Language Guide

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

**Ableism** – Practices and dominant attitudes in society that assume there is an ideal body and mind that is better than all others.

**Ally** – Someone who supports a group other than their own – race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, etc. Allies take risks and action on behalf of others, and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

**Belonging** – Having a hand in co-creating structures, the future, etc. For more information, go to Othering & Belonging Conference and the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society.

**Bias** - An attitude you have that makes you treat someone in a way that is unfair or different from the way you treat other people

**Bigotry** – Hate and prejudice against a group.

**Breaking** - Defining someone who you see as other as a threat to your/our existence

**Bridging** – People of different cultures, ethnicities, languages, gender identities, etc. coming together and recognizing we have the capacity to create a commonality. Empathetic listening is the core part to bridging

**Code Switching** – Switching between standard English and vernacular/dialect spoken within a particular community or region.

**Cultural Literacy** - The acquisition of awareness, knowledge and skills required to communicate, work and live effectively in a pluralistic society. Also known as cultural humility or intercultural competence.

**Diversity** - Individual and group differences including but not limited to differences in race, class, ethnicity, gender, age, culture, economic status, country of origin, religious affiliations, viewpoints, personality, political orientations, life experiences, learning styles, and working styles.

**Dominate group** - The group with power, privilege and social status in a society - not necessarily a majority in terms of numbers. Attributes of this group are accepted as the ‘norm’ by which other groups are measured or compared, often to their detriment.
**Equity** - Fair treatment of everyone that addresses specific needs, barriers and accommodations to ensure all have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of society and its benefits.

**Gender** – A social construct that may reference sex, identity, and expression.

**Hispanic** (From Mother Jones' Style Guide)
Hispanic is not interchangeable with Latino, Latina, and Latinx, but overlaps to some extent. Defer to individual preference. It often depends on geographical region; people in the Southwest tend to use Hispanic and only recently have started replacing it with Latino. When preference isn’t known, use Latino/a/x instead of Hispanic, unless Hispanic is attributed to polls, census reports, or studies.

Each term refers to people from Spanish-speaking countries or cultures, but people from Spain are generally not Latino/a/x. Portuguese-speaking Brazilians are less likely to identify as Hispanic but sometimes do.

Be as specific as possible: Honduran, Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, Colombian, and so on.

**Inclusion** – Being invited, included in something that is already established

**Implicit bias** – The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control.

**Impostor syndrome** - A phenomenon in which high-achieving individuals are unable to internalize their accomplishments and instead constantly fear being exposed as a “fraud.”

**Intersectionality** - “the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect”. different kinds of prejudice can be amplified in different ways when put together.


**Microaggression** – Commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group, particularly culturally marginalized groups.

**Othering** – distancing ourselves from others

**Pacific Islander** – A native/indigenous person of any of the three major sub-regions of Oceania: Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

**POC** – Acronym for ‘person/people of color.’
SSWANA – South Asian, Southwest Asian, and North African

**Systemic Discrimination** – The institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices which may appear neutral on the surface but which have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally.

**Underrepresented/Underserved/Marginalized** - Individuals or groups that have historically been or currently are inadequately or insufficiently represented, under resourced, and/or oppressed due to structural and/or societal obstacles and disparities.

**Race and Racist Thought**

**Antiracism** - A person who opposes racism and promotes racial tolerance

**Antiracist** – “The active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably”

**Alt Right** – Short for Alternative Right; a segment of the white supremacist movement that rejects mainstream conservatism in favor of politics that embrace implicit or explicit racism, anti-Semitism and white supremacy.

**Privilege** – Unearned and unquestioned power that gives certain groups and individuals economic, social and political advantages; the unequal distribution of and access to resources, benefits and status.

**Racialization** – The arbitrary grouping of people based on perceived physical differences, such as skin tone.

**Racism** – The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. (adl.org)

**White privilege** – Societal advantage that comes with being seen as the norm in America, achieved regardless of wealth, gender or other factors; unearned assets that whites in America benefit from but remain largely oblivious to.

**White nationalism** (from the Anti-Defamation League/ADL) - A term that originated among white supremacists as a euphemism for white supremacy. Eventually, some white supremacists tried to distinguish it further by using it to refer to a form of white supremacy that emphasizes defining a country or region by white racial identity and which seeks to promote the interests of whites exclusively, typically at the expense of people of other backgrounds.

**White supremacy** – The belief that white people are superior to all other races, especially the Black race, and should therefore dominate society.
Gender and Identity

Binary - A classification system of two genders, male and female; a concept or belief that there are only two genders and that one’s biological or birth gender will align with traditional social constructs of masculine and feminine identity, expression, and sexuality.

