



HURON PERTH
HEALTHCARE
ALLIANCE

GUIDE TO INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

ADOPTED FROM THE HPA-OHT GUIDE AUGUST 2023



This section provides guidelines and recommendations of language to use that respects and honours equity, inclusion, diversity, anti-racism and accessibility.

Best practices in Language related to equity, diversity inclusion, and accessibility are in a constant state of change. The language presented in this document is the current best practices within the present geopolitical factors that influence the work of the Huron Perth & Area Ontario Health Team (HPA-OHT) and the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA). The HPHA/HPA-OHT's Diversity Equity Inclusion and Anti-Racism (EIDA-R) Advisory Groups will review this document on a regular basis to ensure accuracy of best language practices.

What is Inclusive Language?

Inclusive language entails using words, phrases, and expressions that respect and include all individuals, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, or ability. It aims to create an atmosphere that values diversity, promotes empathy, and avoids excluding any individual or group. At its most basic, embracing inclusive language involves adopting practices concerning pronoun use and gender-neutral terms and avoiding language that promotes stereotypes.

Inclusive Language Guiding Principles

- Be respectful of a person or group's preferences/choices regarding vocabulary. Always ask how a person would like to be referred to. Remember that no community is homogenous and that an individualized approach is best.
- When writing, person-first language is the recommended first choice, unless it is known that an individual or group describes themselves otherwise. (e.g., using a person who is marginalized rather than marginalized person).
- Be aware that language best practices can differ depending on the audience such as geographic location and age demographic. As an example, 2SLGBTQIA+ (2 Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and additional people+) and some older adults find the term "Queer" to be offensive whereas some younger individuals have embraced the term. Specific terms should only be used after confirming the preferred term.
- There is a difference between respectful and appropriate language for those belonging to a group (in-group) and those who do not belong (out-group). Certain terms may offend when used by someone from outside that specific community.
- Anticipate a diverse audience and make conscious efforts to reflect that diversity in written work and images.
- Only use descriptors that refer to a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age, when those descriptors are relevant to the story. For example, noting that an individual uses a wheelchair is appropriate in a news story on accessibility concerns on campus.

Problem Words	Context
Aboriginal	Not widely accepted amongst Indigenous Peoples. The HPA-OHT has adopted the use of the word Indigenous Peoples (Plural with a capital I and P) when referring to the collective group.
Bib	Use words such as apron or clothing protector
Black list	Use of the words “black” for something undesirable, wrong or bad perpetuates concepts that have been used to oppress people of color. Using plain language (i.e., “deny list”) makes the meaning more clear.
Canada’s Indigenous Peoples	Implies a hierarchy/possession and not all Indigenous people identify with the Canadian national identity Indigenous Peoples <u>in</u> Canada. Refer to ‘Turtle Island’ instead of Canada as many Indigenous lands encompass multiple modern-day countries.
Committed suicide	Say “Died by suicide” or “Lost by suicide”
Diaper	Instead, use terms such as continence products, incontinence products, incontinence briefs or adult briefs.
Drug addicts or abusers, junkies or user(s)	Instead say, “people who use drugs” or “people with a substance use disorder”.
Elderly, old people	Use people-centered words like older adults, individuals, or people. Senior(s) can be used but Older Adult(s) is preferred.
Exclusively using the word patients	Also use person, individual or citizen as appropriate
Fellow	Is of masculine origin. Gender-neutral alternatives like such as peers, colleagues, co-workers should be used.
Holders in the Emergency Department	Instead say “Patients that are holding in the Emergency Department”. This encourages person/patient first language.
Long-term care facility or nursing home	Home-related words such as long term care home or retirement home
Loved ones	Instead use, family members, friends, partner or describe the relationship (e.g., father, wife, partner, brother, cousin, etc.)
Native to describe where someone is originally from	E.g., Say someone is Clinton-born, originally from Clinton or raised in Clinton.

Peanut Gallery	Peanut gallery originally referred to the balconies of segregated theaters, where black people had to sit.
Powwow to describe a get together	This word should <u>only be used</u> to describe an Indigenous ceremony involving feasting, singing and dancing.
Preferred pronouns	This implies it is a choice and not their identity. Ask the individual what pronouns they use, as it may be different from “he/him” or “she/her.” Never assume based on appearance.
Reserve	Use Indigenous community, First Nations community, Metis community or Inuit community.
Sexual preference	This implies that sexuality is a choice. Use sexual orientation instead.
Stakeholders	Has negative connotations for Indigenous Peoples. When land acquisition was happening, this term referred to the allotment of land to settlers. Instead use terms like interested parties.
Transgendered	This suggests that being trans is something that happens to someone, as opposed to an identity someone is born with. Use transgender or simply, trans.
Referring to individual by their a diagnosis (e.g., schizophrenic, diabetic)	Use person-first language. Person with schizophrenia, person with diabetes.
Using the words gay or homosexual as blanket terms.	These may not fit with how a person identifies themselves. Respect the individual or group for how they want to be addressed/referred to. Some examples may include lesbian, bi or bisexual, transgender, trans, intersex, two-spirit, queer, genderqueer, gender-questioning, and bigender. The HPA-OHT has adopted the use of the acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ when referring to the entire community. This is in-line with the Government of Canada.

If you have any questions or recommendations for language on any part of this document, please reach out to the HPHA Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Committee at eid-ar@hpha.ca