Southern Cross University

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FACTSHEET

The Power of Inclusive Language

Language is powerful and dynamic. We use it every day in speaking and writing yet rarely stop to think how we may be including or excluding people in our audience. Inclusive words, phrases and tone do not reflect prejudice or discriminate against individuals or groups because of, for example, their race, culture, age, religion, sexuality, gender or disability. When inclusive language is used, people feel safe to participate as they can 'see' themselves and their experience reflected in the conversation as equals. Individual perspectives and experiences are more likely to be shared and validated.

As a diverse educational institution of staff and students across multiple campuses, Southern Cross University seeks to build a respectful work and study environment where everyone feels included and can make a meaningful contribution. We not only promote inclusive language, we also encourage inclusive practice in curricula (diversity and balance in content, language and images). To this end we have provided an excellent and comprehensive professional learning resource on-line: Southern Cross University Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice Toolkit.

Here are some recent examples of inclusive language.

	Inclusive Language	Language to avoid
Indigenous Australians Southern Cross University respects Indigenous identity. Gnibi, the SCU College of Indigenous Australian Peoples is a source of expertise and advice in inclusive language use.	All staff are encouraged and permitted to make an Acknowledgement of Country when opening University events. See wording at SCU Acknowledging Traditional Custodians At Southern Cross University we use terminology such as 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' when referring to Indigenous Australia. Acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This map (Horton, 1996) shows the diversity to be found among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia. In some circumstances, it may be culturally appropriate to refer to a specific language or cultural group, such as 'the Widjabul people of the Bundjalung nation'. Seek advice before using these terms. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often have both an anglicised name and an Indigenous name. Always	Referring to Torres Strait Islander peoples as Aboriginal people. Suggesting that someone does not look like an Indigenous person. Stereotypical descriptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that imply all members of communities share the same characteristics. Using the Aboriginals, the Indigenous. Use an appropriate noun as well, e.g. Aboriginal people/s or Torres Strait Islander people/s. Eugenic terminology such as full-blood, half-caste or part-Aborigine.

	Inclusive Language	Language to avoid
	use a person's Indigenous name if they have expressed a preference for this. Always capitalise 'Indigenous', 'Aboriginal' and 'Torres Strait Islander' when you are referring to Indigenous Australians.	
People with Disabilities	It is likely that one in five people you meet will have a disability. Disabilities can be visible and invisible. Always refer to the PERSON before referring to their disability: 'person with a disability' or 'people with disabilities'. More specific examples include: • person who is deaf, has a hearing impairment or from the Deaf community; • person who is blind or has a vision impairment; • person who uses a wheelchair or is a wheelchair user; • person with an intellectual disability, or a person with mental health condition. People with disabilities are living with disabilities and seek to be included just the same as everyone else. Use expressions that recognise the capacity of people to make meaningful contribution to and be a part of the community.	Avoid using 'disabled person' or 'the disabled' or generalist terms such as 'the mentally ill' as this diminishes the person and defines them by their disability rather than by their humanity. Do not use the term 'suffering' from disabilities, or 'confined' to a wheelchair. A wheelchair is a liberator. Avoid phrases such as 'handicapped', 'deaf and dumb' (non-verbal is the preferred term), 'retarded' (person with intellectual impairment). In everyday language avoid using historically derogatory words and phrases like 'they danced like a spastic'; 'you're such a spaz/retard' and 'they're crazy'. Avoid sensationalising on the basis of a person's disability or using 'euphemisms', such as 'physically challenged' or 'special'. Telling them they're 'so brave' or 'so courageous' is considered to be condescending.
Gender	Use gender neutral terms such as: • chair or chairperson, not chairman • 'welcome to all', not 'ladies and gentlemen' • 'humankind' not 'mankind' • 'workforce' not 'manpower'/ 'staffing' not 'manning' • 'the admin staff' or 'administrators' not 'the girls in the office' Use gender neutral pronouns such as 'they' or 'their' instead of 'him/her' or 'his/her' Use consistent and preferred titles irrespective of gender such as: Mr Smith	Do not use expressions which stereotype gender roles, such as: • women stay home and care for children and men work • women are not interested in Engineering, Science, Maths etc • men can't nurture children or are deficient in the kitchen Avoid language that represents heterosexuality as being (the only) 'normal' or 'morally better' or 'correct'. (see sexual diversity below)

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	and Ms Jones, not Mr Smith and Jennifer Jones.	
<u>Sexual diversity</u>	Gender is not binary (not only male and female) and 1 in 10 people you meet are likely to be members of the GLBTIQ (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex, queer) community. Use 'partner' or 'spouse'. There are various options, it can best to ask before using wife/husband/boyfriend/girlfriend when referring to a person or people's personal relationships. People who are transsexual or transgender may use a preferred pronoun to represent their gender identity. Be guided by them.	Do not use derogatory terms such as 'dykes', 'homo', 'tranny', or generalist nouns such as 'the transgenders' or 'the homosexuals.' Only describe or define people by their gender identity if it is relevant. Do not assume. You only know someone's sexual orientation when they tell you. Do not ask intrusive questions about people's bodies, sexual activities or private lives. Do not sensationalise gender diversity OR silence or ignore gender diverse people by only including heterosexual perspectives.
<u>Culture, race and ethnicity</u>	In Australia in 2017, the term CALD refers to people from 'Culturally And Linguistically Diverse' backgrounds. Older terms you may hear include: NESB (from 'non-English speaking background') or LBOTE (Language Background Other than English). These terms can refer to staff and domestic and international students. It is respectful to correctly pronounce people's names. If in doubt, ask the person and if announcing names, ensure accuracy. Use the words 'first name' rather than 'Christian name'. Use 'international student' rather than 'foreign student'. If it is necessary to specify the descent or ethnicity of a person or group it is recommended to use a qualifier with the noun Australian, for example, 'Vietnamese-born Australian' or 'Arabic-speaking Australian'. Some Australians prefer not to be identified through their	Do not use derogatory terms such as 'wogs', 'frog', 'gringo', 'eye-tie'. These are name-calling and likely to offend. If having difficulty pronouncing a name, persist, rather than saying things like "Oh that was a very difficult name to pronounce". Avoid 'positive/patronising' comments based on stereotypes, such as 'You speak such good English'. Avoid unnecessarily referring to people by their migration status, such as 'former refugee', 'new arrival' or 'boat person'. Avoid expressing the assumption that a person with a recognisable accent was not born in Australia. Avoid using one term as a generic descriptor, for example, 'Asian', when there are many racial, cultural and

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	cultural origin or descent at all, so preferences should be respected.	ethnic differences within the geographic boundaries of Asia.
Age	In teaching and learning environments, the age range of students and staff is wide, and mature-age students are usually defined as people 25 years of age and above. Only if it is necessary, refer to a person's age as for example, people over 45 / 55 / 65 years; older or elderly (for 80+) Use language that recognises the value of the person's experience and knowledge and the richness of their perspective.	Avoid referring to older people as 'old', 'past their prime', 'over the hill' Avoid language which shows an assumption of incompetence based on a person's older age for example - "Despite his age, Harry could understand the software..." or "She's done a great job for someone her age..."

Quick References

Southern Cross University Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice Toolkit

Inclusive Language Guidelines, Flinders University

The Inclusive Language Factsheet has been developed by the Equity and Diversity Office November 2017

www.scu.edu.au/equity