

SIX TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

What Does Inclusive Communications Mean?

Inclusive communications recognize, respect and reflect the diversity of your intended audience according to the CDC. As communicators, we believe in the power of words. The right words create immediate connection and trust. The wrong words can unintentionally alienate your audience and cause them to disengage. Read our six tips to inclusive language.

1

Address systems in place. When addressing populations that experience health disparities, use language that focuses on the systems they operate within instead of categorizing the individual/group as “high-risk” or otherwise susceptible to health disparities.

Ex. Instead of “vulnerable” or “underserved,” try “groups that have been economically/ socially marginalized” or “under-resourced communities.”

2

Prioritize the audience's humanity. Refer to select audiences as people experiencing conditions or circumstances.

Ex. Instead of “addicts” or “diabetics,” try “people living with addiction” or “people with diabetes.”

3

Be specific. When in doubt, specify! Recognize subpopulations as often as possible to avoid blanket terms.

Ex. Instead of “minorities” or “disability groups,” try “people from Black and ethnic minority groups” or “people living with low vision.”

4

Avoid combative language. When developing language for objectives or goals within communities, avoid using violent language to communicate.

Ex. Instead of “tackle issues” or “combat disease,” try “consider the needs of (population)” or “eliminate disease.”

5

Don't play the blame game. Especially when addressing communities that experience mistrust or hesitancy when navigating the health care system, avoid placing blame.

Ex. Instead of “people who refuse vaccination” or “residents who do not use PPE,” try “people who have not yet received the vaccine” or “residents who are under-resourced.”

6

Take counsel. Consult community stakeholders to ensure your communications are accessible, culturally appropriate and encourage the desired response. This step is crucial to build trust and encourage community buy-in.

Adapted from the [CDC Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#).

Did you know that CURA has public health professionals on staff skilled at inclusive communications?
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