

**EXPLORE
EDMONTON**



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

At Explore Edmonton, we are committed to promoting an inclusive and welcoming environment for all visitors. The words we use play a vital role in shaping perceptions and fostering a sense of inclusion. To ensure that our communications reflect our commitment to inclusivity, we have developed this Inclusive Language Guide. It provides recommendations and guidelines for using language that respects and includes individuals of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities.

The Government of Canada offers more information on inclusive writing guidelines and resources:

**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
INCLUSIVE WRITING GUIDELINES**

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PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words we use to talk about people when we don't use their name. For most of us, we don't give the pronouns we use to describe ourselves or others very much thought, but many of our colleagues and the people we serve

and provide care to think about them often. Next to a person's name, the pronouns we use when talking with and about others are an important and meaningful way of showing respect and dignity.

- Whenever you meet someone new, consider introducing yourself with your pronouns.
- If you are hosting or participating in a meeting, especially an online or phone meeting, model inclusion by sharing your pronouns.
- Add your pronouns to your email signature.
- Never assume someone's pronouns by the way they look or by the sound of their voice.
- When in doubt ask, "Can I ask you a question about your pronouns?" and if they say yes, then ask "What pronouns do you use?"
- If you are still unsure and aren't in a position to ask, use gender neutral pronouns, they/ them, or the name the person goes by.

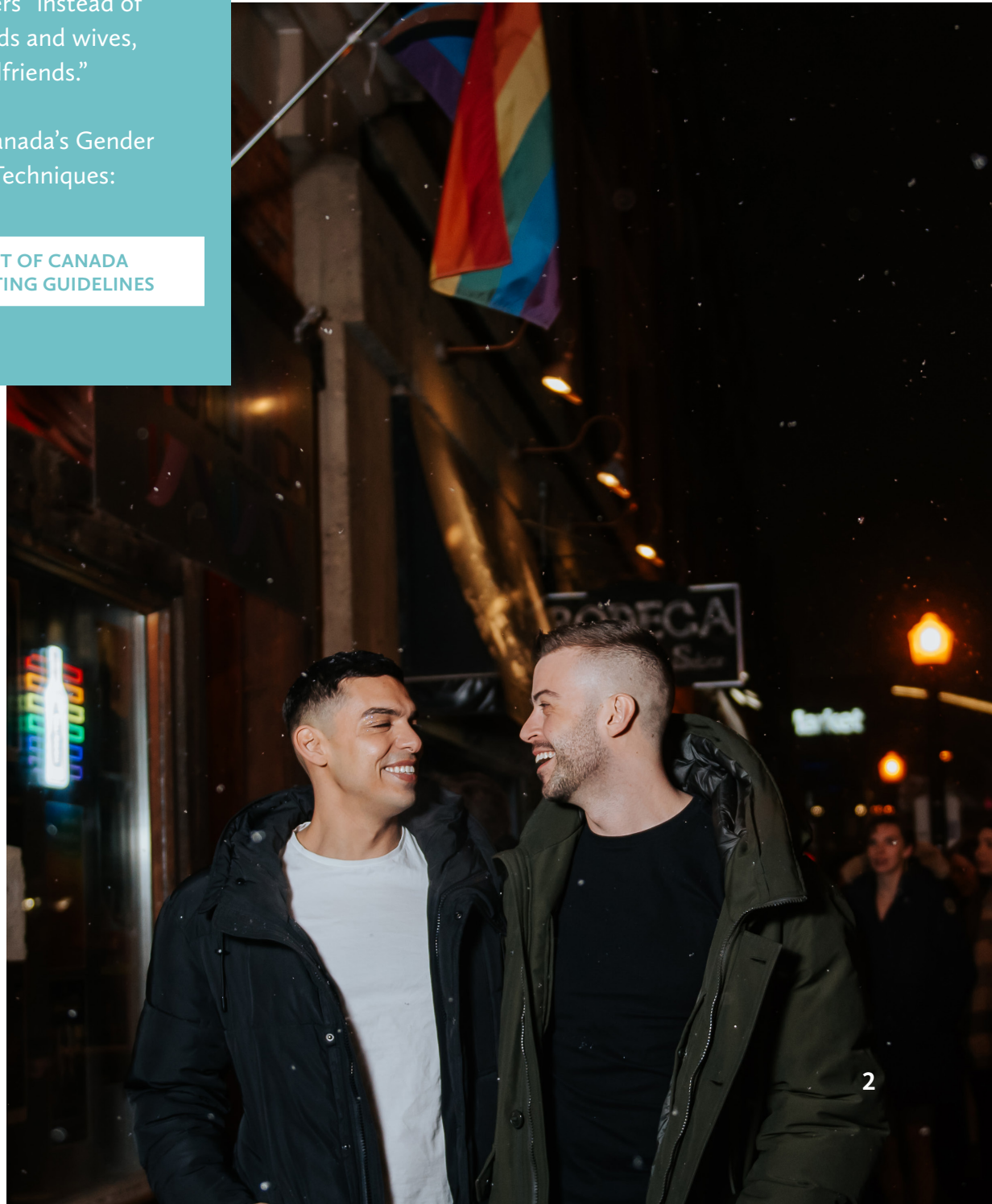


GENDER & SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Avoid language that assumes relationship status and sexual orientation. For example, use “spouses or partners” instead of assuming “husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends.”

