

Office of Student Success & Belonging Inclusivity Guide

Our office has created this guide as a way to encourage action and progress among our communities. Please extend grace for those who are still learning and growing and also continue to hold your peers accountable as we know that our words and our identities are both personal and powerful.

Helpful Tips

- **Use gender-neutral language to address a group:** Saying “guys” or “ladies” to address a group of people is gendered language. Inclusive ways to address a group include “folks,” “people,” “you all,” “y’all,” and “team.”
- **Recognize the impact of mental health language:** “Bipolar,” “PTSD,” “OCD,” and “ADD” are real mental health diagnoses that people possess. Using these terms to describe everyday behaviors underplays the impact of someone’s experiences with a mental disorder. Avoid other derogatory terms that stem from the context of mental health, these words give negative value and contribute to marginalizing individuals with mental health conditions.
- **Ask if you aren’t sure:** Inclusive language is nuanced and is meant to reflect an individual’s or group’s personal style and preference.
- **Personal pronouns,** a consciously chosen set of words that allow a person to represent their gender identity accurately. Pronouns include both gendered pronouns like “He” and “She” as well as gender-neutral pronouns like “They” and “Ze.”

Preface:

*As the world continues to evolve certain terms have been noted to have harmful connotations, the below chart is not an exhaustive list of words/terms, but is meant to be a helpful introduction and resource. “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”
Maya Angelou*

Word/Term Usage

Instead of	Use...Instead
Grandfathered/Grandfather clause	Legacied, exempted

Gypsy	Rom/Romany
Hysterical	Funny, angry, excited
Indian/American Indian	Indigenous American instead, or ask for the terminology that the community prefers
Mental disability	Neurodiverse
Minority/underrepresented minority	Students from underrecognized backgrounds, systemically minoritized groups, marginalized groups
Sexual orientation	Sexual preference
Spirit animal	Kindred, muse, or icon
Third world	Developing countries
Describing someone as “from Africa”	Specify the country that the individual is from vs. generalizing that they are from the continent. If you are unsure of the country they are from, say “from a country located in the continent of Africa”.

Inclusive Language Definitions

Ableism: *Discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities.*

Ally: *Someone who supports a group other than their own e.g. in terms of racial identity, gender, faith identity, sexual orientation, etc. Allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups; take risks and act on the behalf of others; and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.*

Amplification: *A technique an ally can use to ensure that systemically minoritized groups are heard and respected.*

Anti-racism: *Actively dismantling racism in your mind and in your sphere of influence, and working toward equity and equality for all.*

BIPOC: *Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.*

Cisgender: *An individual's gender identity and expression line up with their birth-assigned sex.*

Code-switching: *The practice of changing the way one expresses themselves culturally and linguistically based on different parts of their identity and how they are represented in a group. It's important to recognize that for POC, and the Black community especially, who have not been traditionally able to be their authentic selves in public settings, code-switching has been a survival tactic.*

Diverse/Diversity: *Diversity means individual differences that include (but are not limited to) ability, learning styles, life experiences, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, political, and religion. Individuals cannot be diverse.*

Equality: *Valuing every individual equally regardless of their circumstances, so that everyone has access to equal opportunities.*

Equity: *Recognizes that people have different circumstances and allots the resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.*

First Generation- *an individual whose parents did not complete a 4-year college or university degree*

Gender identity: *A person's perception of their gender, which may or may not correspond with their birth sex.*

Implicit bias: *The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions unconsciously.*

Intersectionality: *Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, this term to describe the experiences of people who experience race inequality in addition to other inequalities such as gender, sexuality, immigrant status, etc. that can create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.*

Inclusion: *a community where all members feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate and achieve their potential.*

Interculturally Competent: *the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds – at home or abroad*

Latine: *Pronounced "La-teen-eh", this gender-neutral term is often used to describe a person of Latin American origin or descent, and as a nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina.*

LGBTQIA: *An acronym encompassing the diverse groups of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, intersex, and asexual populations and allies/alliances/associations.*

Minoritized/Marginalized: *Minoritized groups are devalued by society and are given less access to resources than dominant groups, and are thus marginalized.*

Microaggression: *Comments or actions (e.g. racist, sexist) that can be consciously or unconsciously prejudiced toward marginalized groups.*

Model minority myth: *Refers to a minority group that is perceived as successful.*

Multicultural: *Term for racially, ethnic, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups that includes acceptance of, respect for, and inclusion of others so that systematic exclusion does not exist.*

Neurodiversity: *A term that recognizes the strengths and diversity of thought of people with differences like ADHD and autism, and destigmatizes these differences.*

Nonbinary: *Any gender identity that does not align to the traditional and binary definitions of male or female.*

Psychological Safety: *an environment in which people believe that they can speak up candidly with ideas, questions, concerns, and even mistake*

Racial equity: *The process of achieving racial justice by dismantling racial disparities and improving outcomes for all, prioritizing change in the lives of POC.*

Racism: *Racism is a teaching and mentality that claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence; asserts the superiority of one race over another or others; and seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs, behaviors, use of language, and policies.*

Stereotype threat: *When someone feels at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about an individual's racial, ethnic, gender, or cultural group, which can harm performance and contribute to racial and gender gaps in academic settings.*

Structural racism: *A feature of the social, economic, and political systems in which we all exist, in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms perpetuate racial group inequity.*

Systemic barriers: *Persistent exclusion of POC from health, educational, social, and economic resources.*

Tone policing: *A silencing tactic used in arguments or discussions that focuses on the emotion behind a message rather than the message itself.*

Transgender: *refers to individuals whose gender identity and expression is different than their birth-assigned sex.*

Underrepresented group: *Groups who haven't had equal access to economic opportunities because of their race, gender, sexual-orientation, disability, or low-income status.*

White privilege: *Refers to advantages white people have through systemic racial injustice, and is a way to call attention to how others are denied the same privileges.*