and offers practical substitutes to avoid discriminatory words and expressions.

Guiding Principles

In using inclusive language, it is helpful to keep these principles in mind:

- **People first.** Many general principles provided in this document involve seeing the person as an individual first and becoming aware of diverse audiences.

- **Words matter.** Not only do terms and expressions allow people or groups to feel excluded, but they can also convey or embed stereotypes, expectations, or limitations.

- **Language changes.** All language changes to reflect the values of society. As language changes, so do the norms that deem what is socially and grammatically

acceptable.

- **Mindset matters.** It is important to keep a curious and empathetic mindset. Most language has evolved to reflect the values and norms of the mainstream or dominant culture, and if a person is a member of that culture, they have had the privilege to feel included the majority of the time. That is not the case for everyone.

- **Inclusive terms.** Try to make your language and your message as inclusive as possible. For example, when speaking to an audience, make sure your speech relates to all your listeners and uses gender-inclusive language.

- **Use of generalizations or stereotypes.** No matter your audience, be cautious about making sweeping statements about any social group. Recognize assumptions, biases, and judgements about groups or people reflected in language.

- **Use of prejudiced language.** Take time to educate yourself about what words, phrases, or perspectives may offend your listeners. One goal of an audience-centered, inclusive speaker is to be cautious about prejudiced language or remarks.

- **Self-reflection.** Bring self-awareness to the times when you use words and expressions in writing. Think about your intentions for using a phrase, whether it has any origins, and whether there is a more inclusive way to state what you are trying to say.

It may also be helpful to ask:

- Does the individual or group have preferred terms?

- Does the language reflect the diversity of the intended audience?

- Is reference to a person's gender, culture, ethnicity, age, etc. relevant?

- Am I staying open and curious, and encouraging others to do the same?

- Is there a need to consult a formal style guide such as the Canadian Press Stylebook, AMA Manual of Style, or other resources such as Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples for guidance on written communication standards?

AGE

A person should be mindful about the connotations and biases that could arise when referring to age, whether in reference to a younger or older person. By avoiding terms and phrases that may stereotype individuals or groups on the basis of their age (e.g., language that implies that a particular age group is more or less able), we are creating inclusive spaces for all generations.

Further, demographic terms such as "older" and "younger" are relative and should be used only when relevant within a clear and specific context (e.g., age as a contributor in prognosis or diagnosis). In such cases, give a person's age rather than using imprecise and potentially derogatory terms. Additionally, it is important to note that post-secondary students are not necessarily "young."

While the term "elderly" can imply a stereotype, one important exception to the term is in the reference to Indigenous Elders. This title is considered an honour that comes with age and wisdom by the community.

The following are some examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
The boys/girls in the classroom/office	The students/colleagues in the classroom/office
The elderly, aged, old people, "boomers," seniors, senior citizens	Older person, older people, older citizens, older adults, older population
Mature workforce	Experienced workforce
How would you feel about managing older/younger people?	What skills do you have to enable you to effectively manage a team?
Young and vibrant team	Effective and vibrant team

The following are examples of non-inclusive phrases:

NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASES	IMPLIED MEANING
"Great job, kid/kiddo!"	The term kid is typically used to refer to a child; using this term with an adult can be demeaning and implies a lack of respect

	because of their younger age.
"I'm surprised that *you're* so good on the computer!"	The tone used in this phrase reinforces a stereotype that older generations struggle with computers and technology.
"It's so simple that even your grandma can do it."	This implies that older individuals have certain inferior skills and abilities.
"Oh wow, you don't *look* your age!"	This implies a generalization that people of a certain age should look a certain way.
"That's such a millennial thing to say."	This phrase stereotypes a cohort of individuals without any regard for the person's individuality.

CULTURE, RACE, AND ANCESTRY

Cultural labels, names, and expressions can be created and used to portray certain cultural and racial groups as inferior or superior to others. Preferred terms change as language evolves and awareness increases. It is important to respect the preference of a specific group or an individual about how they wish to be addressed and referred to.