Government of Canada’s Gender Inclusive Writing Techniques:

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
INCLUSIVE WRITING GUIDELINES





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

2SLGBTQIA+

An acronym that stands for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual individuals and communities. The + or plus indicates inclusion of sexual orientations and gender identities not explicitly in the acronym.

ALLY

Rooted in the term, “alliance” and ally is someone in a position of power or privilege who makes consistent efforts to uplift, support and advocate for people in equity-deserving groups such as the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

BISEXUAL

An individual who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to more than one gender.

GAY

A term used to describe individuals who are emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to individuals of the same gender. More commonly used to describe male attraction to other males, but men, women and non-binary people might also use this term.

LESBIAN

A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to other women.

NONBINARY

An umbrella term used to describe individuals who do not exclusively identify as male or female. It is a way of identifying and/or expressing oneself outside the binary gender categories of male/masculine and female/feminine.

QUEER

An umbrella term used to describe individuals who are not exclusively heterosexual or cisgender. This term has been used offensively as a slur and has been reclaimed by some members of the community. It should not be used to describe an individual or entire community unless they self-identify as such.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

A person’s emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction or lack of sexual attraction to others.

TRANSGENDER

A term used to describe individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth.

TWO-SPIRITED

A term used by some Indigenous peoples to describe individuals who embody both masculine and feminine qualities in terms of sexuality, gender and spirituality

TERMS TO AVOID

- **Generalizations and stereotypes:** Avoid generalizations or relying on stereotypes about 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. People within these communities have diverse identities, experiences, and expressions, and it's important to recognize and respect that diversity.
- **Invalidating language:** Avoid language that invalidates or denies the identities and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. This includes phrases like “It’s just a phase,” “You’ll grow out of it,” “It’s not real.” Or “preference”.
- **Outdated terms:** Language evolves over time, and some terms that were once commonly used may now be considered outdated or inappropriate. Stay informed about current terminology and avoid using outdated terms that may be offensive or inaccurate.
- **Misgendering:** Misgendering is using pronouns or terms that do not align with the pronouns the individual goes by. It is essential to respect individuals’ pronouns and use them correctly. Avoid using the wrong pronouns or assuming someone’s gender identity based on appearance or assumptions.
- **Slurs and derogatory language:** Avoid using slurs or derogatory terms that are offensive or disrespectful towards any sexual orientation or gender identity.



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous Language Writing Resources
from the Government of Canada:

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
INCLUSIVE WRITING GUIDELINES



WHEN AND WHERE TO USE INDIGENOUS NAMES:

- Use Indigenous names when referring to specific individuals, communities, cultural practices, or events.
- Emphasize the importance of correct spelling and pronunciation of Indigenous names.
- Craft respectful land acknowledgments that recognize and honour the Indigenous peoples on whose land we work and play:

“Explore Edmonton respectfully acknowledges that we are located within Treaty 6 territory, and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We acknowledge this land as the traditional home for many Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Dene, Salteaux, Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.”

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANISHINAABE

A large Indigenous nation encompassing various groups, including the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, and Algonquin, with territories spanning from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Coast.

BLACKFOOT

A collective name for several Indigenous nations, including the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani, primarily residing in the northern Great Plains region.

CREE

One of the largest Indigenous groups in North America, with communities across Canada, known for their diverse cultures, languages, and traditions.

DENE

A collective term referring to several Indigenous nations in northern Canada, known for their extensive land and cultural connections.

INDIGENOUS

Referring to the original inhabitants of a specific region or territory, often having distinct cultural practices, languages, and histories.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

When speaking about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people collectively.

INUIT

Indigenous peoples inhabiting Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, and Alaska, with distinct cultural practices, languages, and traditions.

MÉTIS NATION

A distinct Indigenous community in Canada with mixed Indigenous and European heritage, recognized as one of the three Indigenous peoples of Canada.

NAKOTA SIOUX

A branch of the Sioux Nation, also known as Assiniboine, residing primarily in the northern Great Plains and western Canada.

SALTEAUX

Also known as Saulteaux or Ojibwe, a group within the larger Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) Nation, residing primarily in the Great Lakes region.

TREATY 6

A specific treaty between the Canadian government and several Indigenous nations, including the Cree, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux, Dene, and Saulteaux, outlining rights, lands, and agreements.