Non-binary – An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman and may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. For more information, Understanding Non-Binary People: How to Be Respectful and Supportive from the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Cisgender - A person whose personal identity and gender corresponds with their sex assigned at birth.

Gender-affirming surgery – procedures that change one’s body to conform to one’s gender identity. Also called “sex-reassignment surgery”. These procedures may include top surgery – breast augmentation or removal – and bottom surgery – altering genitals.

Gender Expression – The way people express their gender, such as through their gender-related appearance or behavior. The conscious and unconscious choices that on a daily basis, each of us make in terms of expressing our gender to the world. Sometimes a person’s gender expression aligns with their gender (biological sex) and gender identity, and sometimes it doesn’t.

Genderfluid – A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Gender Identity – A person’s internal understanding of their gender. This may include a person’s sense of being. Male, female, a combination of male and female, neither male or female, a gender different from the person’s sex assigned at birth, or transgender.

Gender neutrality - movement to end discrimination of gender altogether in society through gender-neutral language and ending sex segregation

Gender-neutral pronouns – they, their, them, ze, sie, co, and ey

When asking about pronouns, ask ‘What is your pronoun. Do not ask ‘What is your preferred pronoun.
Use the pronouns that reflect an individual’s gender identity.
If you’re unsure of what pronoun to use, you can politely ask the individual.
If you make a mistake, correct yourself and move on.
Let others know what name and/or pronouns you use.

**Gender Non-conforming (GNC)** – Refers to people who do not follow the stereotypes and societal expectations of how they should act or look based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Genderqueer** – An umbrella term of gender that refers both to non-normative gender identity and gender expression; a spectrum of identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine – identities outside the gender binary; a person who identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.

**Intersex** - People who are born with chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones and/or genitalia which do not meet the medical standards of male or female.

*While some intersex characteristics may be identified at birth, some intersex persons often may not know their gender identity until adolescence. Remember, always be respectful by not asking questions about an intersex person's characteristics.*

An intersex person can identify as a man, woman, nonbinary, no gender, or multiple genders. Intersex is not the same as transgender, although they may both identify as nonbinary.

**LGBTQ** – An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer

**Lived names or Names in Use** – Name other than legal names which many people use for a variety of reasons. The law often refers to these names as preferred names.

**Mansplain** - The act of men explaining to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing – derived from combing ‘man’ and ‘explain’

**Nonbinary** – Genders that don’t conform to male and female.

**Pansexual** - Someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

**Queer** - A term people use to express fluid identities and orientations.

**Questioning** - A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Sexual orientation** – The affairs of the heart and enduring patterns of intimacy and sexual attraction. Who am I falling in love with? Who do I have the capacity to fall in love with? Who do I want to have intimate relationships with? Example: Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Bisexual, Pansexual.
Transgender – Someone whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation.

Transition – A term used to describe the process some transgender people undertake to begin living as the gender they identify with. The transition may include social aspects such as wearing different clothing, being referred to by a different name or pronoun, etc.; physical aspects like having surgery or taking hormones; and/or legal aspects such as updating their name on documents and changing sex marker on birth certificate.

They/Them – see Gender-neutral pronouns above

Ability/Disability

Accessibility - The degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be viewed as the "ability to access" and benefit from some system or entity. The concept often focuses on people with disabilities or special needs and their right of access, enabling the use of assistive technology. (from myblindspot.org)

ADA – Refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life. (From adata.org https://adata.org/learn-about-ada)

Ageism – A system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions that stereotype and discriminate against individual or groups on the basis of their age.

Autism Spectrum - Any of a group of developmental disorders (such as autism and Asperger’s syndrome) marked by impairments in the ability to communicate and interact socially and by the presence of repetitive behaviors or restricted interests. — called also pervasive developmental disorder.

Universal Design - Designing products, instructional materials, services and spaces so the widest range of people can use them. By designing for the wide spectrum of human abilities, the focus is on creating an environment (physical, learning and service) that is easier for all people to use.

Basic Needs Security
Basic Needs Security – food, housing, and economic security

Food insecurity - The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Immigration

Asylum seekers – people who seek official government protection

DACA – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals allows applicants to request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal. DACA does not provide lawful status.

Dreamers – Refers to a young person who qualifies for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The Act is legislation introduced in 2001 creating a pathway to citizenship to young people who were brought to the U.S. as children without documentation.

Migrants – People who are in the process of moving, commonly for economic reasons but not always.

Refugees – People who are forced to flee their home by violence, persecution, or natural disaster.