The following are some general principles for ensuring inclusivity:

- **Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, and culture.** For detailed guidance on capitalization of proper nouns, consider using a formal style guide. Some examples include: Jewish, Indigenous people, Sikh, Caucasian, Muslim, Inuit, Arab, Asian, Cree, etc.

- **Be cautious about racial, cultural, and other identity references that are not relevant to the message being presented.** A person should avoid identifying or describing people by race, colour, ethnicity, and/or origin if it is not necessary. For example, in the statement "One of my Black students delivered an excellent presentation today," the student's race is irrelevant to the quality of the presentation.

- **Consider when terms such as "visible minority" and "woman of colour" are relevant.** These terms have often been used in writing and discussion; however, they are becoming less used. Before using such expressions, carefully consider if they are as relevant or current as in the past, or if a better expression or more specific identifier is available.

- **Avoid making assumptions about people and assuming that they share personal traits, interests, or similarities** based on their gender, race, culture, class, heritage, status, or appearance. Culture is a very fluid and dynamic concept that may not reflect the complexity of individual identities. Be cautious about introducing or describing someone by their race, culture, or ancestry. Instead of saying, "Have you met Dan? He's Asian too. You two would get along," consider saying, "Have you met Dan? He's new to the team." Whenever possible, allow a person to introduce aspects of their identity that they choose to share.

- **When references are relevant and necessary, find the appropriate, widely-accepted terminology and use the language preferred** by the individual or group concerned. Preferred terminology depends on the preferences of the individual or group, and may change on the basis of location. For example, in the United States, "African-American" is used; in Canada, some people in African-Canadian communities prefer the term "Black," while others prefer "African-Canadian."

- **The use of quotations marks ("Black," "Asian," "White," etc.) shows that the author recognizes the contested and constructed nature of the word.** The term 'racial' can be used to describe situation or relationships where interactions are influenced by racialization (e.g., racial harassment, racial inequality, etc.).

The following are some examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
Blacklist, blackball	Ban, bar, boycott, exclude, ostracize
Blackmark	A negative
Chop-chop	Hurry, quickly
Gypped	Cheated, swindled
Immigrants, foreigners, migrants, aliens	Newcomers, new to Canada
Master bedroom	Primary or main bedroom
Minorities	Racialized communities
Slave	Person who is/was enslaved
Visible minority	Racialized person or group

The following are examples of non-inclusive phrases:

NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASES	IMPLIED MEANING

"I am not a racist, I have several Latino friends."	This is comment is typically a defense against accusations of racism. However, having friends, family, or significant others who are from races and ethnicities different than your own, does not absolve a person from being, speaking or acting in a racist way. Racism exists regardless of relationships held with others.
"I do not see colour."	This comment is seemingly progressive, but is actually harmful to equity, diversity, and inclusion endeavors because it denies the existence of racial and ethnic inequality.
"*Those* people" or "*You* people"	These phrases suggest that an individual belongs to a group identity that has been labelled with an undesirable characteristic.
"Where are you *actually/really* from?"	Asking where someone is from, especially if they have already provided an answer, uncovers the questioner's bias. It suggests that the person being questioned cannot be from here and does not really belong. It is an interrogation of the person's national identity and suggests they do not belong.
"You speak well for a minority person."	This remark is condescending because it assumes all people from ethnic or racial minorities do not speak English well.

DISABILITY

In conversation with or about a person with a disability, it is important to focus on the individual and not their disability. Disability should only be referred to when it is relevant to the context.

Preferences regarding language related to differently able people varies and is sometimes inconsistent. It is appropriate to ask the person in a discreet manner. Be prepared that some individuals may be more comfortable than others with sharing of personal information and to be sensitive to the reality that disabilities (and chronic conditions such as mental illness) are both visible and non-visible.

The following are some general principles for ensuring inclusivity:

- **If it is appropriate to discuss one's disability, a people-first language approach should be used.** For example, instead of saying "disabled person," say "person with a disability." This approach emphasizes that individuals with disabilities are people first, and are not defined by their disability.