TERMS TO AVOID

CONQUER

This term can carry negative connotations and reinforce power dynamics. To promote inclusivity and avoid perpetuating colonial narratives, it's best to avoid using "conquer" in reference to Indigenous communities or their histories. Instead, focus on acknowledging their resilience, cultural contributions, and the ongoing process of reconciliation.

EXOTIC

This term objectifies and stereotypes cultures or individuals from non-Western backgrounds. It reduces their rich and diverse identities to a simplistic and often distorted portrayal. To foster inclusivity and respect cultural diversity, it is recommended to avoid using "exotic" and instead focus on celebrating the unique traditions, practices, and contributions of different cultures.

INDIAN

This term is considered outdated and inappropriate. Instead, use the specific names of Indigenous nations or communities.

NATIVE

While it can be used in certain contexts, be cautious as it can be seen as overly generalizing or stereotyping. Use more specific terms when referring to Indigenous peoples.

PRIMITIVE

Avoid using this term, as it can perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions about Indigenous cultures. Instead, focus on celebrating and respecting their rich cultural heritage.

SHAMAN

This term is specific to certain Indigenous cultures and should not be generalized or used inaccurately. Respect the diversity of spiritual practices among Indigenous communities.

SQUAW

This term is derogatory and offensive, so it should always be avoided.

STAKEHOLDER

The term "stakeholder" has negative historical connotations which may cause unease or mistrust, and it is important to be mindful of this when working with Indigenous peoples. Use "In partnership with Indigenous Peoples."



BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR (BIPOC) COMMUNITIES

- Capitalize "Black" to recognize it as a distinct cultural and political identity, respecting the preferences of individuals and communities. Do not capitalize "white".
- Avoid generalizations and assumptions based on an individual's background.
- Recognize the intersectionality of identities and experiences.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DISCRIMINATION

The unfair or unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on certain characteristics or attributes, such as race, gender, or religion.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The interconnected nature of social identities, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, and how they overlap and intersect, leading to unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

MARGINALIZATION

The process by which individuals or groups are pushed to the margins or periphery of society, resulting in limited access to resources, representation, and decision-making power, and increased vulnerability to discrimination and oppression.

OPPRESSION

The systematic and unjust exercise of power and control over individuals or groups based on their social identities, resulting in the denial of rights, unequal treatment, and disadvantage.

POWER

Unequally distributed access to privileges such as information, opportunity, and resources, and the ability to influence decisions, rules, standards, and policies to benefit oneself or one's social group. Power, and the level of power possessed by any individual or group, affects their ability to live comfortable, safe lives. Power is relational and it operates between individuals, cultures, institutions, and social groups.

PRIVILEGE

Unearned access, benefits, and opportunities possessed by members of a social group with a high level of power. Privilege occurs when structures and institutions have been historically designed for the benefit of or to be accessed by a particular group.

SYSTEMIC RACISM

The systemic and institutionalized practices, policies, and structures that perpetuate racial inequality and discrimination, often resulting in unequal access to resources, opportunities, and power for marginalized racial groups.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

The societal advantages, benefits, and unearned privileges that white individuals experience as a result of their race, often without being consciously aware of them.



TERMS TO AVOID

ALIEN/FOREIGNER

Refrain from using terms that emphasize someone's perceived foreignness or otherness based on their race or ethnicity.

BACKWARDS/PRIMITIVE

Avoid using these terms to describe cultures or practices from non-Western backgrounds, as they can perpetuate stereotypes and diminish the richness and complexity of those cultures.

COLOURBLINDNESS

Refrain from using phrases like "I don't see color" or "We're all the same." While well-intentioned, these statements can dismiss the experiences and identities of BIPOC individuals.

ETHNIC SLURS

Avoid using any derogatory terms or racial slurs that target specific ethnic or racial groups.

EXOTIC

Like when writing about Indigenous Communities, the same consideration goes for members of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) Communities. Avoid using this term to describe cultures or individuals from non-Western backgrounds. It can perpetuate stereotypes and objectify people based on their perceived differences.

MINORITY/MAJORITY

Instead of using "minority" to describe BIPOC communities, opt for more specific terms like "underrepresented" or "historically marginalized" to acknowledge the systemic inequalities they face.

NON-WHITE/PEOPLE OF COLOUR (BIPOC) COMMUNITIES

While "People of Color" is generally accepted as an inclusive term, avoid using it as a generic catch-all phrase without acknowledging specific racial or ethnic identities. Recognize the diversity within BIPOC communities by using specific terms whenever possible.

TOKENISM

Avoid treating individuals from BIPOC communities as tokens or representatives of their entire race or ethnicity. Recognize and value their individuality and diverse experiences.

