

Recommendations for Inclusive Language
Chaffey College Police Department
by
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At the request of Associate Superintendent Troy Ament and Interim Police Chief Cheryl Newman-Tarwater, and in alignment with Superintendent/President Dr. Henry Shannon's 10-point plan, the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work developed recommendations for adapting the use of inclusive language to support the Chaffey College Police Department (CCPD) in effectively addressing the diversity within the Chaffey Community College system.

Inclusive language has become increasingly relevant in contemporary society, as it is essential for promoting equity and ensuring that individuals feel respected and valued. Research suggests that language profoundly impacts how individuals perceive themselves, others, and the world around them. Therefore, inclusive language, which acknowledges and affirms diversity, is crucial for creating a more welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters trust and cooperation.

We recommend that CCPD actively incorporates inclusive language into their communication strategies and interactions with the Chaffey College Community. Further, we encourage academic research and scholarship to continue exploring the impact of inclusive language on social dynamics and community development.

The following briefly describes what inclusive language is, why it is essential to use, terminology, and references.

A. What is Inclusive Language

- a. The American Psychological Association defines inclusion as “an environment that offers affirmation, celebration, and appreciation of different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences, thus allowing all individuals to bring in their whole selves (and all their identities) and to demonstrate their strengths and capacity.”
- b. The University of Houston defines inclusive language as “language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people. It gives respect to groups who are vulnerable to marginalization.”

B. Why is it important?

- a. Studies have shown that using inclusive language improves performance within an organization. (Lauring and Klitmøller, 2017)

- b. Language is a powerful tool; the language we use to describe others impacts our perceptions of them and the perceptions of others as well as our interactions with them.
 - i. Certain words and terms have implied definitions that alter the users', readers', and listeners' perceptions of a person or event.

C. Recommended Terminology:

Race/Ethnicity/Nationality		
Terms to Avoid	Alternative Terms	Reasoning
Blacks	Black People African-American	The term "blacks" is considered outdated
Indian	Native American Indigenous	Several Native American tribes consider the term "Indian" to be offensive. If working with a specific tribe (e.g., Gabrielino-Tongva, Navajo), use the name of the tribe in your reports
Minority	Person of Color	"Minority" can be belittling, overgeneralizing, and inaccurate depending on the location.
Illegal alien	Undocumented immigrant	Human beings are not illegal; actions are.

Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Terminology		
Terms to Avoid	Alternative Terms	Reasoning
Prostitute	Sex Worker	This term does not encompass the reasons why someone does this work (e.g., trafficking victims)
Child prostitute	Child who has been trafficked	The term "sex" implies consent.

Sex with an Underage person	Statutory rape	By law, no one under the age of 18 can legally consent. Use the term "rape" instead when applicable
Non-consensual sex	Rape	
victim	Person who has experienced.... Person who was impacted by...	People who experienced Domestic Violence or other traumas often do not want to be portrayed as victims

Socioeconomic Status Terms		
Terms to Avoid	Alternative Terms	Reasoning
Vagabond Transient	Person without a home Unsheltered Unhoused	A majority of individuals experiencing homelessness are not on the streets by choice
Poor Poverty-Stricken Less-Fortunate	Low-income	Many agencies have defined income brackets for socioeconomic status When possible, be specific about the resource an individual lacks (housing, medical attention, transportation)

Sexuality Terminology		
Terms to Avoid	Alternative Terms	Reasoning
Tranny Transvestite	Transgender individuals LGBTIQ people	The transgender community finds these terms derogatory and offensive slurs.
Homosexual Sexual Preference	Gay, Lesbian Bisexual	The term "preference" implies that sexuality is a choice.

Note: Avoid using the term “queer,” as many individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community consider the term to be offensive.

Medical/Mental Health Terminology		
Terms to Avoid	Alternative Terms	Reasoning
Crazy/Nuts Defective	Mental health illness Person living with a mental health condition Person with a mental illness	People with a mental health illness can control their symptoms with the proper medication and interventions
Using any disorder as a noun (e.g., schizophrenic, depressive, alcoholic, anorexic, AIDS victim)	Person with depression Person with AIDS Person with a substance use disorder	People are not their disorders or conditions
Senile	Person with dementia Person with Alzheimer’s	The term “senile” is derogatory
Committed Suicide Successful suicide Died by firearm Died by overdose	Completed suicide Died by suicide	Avoid language that portrays suicide as a viable option or creates an accurate picture of how the individual died.
Wheelchair-bound	Person who uses a wheelchair	Avoid emphasizing an individual’s limitations

Resources

American Psychological Association. (2021). Inclusive language guidelines. <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf>

Asper, A., & St. Amant, E. (2020). Psych Hub communication guide: Inclusive language & imagery for mental health content. Psych Hub. <http://psychhub.com/psych-hub-communication-guide/>

Lauring, J., & Klitmøller, A. (2015). Inclusive language use in multicultural business organizations: The effect on creativity and performance. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 54(3), 306–324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488415572779>

University of Houston. (n.d.). Inclusive language guide. https://www.uh.edu/marcom/guidelines-policies/inclusive-language/_files/inclusive-language-guide.pdf

Northern Essex Community College. (n.d.). Diversity, equity, and inclusion resources. <https://necc.mass.libguides.com/c.php?g=1143033&p=8345981>

