



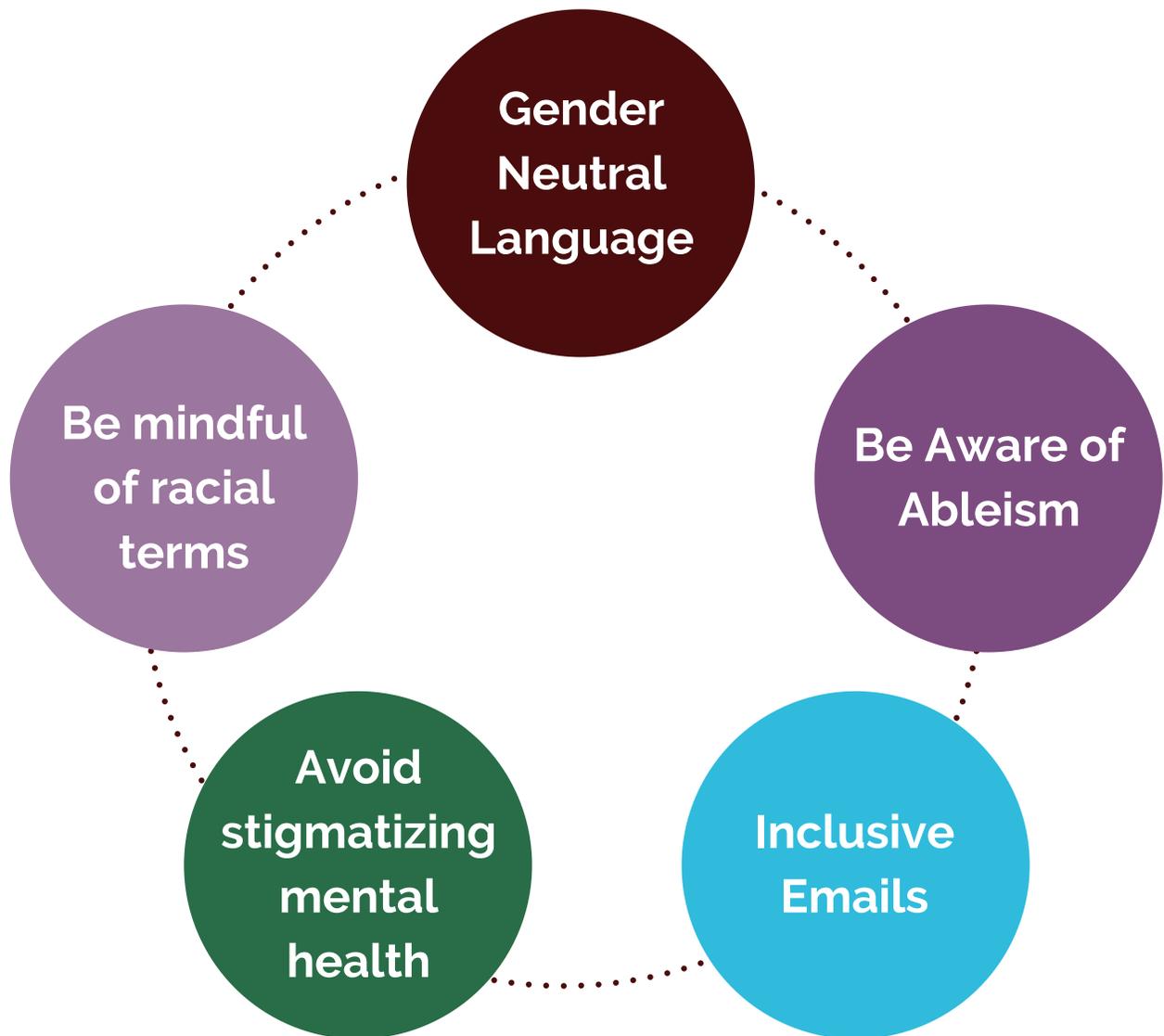
Inclusive Language Guide



*Cover Image courtesy of Jopwell Collection

Through this Inclusive Language Guide, you and your organization can take the first actionable steps to ensuring everyone feels safe and accepted in the workplace. Our Top 5 Tips crafted by our EDIB Experts will guide you in building and transforming your inclusive language practices.

Top 5 Tips for Inclusive Language



Actionable Recommendations and Scenarios

Gender Neutral Language



Use the person's name and try not to use **he** or **she**. Use **"they"** instead to be **gender neutral**



Original: "Hi **guys** thanks so much for all of your help on the presentation today. I look forward to working with you on this project."

More inclusive example: "Hi **Tina and Alex** thank you **both** so much for all of your help on the presentation today. I look forward to working with you on this project."

