

“ We are at a time in our country's history when inclusive language is better than exclusive language.

*Barack Obama*

**language**

## The Inclusive Workplace Language Guide

EMPLOYER  
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### What is inclusive language?

Inclusive language is essential to help people who have been historically marginalized (because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability status, and/or other aspects of their identity) feel included. We all have a responsibility to remove words and phrases from our vernacular that may be harmful to others.

### What is plain language?

It's communication everyone understands the first time it is read or heard.

source: <https://www2.deloitte.com>

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# Guiding Principles for Using Inclusive Language



## People First

Focus on the person, not the characteristics. We are more than our descriptors.



## Words Matter

Terms, expressions can make people or groups feel excluded or embed stereotypes, expectations or limitations.



## Language Changes

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.



## Mindset Matters

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



## Recognize the Impact of Mental Health Language

Using terms to describe everyday behaviors underplays the impact of someone's experiences with a mental disorder. Also, avoid derogatory terms that stem from the context of mental health.



## Self-Reflection

Bring self-awareness when using words and expressions in writing. Think about intentions for using a phrase, whether it has any origins, and whether there is a more inclusive way to state what is trying to be said.



## Use Gender Neutral Language

Avoid assigning a gender specific pronoun to an individual. Not everyone identifies as male or female.



## Keep Learning

Take time to keep educated about words, phrases, or perspectives that may offend. Be cautious about making sweeping statements about any social group. This includes making personal assumptions based on gender, culture, ancestry, age and other categories. Avoid prejudiced language or remarks.

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) is a not-for-profit organization that provides employers, HR recruiters and hiring managers with solutions, tools and resources they need to attract, hire, retain and develop qualified skilled newcomer talent.