- **Be mindful when referring to groups.** Be cautious about referring to a group of individuals as "the disabled." Instead, use references such as "persons with disabilities," "people with quadriplegia," and "students with disabilities."

- **Generally, frame a disability and most medical conditions as something a person has rather than what they are.** For certain sensory conditions, people may prefer more direct language. For example, "He is deaf" rather than "He has deafness," or "She is blind" rather than "She has blindness."

- **Be cautious about using language that suggests weakness or infirmity.** Instead of saying "a person confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair-bound," it is more appropriate to say, "a person who uses a wheelchair."

- **Terminology about a disability can vary depending on the degree of the impairment.** For example, being hard of hearing is different from being deaf. Having low vision is different from being legally blind.

The following are some examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
Able-bodied, "normal"	Specify the opposite of the disability already cited (e.g., people who can see, people who can hear, people who can walk)
Addict, alcoholic, meth user	Person with a substance use disorder
Brain damaged	Person with a brain injury/traumatic brain injury
Committed suicide, failed/successful suicide	Died by suicide, suicided
Disabled, disabled person, special needs, challenged, "handicapped," "cripple"	Persons with disabilities, person with a disability
Mentally ill, crazy	Person living with a mental health

	condition, person with a mental disorder or mental illness
They are epileptic, arthritic, schizophrenic	They have epilepsy, arthritis, schizophrenia
Victim of, stricken/afflicted with, suffers from, battling, survivor	Person who has experienced, person living with, person who has been impacted by
Wheelchair-bound, wheelchair-confined	Uses a wheelchair

The following are examples of non-inclusive phrases:

NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASES	IMPLIED MEANING
"She suffers from cystic fibrosis."	This implies a generalization that persons with disabilities have a reduced quality of life and are suffering. Just because a person has a disability does not mean they struggle with it.
"You are so brave/courage/inspirational."	These and other similar words imply that their accomplishments are not valid because of their disability.
"You don't *look* like someone who needs a wheelchair."	This implies a generalization that persons who use a wheelchair look (or should look) a certain way.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Canadian Constitution recognizes three distinct groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. As a commitment to reconciliation, developing literacy with language that more accurately reflects Indigenous people is core to building cultures of reconciliation.

Indigenous Peoples come from different nations with separate languages, cultures, and customs; they should not be treated as one homogenous group. If you can, always ask the person or group you are addressing which term is personally preferred. While one person may prefer a particular term to acknowledge their Indigeneity, that term may be offensive to another individual.

It is helpful to be aware of the following terms:

- **Indigenous** is a general term and is a preferred term in international writing and discussion that is gaining broader acceptance in Canada. In Canada, Indigenous collectively refers to people who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. More specifically:

  - **First Nations** describes people who identify as First Nations, which have distinct cultures, languages and traditions and connections to a particular land base of traditional territory.
  - **Métis** is a French term for "mixed blood," which refers to the specific group of Indigenous people who trace their ancestry to the Métis homeland and are accepted members of the Métis community.
  - **Inuit** refers to a group of people who share cultural similarities and inhabit the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, Russia, and the United States of America. Inuit is a plural noun, and the singular is Inuk. Also note that "Inuit" means "people," so it is redundant to say, "Inuit people."

- **Indian** in reference to an Indigenous person is a historical misnomer with negative meanings for many Indigenous people as an imposed term. Use of this term should be avoided unless it is part of a historical reference, part of a legacy term, or used in reference to a government policy or classification (e.g., "Indian Act," "status Indian," "the Musqueam Indian Band"). While there are some status First Nations who prefer this term, "Indian" is considered an "in-group" term for their use (see next section).

- **Aboriginal** may be used in reference to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. However, it *may* no longer be the preferred term by certain as language use is changing and more are embracing the term "Indigenous." In Canada, there is a shift towards the use of "Indigenous" as the collective term, but "Aboriginal" may still be used (e.g., "Aboriginal and treaty rights" in the Constitution Act, or the "Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network").