Notice: Use their **names** instead of **guys**



Avoid using **gender-specific terms**, try using more **neutral** terms to ensure inclusivity



Chairman → **Chair**
Congressman → **Representative**
Manpower → **Workforce**
Steward/stewardess → **Attendant**
Waiter/waitress → **Server / Waiting staff**
Mankind → **Humanity**
Landlady → **Property Owner**
Businessman/businesswoman → **Executive**
Mother tongue → **Native language**
Husband/wife → **Spouse / Partner**

Actionable Recommendations and Scenarios

Be Aware of Ableism

able·ism

discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities

Source: Merriam Webster



Use **alt+text** to describe any images to make them accessible for screen readers



Use a **people-first** approach. For example:
Instead of **my blind colleague** say **my colleague who is blind**



"I know I need to be careful of my **blind spots**" → **ableism**
So rather than saying something negative about blind people (e.g., blind spot), use **ignorant**, **not knowledgeable**, or a **gap in understanding**



"That is so **lame**." → **ableist language**
We say "lame" when we mean something is boring or dull, but "lame" actually refers to **lower body parts that don't function properly** for walking



Be mindful of stereotyping older adults. Terms like "**aged**" or "**elderly**" could lead to preconceived notions about their abilities

Actionable Recommendations and Scenarios

Inclusive Emails

Note: changes to email signature should take place alongside company-wide conversations and training on the use of pronouns, creating inclusive workplaces for all genders as well as on the importance of land acknowledgements.



Include your **pronouns** and a **land acknowledgement** in your email signature



If the company has won an **award** related to **diversity** and **inclusion** then share the symbol or link to it



Original: Hey folks,
Thank you for all your hard work on the briefs.

Best regards,

Jaime



More inclusive example: Hey folks,
Thank you for all your hard work on the briefs.

Best regards,

Jaime

she/her/hers

Located in Vancouver, BC, the historical, traditional, and unceded territories of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleilwaututh First Nations

Notice: The use of **pronouns** and **land acknowledgement** in the signature

Actionable Recommendations and Scenarios

Avoid Stigmatization of Mental Health



Avoid words that stigmatize and devalues mental health conditions:
crazy, maniac, nuts, OCD, stupid, addict, victim



Example:

Colleague: Wow, Veronica's desk is so organized. It's like she has **OCD**.

More Inclusive Language:

Colleague: Wow, Veronica is so **neat** and **tidy** with her workspace.



Avoid idiomatic expressions and redundancies like "**went downhill**", "**beat around the bush**," "**ridiculously good**", "**true facts**".

Their literal meanings can be challenging for those who do not know the meaning of these phrases and/or those with neurological conditions like autism



Provide mental health resources for your employees



Allocate time for mental health and rejuvenation days to allow employees to recharge and disconnect

Actionable Recommendations and Scenarios

Be Mindful of Racial Terms



Use **people's first language**



Use a **people-first** approach. Example: instead of **my Black colleague**, say **my colleague who is Black** or **my South East Asian manager**, say **my manager who is South East Asian**



Use alternatives for terms that **reinforce racial supremacy**



Refrain from using the terms **black = bad** and **white = good**



Use **Allowlist** and **Blocklist** vs. **Whitelist** and **Blacklist**



Be mindful of **stereotyping** colleagues
Ask your manager(s) for **bias training**

Additional Resources

Below you can find EDIB Expert-approved additional resources to dive deeper into your inclusive language journey.

- [APA Bias-Free Language](#)
- [APA Inclusive Language Guidelines](#)
- [Words Matter - Guidelines on Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace](#)
- [Inclusive Language in the Workplace: +30 Words You Should Stop Using Now](#)
- [Elements of Indigenous Style A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Native Land Map](#)
- [Make your Outlook email accessible to people with disabilities](#)
- [Words Matter - Guidelines on Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- [12 Common Words And Phrases With Racist Origins Or Connotations](#)
- [GSMA-Inclusive-Language-Guide_2020.pdf](#)



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About Veza

Veza Global has over 15 years of international EDIB leadership experience and came together through our passion for creating equitable opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds to impact their organizations.

Our Founder Manpreet Dhillon, ranked #15 globally on the 2020 EmPower Ethnic Minority Future Leaders list, started Veza Global to create authentic, human-centred consulting services and leadership training through a lens of equity for race, culture, gender, and people with disabilities.

A select few of our past clients include the HR Tech Group, Immigrant Employer's Council of BC (IEC-BC), UN Women, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and Terramera.



Our EDIB Solutions

Organizational, Demographics and/or Inclusion Assessments

Assess where your company is on their equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging journey and create an action plan to move forward.

Audit of HR Practices & Policies, with Focus Groups

EDIB audit of HR policies, practices and employee lifecycle. Complete with focus groups of 10-15 employees through a Veza Global facilitated discussion. Receive a complete report with recommendations organized in themes.

Inclusive Leadership coaching

Grounded in Inclusive Leadership Competencies, this 1-2-1 coaching will support leaders in embodiment and engagement of the EDIB principles in the way they lead and manage.

EDIB Workshops

Interactive, facilitated conversation for peer-to-peer learning. Offered on a variety of topics depending on your organization's needs.

EDIB Advisory

We offer advisory services to provide you with a sounding board, help review documents, and to help you discuss your next steps.



Coaching, customized training and consulting for companies on diversity, inclusion and leadership.