

Principles of Inclusive Language

CNE 2020

On behalf of CNE, thank you for partnering with us to plan and/or deliver this important continuing nursing education! We are very honored and grateful to be working with you. The University of Washington School of Nursing's Department of Continuing Nursing Education is committed to creating an open, inclusive, and equitable learning community for every partner and participant of ours. We value and celebrate the diversity of our partners, participants, staff, and patients, and we strive to continue that through our programming.

We would like to provide you with a reference of our principles of inclusive language. We want to first recognize that we are all working to positively impact the health and wellness of our patients and our community. That intention is what brought most of us to nursing and healthcare, and even to CNE. We developed this guideline for using inclusive language to broadly expand our conversations to include the greatest number of people we can in our programming.

What is Inclusive Language?

Inclusive language is word choice that promotes the acceptance and value of all people, free from words or phrases that may exclude, or stereotype people based on their attributes or membership to a particular group. Inclusive language is centered around including and empowering everyone in our audience. It is important to note that language is fluid and that the meaning and connotations of words change over time. Thus, we encourage you to apply the principles described here, rather than memorize specific phrases, as these may change.

Key Points of Inclusive Language

- Consider including **equity and inclusion topics** in your discussions and presentations
- Use **inclusive greetings**
 - Instead of “ladies” or “gentlemen,” use “everyone,” “friends,” “folks,” “all,” etc.
- Avoid words with a **negative connotation** and focus on a **strengths-based approach**
 - Using the word “victim” implies disempowerment of those who have experienced violence; instead, use “survivor,” or “people who have experienced violence/abuse”
 - Instead of “suffering from ___” use “people with ___”
- **Consider context** – Only reference personal attributes or characteristics when it is relevant to the context:
 - Use pronouns in case studies, and gender *if it is relevant* to the case - try not to assume, or to let participants assume, the pronouns or gender of the subject
 - If gender is relevant: MW, (she/her), 79yo cis-woman, presents with lightheadedness and dizziness x 3 days;
 - If gender is not relevant: MW (she/her), 79yo presents with lightheadedness and dizziness x 3 days
- Use **people-centric language**: When possible and relevant, focus on the person, not their identity:
 - “A person experiencing homelessness” instead of “a homeless person”
 - “A person who uses a wheelchair” instead of “wheelchair bound”
 - “Someone living with” or “being treated for” instead of “suffering from”

- **Do not make assumptions:** When appropriate, ask about the terminology and language people use for themselves, and respect their wishes. Or, if you do not know, acknowledge that you do not know
 - Introduce yourself with your name and pronouns, and ask all participants to do the same when asking questions to avoid assumption-making
- **Avoid aggregating** individual identities, if possible
 - Instead of “Asian,” use “Japanese”
- **Use gender-neutral terminology**, recognizing that biological sex is different than gender
 - Biological Sex: biological sex as defined with the reproductive organs we are born with; this is generally assigned at birth
 - Gender: the way a person identifies
 - A lot of terms we are accustomed to using are gendered:
 - Use “sexual and reproductive health” instead of “women’s health” – not all people who identify as women have vaginas or ovaries, and not all people with vaginas or ovaries identify as women
 - Use “Humankind” instead of “Mankind”
 - Use “Latinx” instead of “Latino” or “Latina”
 - Use “penis condom” instead of “male condom”
 - Use “pregnant person” instead of “pregnant woman”
 - Use “parents” instead of “mom and dad”

Land Acknowledgement

We will be delivering this Land Acknowledgement in our welcome speeches:

The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.

Thank you for your commitment to promoting equity and inclusion with us! Please let us know if you have any questions!

Best,

Your CNE Team

References

- <https://communications.uoregon.edu/inclusive-language>
- <https://imb.uq.edu.au/files/20283/using-inclusive-language-guide.pdf>
- <https://www.washington.edu/diversity/tribal-relations/>
- <https://mana.org/healthcare-policy/use-of-inclusive-language>