Inclusive Language Guide

What is inclusive language?

Inclusive language aims to be inclusive of all people regardless of their backgrounds. It avoids words, phrases, or tones that could offend, exclude, or demean individuals based on group membership or attributes.

Inclusive language is a powerful tool that aims to empower and value all people, focusing on accessibility and respect rather than political correctness and enables people of different ages, abilities, genders, and cultures to feel valued and respected.

Why is considering inclusive language important in organisations?

Language plays a crucial role due to its ability to have an impact on individuals and is capable of both negatively and positively influencing people's feelings and perceptions. It can offend, intimidate, or exclude, as well as reinforce stereotypes and inequalities. However, when used inclusively, language has the power to make individuals feel valued, included, and empowered.

Considerations for implementing inclusive language

- Practicing care and consideration in group interactions, using inclusive terms that reflect the diversity within and between groups.

- Adopting people-centric language that focuses on individuality, avoiding stereotypes or classifications based on group association or identity.

- Referencing personal attributes only when relevant and adopting a strengths-based approach that focuses on abilities and resilience rather than deficiencies.

- Asking individuals about their preferred language and respecting their choices, without making assumptions based on stereotypes.

- Being mindful of the implications of one's language, avoiding exclusionary or disparaging expressions.

- Empowering individuals and groups to represent themselves, and consulting widely to ensure language accurately reflects the group's perspective.

- Actively addressing and correcting stereotypes, myths, and inappropriate language, ensuring accessibility and consideration of diverse needs in communication.

- Understanding the context of language use, recognising that some terms may be empowering for some but derogatory when used by others.

Considerations when implementing inclusive language

When using inclusive language, consider these key practices to ensure respectful and accessible communication:

1. Evaluate the necessity of mentioning personal characteristics of individuals or groups.

2. Ensure that any references to personal characteristics are made in inclusive terms.

3. Check if the references accurately represent the diversity of the intended audience and if the material is accessible to them.

4. Reflect on whether the design and delivery of your material inadvertently exclude anyone.