- **Eskimo** is a historical misnomer with negative meaning for many Inuit and should be avoided. There are a large number of Inuit living in B.C.

The following are some general principles for ensuring inclusivity and respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples:

- **Be mindful with the term "Indigenous Peoples."** "Indigenous Peoples" is commonly

used as a collective term for all of the original peoples of Canada and their descendants. "Indigenous people" with a lower case "people" is simply referring to more than one Indigenous person rather than the collective group of Indigenous Peoples. If a person is working with a specific group that identifies as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, they are encouraged to use the more specific name rather than the broader term.

- **Understand that Indigenous Peoples come from different nations with distinct languages, cultures, and customs.** The specific nation, community, or band should be used when possible. You are encouraged to use the spelling that the Indigenous group prefers. For guidance, consider [this information.](#)

- **Be cautious about vocabulary and usage, especially that which ascribes ownership.** Instead of describing Indigenous Peoples as "belonging" to Canada, as in "Canada's Indigenous Peoples," it is more respectful to say, "Indigenous Peoples living in Canada."

- **Capitalize formal titles and maintain consistency.** When it is a part of a person's title, capitalize "Chief," "Hereditary Chief," "Grand Chief," and "Elder." For example, "Elder Vera Snow will be attending the event." Capitalization is also necessary when referring to "Nation" or "Nations." Capitalization is not necessary when the term is not a part of someone's title. For example, "She is an elder." For detailed guidance, consider using a [formal style guide.](#)

Inclusive language also refers to the avoidance of phrases or terms that have been appropriated from Indigenous cultures or are discriminatory towards Indigenous Peoples.

The following are some examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
Indian-giver	Take something back, rescind a gift
Pipeline	Pathway
Pow-wow	Meeting, gathering
Spirit animal	Favourite animal, animal I would most like to be
"Sold down the river"	Betrayed

In-Group Terms

In-group terms are terms that are accepted and used by members of the same group, but are most often not appropriate for use by people who are not members of the group. In-group terms often form as an act of resilience and re-appropriation. This may occur in many groups. For example, the term "Indian" may be used as an in-group term, often among older First Nations people. Often the terms "Aboriginal," "First Nations," "Native," and "Indigenous" are used interchangeably, sometimes by members of the Indigenous community. However, people are encouraged to recognize that these terms carry different meanings to different people. For instance, Indigenous people may use in-group terms that are unsuitable for those outside of that group to use. When engaging with specific people or groups from the Indigenous community, it is always best to find out what term they prefer.

Some Indigenous people identify more closely with their tribal or linguistic group designation (e.g., Coast Salish) and prefer the use of the name of the community. Try to identify the tribal affiliation or community, and use Indigenous spellings for the names of communities.

MARITAL AND FAMILY STATUS

There is a wide range of family types, including single parent, blended families, adopted, and common-law relationships. Regardless of the gender of two people in a couple, the inclusive term "spouse" or "partner" are appropriate.

Adoption is a part of many families. Questions about adoption may arise from curiosity, but can have an uncomfortable effect on someone. It is best that communication around adoption emphasizes similarities among families rather than differences.

The following are some general principles for ensuring inclusivity:

- **Avoid the question of marital or family status by using names only** in both written and oral form.
- **When a person identifies as being married or in a relationship, avoid making references to gender** (husband or wife), if unknown.
- **Refer to a person's "birth parent" rather than "natural parent" or "real parent."** The latter terms imply that an adoptive family is unnatural or not real.

RELIGION AND BELIEFS

Many individuals follow a religion (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Sikhism) or maintain a belief (e.g., atheism, agnosticism, humanism). Inclusive language refers to the use of language that is not affiliated with a particular religion or belief. For example, it is not uncommon for Christian-centric terms or phrases to be used in Canada (e.g., "Merry Christmas" during the month of December).

Reference to one's religious practice or belief should be avoided unless it is relevant to the context. For example, if making modifications to a treatment plan to accommodate religious or spiritual beliefs/practices. Note that both terms – religion and belief – are used. Both forms should be officially recognized as an individual may not practice a particular religion, but they may have a religious or philosophical belief.

