

Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace

Honouring diverse lived experiences, cultures and histories.



Practice	✓ Say or Do This	✗ Avoid This
Place people first	“Jack has a disability.”	“Jack is disabled.”
Reflect diverse groups (i.e., gender and citizenship)	“Hey everyone.” Use the terms residents, Canadian society or people in Canada (when generally referring to people in Canada).	“Hey guys.” Only use the term Canadians – many people in Canada are residents, not citizens.
Destigmatize groups and issues	“Accessible parking.” “People have substance abuse disorders.” “That event was not interesting.”	“Handicapped parking.” “People are addicted to drugs.” “That event was lame.”
Account for diverse practices	“Have a happy holiday” and/or recognize different holidays, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Solstice, Kwanzaa, Diwali.	Only wishing a merry Christmas, assuming everyone recognizes December 25.
Respect cultural practices and symbols	Learn how to appropriately use terms or refer to symbols or ideas from diverse cultures.	Misusing references to pow wows, totem poles, tribes, spirit animals, for example, especially in expressions.
Choose the right words, avoiding negative words	“Exclude or eliminate” “Group” “Surprised”	“Blackball” “Gang” “Blindsided”
Avoid us/them	“We watch out for one another”.	“We watch out for others.”
Value people	“We are recruiting new staff.”	“We are recruiting new talent.”