Undocumented – get wording from the Undocumented Students Program

UnDocuAlly – Trained campus allies for our undocumented students at Cal. Learn more at https://campusclimate.berkeley.edu/staff/our-programs-and-services/undocually-training-program

Those involved in the Carceral System
See the Underground Scholars Initiative Language Guide for information on communicating about those involved in the carceral system.

How to be inclusive and current in your word choice

A person is not diverse; communities, groups, etc. can be diverse.
Race vs. Ethnicity – both are social constructs used to categorize and characterize seemingly distinct populations.

- Race is associated with biology and linked with physical characteristics
- Ethnicity is linked with cultural expression and identification.

Use person-centered language – focus on the person, not their characteristics. Only mention characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or immigration status when it’s relevant to the discussion.

Use language that reflects how your audience members refer to themselves. Ask people how they would like to be identified. Make room for complex identities and the complexity of different communities.

In written and oral communications, think about the people you’re addressing; consider contest and check to see whether you’re making assumptions about gender, identity, race, religion, or life experience. Be sensitive to differences.

Avoid using ladies, gentlemen, ma’am, sir, girls, guys, etc.
Use more inclusive, gender-neutral words such as friends, ya’ll, folks, everyone.

Are the words you’re using current? Do they speak to and include your audience? Do they leave anyone out?

When speaking about disability, avoid phrases that imply victimhood such as “afflicted by,” “victim of,” “suffers from,” “confined to a wheelchair.”

**More Inclusive Language Choices**

**More inclusive**: marginalized, historically underrepresented, underrepresented
Less inclusive: minority – not all marginalized groups are minorities

**More inclusive**: Folks, people, y’all
Less inclusive: Guys/women

**More inclusive**: Women
Less inclusive: Girls (when referring to adults)

**More inclusive**: Chairperson, chair, moderator, leader
Less inclusive: Chairman, foreman

**More inclusive**: Partner, spouse
Less inclusive: Girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, husband
More inclusive: people with disabilities, persons with a developmental disability, deaf people, blind people
Less inclusive: disabled, mentally challenged

More inclusive: accommodations
Less inclusive: special needs

More inclusive: wheelchair user, uses a wheelchair
Less inclusive: Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound

More inclusive: physical disability
Less inclusive: crippled

More inclusive: Deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired
Less inclusive: deaf and dumb, deaf-mute

More inclusive: Typical
Less inclusive: Normal

More inclusive: Undocumented
Less inclusive: Illegal immigrant, illegal alien

From Mother Jones’ Style Guide (with a few additions)
“band leader” instead of “frontman/frontwoman”
“chair” or “chairperson” instead of “chairman/chairwoman”
“communities” instead of ‘community’ to avoid implying a monolith
“crewed” instead of “manned,” unless a crew is all men and you’re pointing that out
“enslaved people” rather than “slaves”
“enslavers” rather than “masters,” “slaveholders,” or “slave owners”
“firefighter” instead of “fireman/firewoman”
“fisher” instead of “fisherman/fisherwoman”
“heir” instead of “heiress”
“host” instead of “hostess”
“humanity” or “humankind” instead of “mankind”
“mail carrier” instead of “mailman”
“manufactured,” “artificial,” or “synthetic” instead of “manmade”
“police officer” instead of “policeman/policewoman”
“spokesperson” or “representative” instead of “spokesman/spokeswoman”
“sales rep” or “salesperson” instead of “salesman/saleswoman”
“server” instead of “waitress/waiter”
“sex worker” and “sex work” instead of “prostitute” and “prostitution”

HOW TO USE GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Neutral (Singular They)</th>
<th>They sang</th>
<th>I called them</th>
<th>Their shirt is green</th>
<th>That is theirs</th>
<th>They like themself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Neutral (Ze)</td>
<td>Ze sang (pronounced ‘zee’)</td>
<td>I called hir (pronounced ‘here’)</td>
<td>Hirs shirt is green (pronounced here’s)</td>
<td>That is hirs (pronounced here’s)</td>
<td>Ze likes hirself (pronounced hereself)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://open.buffer.com/inclusive-language-tech/

https://medium.com/diversity-together/70-inclusive-language-principles-that-will-make-you-a-more-successful-recruiter-part-1-79b7342a0923

https://communications.uoregon.edu/inclusive-language

**Additional resources**
- Chancellor’s SB179 task force
- Office of the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination
- UC Berkeley resources for students, faculty, and staff
- California Gender recognition Act
- Gender Equity Resource Center
- Equality California
- My Pronouns
- Gender Spectrum