



Canada Snowboard, in Collaboration with INclusion INcorporated

Inclusive Language Key Points

Language is not scary – We can always do better but be open to learn and get things wrong as we learn the ever changing language together.

How language change occurs:

- **All language changes with different generations**, think of how often Mr. and Mrs. are now used.
- **When communities are safe enough**, they often get a chance to define themselves rather than be defined by the broader community.
- **Privilege** - Being aware that although you may not have ever had anxiety or deep thought processes around what you are called, however this is not the case for everyone.
- **Power** – Our ability to make the choice to make change.
- **Allyship** – Working with those in less privileged language situations to promote change.

Language is not about ‘you’, it’s about ‘them’ – when your language is asked to change, it is not a critique of you. Rather it is about making others feel acknowledged, respected, and included.

Language is continuing to change so take the follow steps:

1. Be open to change
2. Commit to change
3. Learn and talk about change
4. Talk about your process and goals
5. Apologize when needed

Avoid Assumptions and start neutral: when addressing people or collecting information, for example:

- Guardian / care giver / adult
- They / them
- Partner
- Team / folks / people / y’all / athletes / riders / sports people / everyone / staff
- Family name
- Child / Children
- Family

Best Practices

- Say and use your Pronouns (verbally and in writing) to help increase awareness, and make it more normal and common practice for everyone to do, especially those who’s may not align to the way they look.
- Ask what name people want to go by (short forms and nicknames)
- If you aren’t very tied to your titles, neutralize those (e.g. use ‘partner’, rather than ‘husband/wife’).
- Be an advocate (if you know someone uses certain pronouns, be their advocate).
- Remember to ask people if they need any support / accommodation e.g. “How can I be a good coach / mentor / support for you”. Remember, everyone’s support requirements are not things we can see physically (e.g. a learning difficulty / cognitive disability). Asking this of people saves them having to ask you for support and therefore helps to create a more inclusive environment for all.
- Be cautious of using words used by a particular community, some words have meaning by community, words which have been put in place to make a particular groups and a particular moment in history, know these words, and their history, and whether you should use them or not.



- Common sayings to NOT use: Gyp / Nitty Gritty / Black-List / Handicapped.
- Avoid words causing harm or judgement, words that cause people to feel smaller, change themselves and/or express themselves fully (e.g. Crazy / Insane / Suicide references / needy / pushy / high maintenance / “Too much” / Uppity).
- **Mirroring** – Use the words that someone has used to identify themselves as. E.g. Use the same specifics someone has for themselves (Indigenous / First Nations, Metis, Inuit / Algonquins of Pikwakangan).
- **Listen to the community** - (Black vs People of Colour (POC)).
- **Listen to the person** -No one is exactly the same.
- **In Community Lingo** – Some words were used as a weapon previously, but have been reclaimed by the community to make people be able to claim their power back. These are not necessarily words that should be used outside of the community (e.g. Queer).

Useful and best practice terminology:

- **Sex** – What you were biologically born as (Female / Male)
- **Gender** – how we very deeply and internally, identify ourselves (Non-Binary, Woman/Girl, Man/Boy).
- **Gender Expression** – How someone expresses themselves (Androgenous / Feminine / Masculine)
- **Sexuality** – Who someone chooses to be in a relationship with (Partner, husband/boyfriend, wife/girlfriend).
- **2SLGBTQAI*** - The acronym which brings together a number of different gender and sexuality expressing terms. It is important to note this acronym is continually changing, and depends on the community as to the definition they use. It is therefore recommended to put a * at the end to ensure everyone is included.
- **“Sex assigned at birth”** – however try to avoid even having to ask this if you don’t need to.
- **Woman / Man / Non-binary** – Not “transwoman/man” / “was a.....” / “gender who dresses as” / “transexual” (not everyone is going to go through gender affirming surgery).
- **Gender affirming surgery** – Not “Sex Change”
- **Person Centred Language “People/person with a disability”** – she has / athlete with ... / athlete without.... (Unless they ask otherwise).
- **Accommodations vs exceptions** (things to help people thrive, rather than think of them as exceptions).

Overall Takeaways:

- We can all do better, don’t try to get it “Right” all at once: Set some goals, catch yourself, ask someone to help.
- When someone corrects you, say thanks. Corrections aren’t about you, it’s about what they need.
- Use your language to empower.