URBAN/INNER CITY

These terms are often associated with racial stereotypes and can perpetuate negative biases about certain neighborhoods or communities.

VICTIMHOOD

Avoid language that portrays BIPOC communities solely as victims or helpless individuals. Recognize their resilience, strength, and agency in the face of systemic challenges.



ACCESSIBILITY

- Use person-centered language and put the person first, emphasizing their individuality. For example, say “a man who is blind” instead of “a blind man” or “a person with schizophrenia” instead of “a schizophrenic.”
- Avoid phrases that suggest victimhood when speaking about disabilities. For example, avoid “afflicted by,” “victim of,” “suffers from,” or “confined to a wheelchair.”
- Use “Differently abled” as a more appropriate term than “disabled.”
- Provide information about accessible venues, facilities, and services.
- Accommodate individual preferences for accessibility needs, such as providing alternative formats or sign language interpreters.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABLEISM

Discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities, based on the belief that able-bodiedness is superior.

ACCESSIBILITY

The degree to which a product, service, or environment is usable and inclusive for people with disabilities, ensuring equal access and opportunities.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

Alternative formats of information that accommodate different disabilities, such as large print, braille, audio description, or electronic text.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Devices, tools, software, or equipment that help individuals with disabilities perform tasks, improve their independence, and enhance accessibility.

INVISIBLE DISABILITY

Disabilities that are not immediately apparent or visible, such as chronic pain, mental health conditions, or certain neurological disorders.

Government of Canada's Accessibility Glossary:

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
INCLUSIVE WRITING GUIDELINES

MOBILITY AID

Devices or equipment used by individuals with mobility impairments to assist with movement and navigation, such as wheelchairs, crutches, or walkers.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Modifications, adjustments, or changes made to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities, enabling them to participate fully and equally.

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

A trained professional who facilitates communication between individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who can hear, using sign language.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The design of products, environments, and services that are accessible and usable by people with diverse abilities, without the need for adaptation or specialized solutions.



TERMS TO AVOID

AFFLICTED

This term implies that a person with a disability is burdened or afflicted by their condition. Instead, use neutral and respectful language that focuses on the person's experiences, abilities, or challenges.

CRIPPLE

This derogatory term is offensive and disrespectful. Instead, use person-first language and specific terms to describe the disability or condition.

DISABLED

Instead, use "person with a disability" or "person with differing abilities" to emphasize the personhood and individuality of the individual, rather than defining them solely by their disability.

HANDICAPPED

This term is outdated and can be stigmatizing. Instead, use "accessible" or "adapted" to describe facilities or accommodations that cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

INVALID

This term implies that a person with a disability is without value or significance. Instead, use person-first language and focus on the person's abilities and strengths.

NORMAL/ABNORMAL

Avoid using these terms as they imply that individuals with disabilities are not "normal." Instead, focus on diversity, individuality, and inclusivity in describing human experiences and conditions.

RETARDED

This derogatory term is highly offensive and should never be used.

SPECIAL NEEDS

While this term is commonly used, it can be seen as patronizing or infantilizing. Instead, use "individuals with disabilities" or specific terms to describe the needs or accommodations required.

SUFFERS FROM...

This phrase can perpetuate a narrative of victimhood and define a person solely by their condition. Instead, use language that respects their experiences and acknowledges their resilience and strength.

WHEELCHAIR-BOUND

Avoid using this term as it suggests that a wheelchair restricts or confines a person. Instead, use "wheelchair user" or "person who uses a wheelchair" to emphasize the person's agency and mobility.



MENTAL HEALTH & NEURODIVERGENCE



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADHD (ATTENTION-DEFICIT/ HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER)

A neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that can impact daily functioning and attention span.

AUTISM

A complex neurodevelopmental condition characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication, and restricted or repetitive behaviors and interests.

DYSLEXIA

A learning disorder that affects a person's ability to read, spell, and process language despite having normal intelligence and adequate educational opportunities.

EPILEPSY

A neurological disorder characterized by recurrent seizures, which are caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain.

OCD (OBSESSIVE- COMPULSIVE DISORDER)

A mental health disorder characterized by recurring thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) that individuals feel driven to perform.



TERMS TO AVOID

CRAZY

This term is derogatory and can perpetuate negative stereotypes and stigmatization of individuals with mental health conditions. Instead, use respectful and understanding language that promotes empathy and support.

INSANE

This term perpetuates negative stereotypes and can be stigmatizing. Instead, use neutral and descriptive language to discuss mental health conditions.

MANIC

This term is associated with the manic phase of bipolar disorder and can be stigmatizing. Instead, use more neutral and descriptive language to discuss the symptoms or experiences.

PSYCHO

This term is derogatory and stigmatizing when used to describe individuals with mental health conditions. It's essential to use respectful language that fosters understanding and empathy.



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