The following are some examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
God bless you	Bless you, à vos souhaits, gesundheit
Merry Christmas	Happy Holidays; Season's Greetings
Oh my God	Goodness, gosh

Inclusive language also refers to the avoidance of many phrases or statements that tend to stereotype various groups of individuals based on their religion or belief.

The following are examples of non-inclusive phrases:

NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASES	IMPLIED MEANING
"Don't you wish you could just take your hijab off?"	This phrase stereotypes Muslim women as being oppressed and not having the ability to make the personal choice to wear (or not to wear) a hijab.
"You're an atheist? So, you don't believe in anything?"	This implies that individuals who do not believe in God, do not believe in anything. It fails to recognize the individual's personal belief choice and attempts to impose their own ideologies onto the

	person about what is right or ideal.
"You're such a tech guru!"	The word guru is an appropriation from Hindu and Buddhist religions that use the term to refer to a spiritual leader who is highly respected and esteemed. The nonchalant use of the term diminishes its importance and origins.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression have different meanings and are subjective and unique to the individual. It is important to understand that the acronym LGBTQ2SIA+ is a term that represents many but not all groups as there are many more identities as well. An equally important understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression is acknowledging that language is evolving, and as we re-learn to be more inclusive, it is helpful to be mindful of inclusive terms and definitions.

Gender-Neutral Language

Language can take on unnecessarily gendered forms, which includes words, phrases, and expressions that unnecessarily differentiate between women and men, or exclude, trivialize, or diminish either gender or sex. For example, "the best man for the job" can be replaced by a variety of terms and phrases such as "the best person/candidate for the job." Similarly, "the man is sitting in the clinic waiting area" can be replaced by, "the patient is sitting in the clinic waiting area."

As language changes, so do the norms that deem what is acceptable. There is a shift away from practices such as gendered language (e.g., terms like "fireman" and the universal "he" to stand for all genders) and "heteronormative" language (e.g., language that reinforces the attitude that heterosexuality is the preferred way of being) toward terminology that is more inclusive (e.g., using "spouse" instead of "husband" or "wife").

The following are examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
Hello, ladies and gentlemen	Hello, everyone
Mankind	Humankind

Man-made	Machine-made, synthetic, artificial
Manpower	Workforce, personnel, staff, human resources
Salesman/saleswoman	Salesperson, sales representative
Steward/stewardess	Flight attendant
Policeman	Police officer
Waitress or waiters	Servers
Wife/husband or boyfriend/girlfriend	Spouse or partner

Casual sexism or sexist microaggressions remain common and are often viewed as harmless or joking around. While the intent may not be to demean a particular sex, the outcome of this type of language is often offensive and discriminatory. For example, terms such as "dear," "sweetie," or "love" can be patronizing and condescending in certain situations.

The following are examples of non-inclusive phrases:

NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASES	IMPLIED MEANING
"Men wouldn't get it."	This enforces gender stereotypes against men by implying that they don't understand something solely on the basis of their gender/sex.
"Take it like a man!" or "Man up!"	These phrases enforce stereotypes that men should be strong and never show emotion. These expectations put unrealistic standards on men and create a culture where men do not feel comfortable expressing their emotions.
"That's a woman's job."	This enforces gender roles and discriminates against women based on social constructs about a woman's 'role.'
"You are so strong/smart/fast for a girl."	These types of comments perpetuate stereotypes about women that are demeaning and view them as inferior. Women are diverse and have a wide range of strengths and abilities; these phrases fail to recognize their individuality.

Part of understanding the complexity of gender identity is recognizing that there are differences between sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. The use of language is evolving to be more inclusive and go beyond simple binary gender (male/female only).

