

Equitable
Language:
Affirming People
through Language



Today's Agenda

Introduce

The Diversity, Inclusion, Cultural and Linguistic Competence and Equity committee and Equitable Language guidance.

Discuss

The starting point for learning about equitable language.

Identify

Steps to achieving equitable language within your Council.

Objectives

Attendees will:

Improve their understanding about equitable language and its purpose.

Improve their understanding about people first and identity first language.

Explore an equitable language resource and ways to use the resource.



Meet the
Diversity,
Inclusion, Cultural
and Linguistic
Competence and
Equity Committee

- Jacqueline Hayes-NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
- Maria Pinkelton- Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Miguel Juarez - Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Katheryne Staeger-Wilson- Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council
- Luz Collazo- DC Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC)
- McKinley Rouse- Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council
- Tedra Jackson- Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

The purpose of the Diversity, Inclusion, Cultural Linguistic Competence and Equity (DICLC and E) Committee

Diversity

All the ways in which people differ. The presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language,. (dis)ability, age,

Inclusion

A variety of people have power, voice and decision-making authority. The act of building and maintaining a strong sense of belonging by actively inviting and valuing authentic contributions and fully empowering the participation of people.

Equity

Fair access, equal opportunity, resources, and an ability to thrive in an environment of respect and dignity.



Cultural Competence

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, defines Culturally Competent as it relates to services and supports.



CULTURALLY COMPETENT.—*The term “culturally competent”, used with respect to services, supports, or other assistance, means services, supports, or other assistance that is conducted or provided in a manner that is responsive to the beliefs, interpersonal styles, attitudes, language, and behaviors of individuals who are receiving the services, supports, or other assistance, and in a manner that has the greatest likelihood of ensuring their maximum participation in the program involved. Sec. 102 DEFINITIONS. (7)*

The Equitable Language Resource guide

- Recommended terms were adapted from the CDC's *Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication*.
- This document provides some preferred terms for select population groups.
- The guide explains why certain terms are stigmatizing.

What is Equitable Language?

– it is respectful, accurate and relevant to all.

Introduction

- Language is a powerful tool for enacting social and systems change.
- It affects our work and shapes the way we talk about our work.
- Research has demonstrated that stigmatizing language can negatively impact how someone is treated.
- It is important to be intentional with the language we use to combat stigma within systems.



Why is Equitable Language Important?

- To change the narrative allowing people to be intentional - avoiding implicit biases.
- Make people feel included and valued.
- Equitable Language will allow us to see people as people, not as a stereotype, attribute, or characteristic.



Equity Centered Writing



Supports strength-based messaging



Respectful



Accurate



Relevant



Highlights inequities

Questions to consider when writing

- **Whose point of view is central?** If the communication focuses on a particular group or culture, are people from within that group the main actors, rather than an outsider coming in as the “hero”?
- **Am I avoiding generalizations or assuming someone's identity?** Only mention characteristics like gender, sexual orientation, religion, racial group or ability when relevant to the discussion.
- **Does my visual content reflect the members of my audience?**



There are no
perfect methods




A significant part of equity-centered language comes from simply taking a moment to reflect on if a term means what we are trying to say.

everylearnereverywhere.org

Additional Thoughts

This information is offered as a guide to DD Council staff in using and sharing language that supports equity work



It is important to note that the DD Act was published in 2000, therefore, some of the terms included below are not representative of current best practices or may be currently in federal legislation.



As mentioned above, equitable language efforts are constantly evolving, and is difficult for any legislation, laws, or statutes to keep pace with ongoing advocacy efforts.

Preferred Terms for Populations, Groups and Communities

- Language is a powerful tool. All forms of communication should reflect and speak to the needs of people in the audience of focus.
- The following information provides preferred terms for select population groups; these terms attempt to represent an ongoing shift toward non-stigmatizing language.
- The information provided should be used as a guide and provide reflection upon word choice; choose words carefully, inclusively, and appropriately for a specific use and audience.

People who are at increased risk or higher risk

Commonly Used Terms

- Vulnerable groups
- Marginalized groups
- At-risk groups
- Hard to reach groups
- Targeted population

Equitable alternatives

- Groups that have been economically/social marginalized
- Groups that have been historically marginalized or historically excluded
- Communities that are underserved by/with limited access to [specific resource or service].
- Groups placed at higher risk/put at higher risk of [outcome].
- Groups experiencing disadvantage because of [reason].

