Inclusive language

Elizabeth Wynn
She/her
28/5/2020
Why is this important?

DID YOU KNOW...
YOUR WORDS

YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER

Can be hurtful?
Can make you less approachable?
Might be offensive?
Can create an inclusive campus?
Can generate kindness?

Image from Atlas Corps
This isn’t about controlling or judging what anyone says or thinks.

Language is always evolving and people have different opinions.

The most important things are respect, empathy and an open mind.
General guidelines

If you aren’t sure, look it up or ask

- Be relevant
- Use the language a person uses for themself
- Be gender-neutral and non-binary inclusive
- Don’t make light of disabilities
- Avoid euphemisms and victimhood of disabilities

If you aren’t sure, look it up or ask.
Specific examples

- Confined to a wheelchair → Wheelchair user
- The common man → The average person
- Christian name → First name; given name
- Minorities → Underrepresented group
- Disabled toilet → Accessible toilet
- Transsexual; transgendered → Trans(gender)
- Guys (to refer to a group) → Everyone; folks; all
- Mentally handicapped → Person with a learning disability
Useful concepts

• **Ableism**: Practices and attitudes in society that assume there is an ideal body and mind that is better than all others.

• **Heteronormativity**: A default assumption of heterosexuality and stereotypical gender norms.

• **Microaggression**: Brief and common communications that transmit derogatory or negative messages to a person because they belong to a marginalised group.

• **Privilege**: A right or advantage that only some people have access to because of their social group membership.

• **Reclaimed language/words**: Words with a history of derogatory use that members of the oppressed group have decided to use for themselves.
Respect
Empathy
Open mind
Any questions?
Further reading

- Gender-specific proofing tool in Word
- Institute inclusive language guidelines
- Relearning how to speak: how to be more inclusive every day through language