It is helpful to be aware of some of the following terms and their definitions:

- **Cisgender** refers to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.
- **Gender expression** refers to how a person publicly presents their gender.
- **Gender identity** refers to a person's internal and external experience of gender which may be the same or different from their sex at birth.
- **Sex** refers to the external physical characteristics used to classify humans at birth. **AFAB** – Assigned female at birth. **AMAB** – Assigned male at birth.
- **Sexual orientation** refers to whom one is sexually and/or romantically attracted.
- **Transgender** is an umbrella term to describe a wide range of people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differ from the sex they were assigned at birth and/or the societal and cultural expectations of their assigned sex.

Pronouns

Language is important when speaking about gender identity because it facilitates respect by allowing people to use language that describes their identity. One of the greatest opportunities to encourage and demonstrate inclusion is around the use of third person pronouns (e.g., "he/she/they/ze/xe"). By choosing to use the gender-neutral pronoun "they," which is already becoming a more common occurrence in written and spoken language, one is able to signal acceptance and understanding.

Respecting individuals' gender identity through language is fundamental in creating a safe and inclusive environment. The gender identity of an individual may not align with social expectations about gender based on one's anatomy or how they present themselves in their appearance. The gender identity of an individual may also not align with the socially-constructed male/female gender binary nor may it align with the gender they were assigned at birth. You should always ask an individual how they would prefer to be addressed to avoid assumptions, promote respectful relationships, and create an inclusive culture.

The following are some general principles for ensuring inclusivity:

- **Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression are different.**

- **Use gender-neutral language and pronouns** (e.g., they, them, their) unless that person has informed you of their preferences to avoid misgendering someone.

- **Be cautious about making assumptions.** All people do not look a certain way or come from the same background, and many may not appear "visibly trans." Rather, one should assume that an audience might include transgender people.

- **Take the time to listen if the pronouns are not known.** Double checking the use of terminology and language descriptors confers respect and can contribute to the development of most relationships. If the pronoun that a person uses is not known, listen first to the pronoun other people use when referring to that person.

- **Be considerate about names.** Respect the name a transgender person is currently using. For some people, being associated with their birth name is a source of anxiety, or it is simply a part of their life they wish to leave behind. If you happen to know the name someone was given at birth but no longer uses, refrain from sharing it without the person's explicit permission or publicly announcing it (e.g., calling out the patient's name in waiting rooms).

- **Respect a person's privacy.** Some people feel comfortable disclosing their status to others, and some do not. Knowing a transgender person's status is private and it is up to them to share it.

- **Respect terminology.** Transgender people use many different terms to describe their experiences. Respect the term (transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.) that a person uses.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a multifaceted lens of societal standing that can include racial, cultural, gender, sexuality, geographical/physical, educational, occupational, and financial factors. This intersectionality shows just how complex SES is, and how inequalities are stratified by multiple social systems.

Part of this inequity is language that discriminates against people impacted by low SES. The words we use to refer to people can reflect our attitudes toward them — whether implicit or unconscious — and reinforce a class divide between communities. It is important to carefully consider the language choices we make when speaking about poverty, education

levels, and access.

The following are some examples of appropriate language:

WORDS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES
At-risk, disadvantaged, vulnerable	Be specific about the systemic causes at the root of the issue and what the person is "at-risk" for, or use quotation marks ("at-risk") to demonstrate the problematic implications of this term.
The homeless, a homeless person	People without housing, individual experiencing homelessness
Poor, underprivileged, poverty stricken, disadvantaged	Experiencing economic hardship
Prisoner, convict	Person who is/has been incarcerated
Prostitution, prostitute	Sex work, sex worker
Well-educated, less-educated	Specify the degree or formal education without assigning value to it, e.g., holds a bachelor's degree

The following are examples of non-inclusive phrases:

NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASES	IMPLIED MEANING
Blue or white collar, unskilled labour	This implies that only certain types of labour or jobs requires skills.
Inner city, "ghetto," "the projects"	This conflates social class with race and ethnicity.
"Leveling the playing field."	Game-based metaphors suggest winners and losers.
"White trash"	This phrase demeans rural populations with low income levels and infers by adding the qualifier of "white" that all other racialized groups are "trash" by default.

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