



Inclusive Language



INCLUSION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

TIP SHEET

What is inclusive language?

Inclusive language:

- Shows respect for all members in our community
- Gives more accurate views of the real world
- Reflects diversity and is meaningful to a wide audience

Why is it important to use inclusive language?

Language is a powerful tool. How we speak to and about others influences how we treat them. It is essential for creating an environment where everyone feels safe, welcome and included. To feel included, we need to 'see' and 'hear' ourselves reflected in the language used.

Steps to Inclusive Language

1. Keep an open mind

- Pay attention to your everyday language and make conscious language choices.
- Try to stand in someone else's shoes and see it from their perspective.

2. Focus on the person

- Only refer to a child's disability if it is relevant.
- Use person-first language if needing to refer to a disability, e.g. child with a disability rather than disabled child.
- Use language that emphasises individuality, rather than disability. This does not mean that the disability is ignored, but it should not be the focus.

3. Avoid condescending or derogatory terms

- Avoid euphemisms and made-up terms, such as 'differently abled' and 'handicapable'.
- Avoid phrases that suggest victimhood, such as 'suffers from' or 'afflicted by'.
- Avoid derogatory terms that stem from the context of mental health, for example, 'crazy', 'mad', 'schizo', or 'psycho'.

4. Use more accurate comparisons

- Use 'person without disability', rather than 'able-bodied' person.
- Use 'sighted person' for someone who is not blind.

5. If in doubt, ask

- If you're not sure what terminology someone prefers, just ask them.
- Strive to include language that reflects peoples' choice and style in how they talk about themselves.

Where and when to use inclusive language?

Inclusive language should be used in everyday talk and interactions. It should be used in all digital and written formats. Consider the language used in enrolment or registration forms, promotional material, newsletters, manuals, rule books and website content. 'A safe and inclusive program for all children' is one example of how to use inclusive language in promotional material.

Additional Resources

Australian Government Style Manual

<https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/inclusive-language/people-disability>