

Fact Sheet: Inclusive Language presented by the Culture & Ethnic Diversity Network



Demonstrate your Allyship by recognising and challenging:

Racist language & behaviours:

- Being asked “Where are you really from?” – an assumption that you are not British.
- Continually pronouncing someone’s name incorrectly with no effort to get it right.
- Being mistaken for being in a role more junior than the role you hold
- Having an idea dismissed or ignored and then a white person making the same suggestion and being given credit.
- A non-black person saying, “Can I touch your hair?” or touching a black person’s hair.
- Being the only person asked to produce workplace identification in a group of white colleagues.

Sexist Language:

- Avoid sexist language e.g., “Is it that time of the month?”
- Maternity & Pregnancy – “should you be doing that in your condition?”

Ableist language:

- Avoid ableist terms, stereotypes, idioms, and expressions e.g., “the blind leading the blind”.

Ageist Language:

- For example, avoid using the term “kid” to refer to a younger colleague.

Religion, Faith, and Belief:

- Using “Jesus” or “God” as an outcry may be offensive to people of faith.

Use Inclusive language for LGBTIQ+:

- Mind greetings in team meetings or groups.
- Use “siblings”, “partner”, “they” and ask for pronouns.
- Introduce self and state pronouns.
- Avoid assumptions about gender identity or sexuality.
- Don’t assume traditional parental roles or family structure.

Ask Rather than Assume!

Don’t assume ever. Names don’t define religion. Appearances don’t reveal disabilities. Don’t judge someone’s life just by their looks or words. Avoid Generalisations. Be specific and consider individual differences.

“Lost in translation” - Communicating with people whose first language is not English.

- Simplify your language but don't patronise.
- Keep it simple, using shorter sentences, avoid idioms.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Don't be afraid to check understanding.
- Ask for the right interpreter (if needed).
- Pay attention to body language.
- Be patient and respectful.
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Not all languages have gender neutral terms.

Be Kind to Yourself

It's ok to get it wrong! We all make mistakes; the important thing is that we learn from them.

If you make a mistake...

- Avoid being defensive.
- Accept the feedback.
- Apologize.
- Be mindful of your language in your next interaction.

Language is constantly evolving, and it can take time to switch to new ways of communicating with one another. Practice makes perfect!

