

COMMUNICATIONS TOOL KIT



This document will help you in the design of written materials to be both inclusive, sensitive, and compliant with the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service (CLAS) Standards and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).



We do not want to be exclusionary, insensitive, or contribute to people feeling they are not welcome. Using gender neutral and culturally sensitive wording when creating any documents-whether for staff, members, providers, or the community is best practice, aligns with regulations and it fosters inclusivity. We need to be aware of the language we use. Utilize the below list when writing or reviewing documents. The list includes either offensive or non-inclusive phrases or words that have been found in materials, written as indicated. When reviewing documents, perform a search for the words as written below in the various ways (utilize the “find” function – select “Control F”) and replace them with sensitive terms as applicable:

Exclusionary	Inclusive
his, her, his or her, his/her	their, the members
he, she, he or she, he/she	they, the members
him, her, him or her, him/her	them
himself, herself, himself or herself	themselves
woman, man, men or women	the member or the individual, members or individuals
gender specific screenings – well-woman etc.	take out the gender term and leave as “preventative screening” or “annual well-check”. In general we need to use medical terms – do not “gender” services. Documents often reference “women should have a mammogram...” and instead should say “members should have a mammogram” etc.
pregnant women, pregnant woman	pregnant individuals, child-bearers, child-bearer
mother, father, mom, dad	parent as applicable
maternity	excluding any formal contract/program language requirement or information-change to “pregnancy”, “childbirth”, “pregnancy and childbirth” “prenatal”, “postnatal” etc. as applicable
Gender-Male, Female - Sex and Gender/Gender Identity are different. Stay away from using them synonymously because it can be exclusionary; sex should reference medical terminology and gender/gender identity should reference the social construct of gender/gender identity...gender identities.	When need to know sex – include sex terms: male, female, or intersex When need to know gender – include gender/gender identity terms: woman, man, transgender, boy, girl, nonbinary, gender fluid, two-spirit, etc.- many more terms available. Consider asking “sex assigned at birth” and “gender identity” to be more inclusive.
both sexes	for sex there is male, female, intersex if inferring gender/gender identity there are many terms (based on context change to “individuals” or just say “sex” of member or “gender identity of member”)

Offensive/Insensitive	Sensitive
hearing impaired	deaf or hard of hearing
visual impairment	blind or low vision
LEP members	members with limited English proficiency
gender reassignment surgery, sex change	gender affirming surgery, transition
sexual preference	sexual orientation
hermaphrodite, hermaphroditism	“intersex” if applicable or if actually referencing gender affirming procedures, use “gender affirming treatment”
transgenders, a transgender, transgendered	Transgender should be used as an adjective, not a noun. For example, “Tony is a transgender man”. Adding “ed” is insensitive-being transgender is a part of someone’s identity, nothing happened to make someone transgender as the “ed” may suggest.

For additional questions on creating culturally sensitive materials: email Diana M. Carr, ICE Co-Chair at Diana.M.Carr@healthnet.com or Peggy Payne, ICE Co-Chair at peggy.payne@cigna.com