ACCESS to SERVICES and RESOURCES

Commonly used terms

- Unserved/Underserved (term referenced in Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000)
- Hard to reach populations
- The uninsured

Equitable alternatives

- People who have been historically unserved/underserved
- Communities that are under reached or inaccessible
- People who are uninsured/people who are underinsured/people who do not have health insurance

NON-US BORN PERSONS/IMMIGRATION STATUS

Commonly used terms

- Illegals
- Illegal immigrants
- Illegal aliens
- Illegal migrants

Equitable alternatives

- People with undocumented status
- Mixed-status households
- Immigrant, migrant
- Asylee or asylum seeker
- Refugee or refugee populations
- Non-U.S. born person(s)/foreign-born person(s)
- Non-U.S. born persons/Immigration Status



Words with violent meanings

Commonly used Terms

- Target communities for interventions
- Target population
- Tackle issues within the community
- Aimed at communities

Equitable alternatives

- Engage
- Prioritize
- Consider the needs of
- Tailor to the needs of
- Population of focus

Older Adults

Commonly used terms

- Elderly
- Senior
- Frail
- Fragile

Equitable alternatives

- Older adults
- Persons aged [numeric age group] (e.g., people aged 55-64 years)
- Elders when referring to older adults in a cultural context



RACE and ETHNICITY

Commonly used terms

- Referring to people as their race/ethnicity (e.g., Blacks, Hispanics, Latinos, Whites, American Indians, etc.)
- Referring to people as colored people, colored Indian (to refer to American Indian)
- Native American
- Eskimo
- Oriental
- Afro-American
- Negro

Equitable Alternatives

- Racial groups
- American Indian or Alaska Native persons/communities/populations
- Asian persons
- Black or African American persons; Black persons
- Native Hawaiian persons
- Pacific Islander persons
- White persons
- Ethnic Groups:
- Hispanic or Latino persons
- When describing a combination of racial/ethnic groups use “people from some racial and ethnic groups” or “people from racial and ethnic minority groups”



SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Commonly used terms

- Sexual preference
- Gendered, binary language, when not necessary
- Transgendered/transsexual
- Homosexual

Equitable alternatives

- Lesbian, gay, or bisexual (when referring to self-identified sexual orientation)
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Genderqueer
- Gender diverse



Listen and Give Grace

Equitable language efforts are continually evolving alongside new research and ongoing advocacy efforts.

Communities within your region, city, or state, may have preferred language that has evolved out of your local context.

Do not be afraid to approach people because you think you may say the wrong thing.

Person First and Identity First

Person first and identity first language are important distinctions to promote autonomy and support identity.

Person-first language is language that puts a person before their diagnosis, such as being a person with a disability.

Identity-first language is language leads with a person's diagnosis, such as being a disabled person.

Georgia's strategies and approach

The ever-changing culture and norms for how people with disabilities choose to be identified, it is best practice to assume good intent and have grace with the language others use when referring to this population.

It is best to ask people which language they prefer or research the consensus of different parts of the disability community.

Additional steps to Equitable Language

- **Try having an open mind-** Our world is ever changing, there is always a new “normal” be open to changing what you have always thought of a “ normal”.
- **Implicit/Unconscious Biases are real-** Being critiqued or called out doesn’t mean you need to defend yourself, reflect and acknowledge that the persons feelings.
- **Consider Context-** Language used inside your personal environment may not be acceptable at work or outside your community.
- **If your unsure what words to use, just ask-** Defer to people with lived experience, consider contacting other organizations who represent a group your curious about and asking questions (this could be the beginning of a great collaboration)

Contact us!

We recognize that some things may have been left out or need to be further explained. If you feel we have made a mistake in the explanation of the material, or you would like to offer additional information we invite and welcome your comments.


Please send your comments to:

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The DICLC and E committee meets quarterly and would like to offer their assistance; if your council would like to receive guidance from the committee, please send your questions or documents for them to review to Cherie Moon at cmoon@nacdd.org and the committee will review and respond.

Thank you

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The views and opinions expressed in this webinar are those of the contractor and the content does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Administration on Community Living (ACL).

References and Resources

References

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Equity Style Guide, 2020.](#)

The CDC's Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication emphasizes the importance of addressing all people inclusively and respectfully.

Resources

[Bias-Free Language](#)

APA guidelines that cover many important topics, including age, disability, racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status

Source: American Psychological Association (APA)

[Conscious & Unconscious Biases in Health Care](#)

National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University Courses that focus on conscious and unconscious biases in health care and their impact on people who are disproportionately affected by disparities in health and health care

Resources continued

[Inclusive language | 18F Content Guide](#)

Guidance for writing and talking about diverse groups of people

Source: U.S. General Services Administration

[PARC Suggested Language List](#)

A tool to share information and suggestions about language usage.

Source: Prevention, Advocacy & Resource Center (PARC)/ Brandeis University

[Proud & Supported](#)

Proud & Supported is a project to support LGBTQ+ people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and more. The project is funded by the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.