A Quick Guide to Using Inclusive Language

General Rules of Thumb

- **Use language that reflects what people call themselves**
  For example, taking the time to find out what labels or words a person or group uses for their identities and experiences rather than making assumptions, and always respecting the language a person uses to self-identify.
- **Use "person-centered" language as a general rule**
  For example, when talking about groups you aren't a member of, not using an identity as a stand-in for a person or a group: "people with disabilities" instead of "the disabled"; "transgender people" instead of "transgenders" or "the transgendered"; etc., remembering that any aspect of a person is just that: an aspect of a person.
- **Avoid irrelevant references to details about a person**
- **If you're not sure, do some research or ask! If you mess up, apologize and learn so you can move forward.**

Race & Ethnicity

- Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, and race: Native Americans, Aboriginal Peoples, Arab, Caucasian, French-Canadian, Inuit, Jew, Latin, Asian/Pacific Islander, Cree
- Avoid references that draw undue attention to ethnic or racial backgrounds. When references are valid, learn the most appropriate specific terminology or use the term preferred by the person or group concerned
- When it is necessary to describe people collectively, the term 'racialized person' or 'racialized community' is preferred by more and more organizations, as these terms express race as a social construct and do not promote broad 'other than white' categorizations. Racialized groups include people who might experience differential treatment on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion or culture
- Using 'minority' may imply inferior social position and is often relative to geographic location. When needed, the use of "minority ethnic group" is preferred over 'minority group'
- When referring to immigration status, do not call people "illegal." Instead, use "undocumented."

Gender:

- The AP Stylebook permits the use of "they" as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun
- Don't deadname (refer to a transperson by their previous name)
- When possible, refer to someone by their name or role: "The author," "The gender studies scholar," "Dickinson wrote"

- Do a little research: if you are writing about a public figure of any kind, chances are that others have also written about that person; you may be able to follow their lead. If you see multiple practices, imitate the ones that seem most respectful
- Don't use "man" or "men" to refer to groups of people who may not be men. For example, use "humankind" instead of "mankind"
- Do not make assumptions about a person's gender based on stereotypes.
- Make it a habit to introduce yourself with your gender pronouns, and invite others to do so as well: "My name is Lindsay, and I use she/hers."

People with Disabilities:
- Use language that focuses on the person, not the disability
- Always put the person before the disability
- Use language that emphasizes abilities rather than limitations (for example, "Barbara uses a wheelchair for mobility" instead of "Barbara is confined to a wheelchair"
- Avoid negative or value-laden terms that overextend the severity of a disability
- Do not label people by their disability

Resources:

- http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/diversity-language-guidelines.cfm
- http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/gender-inclusive-language/
- http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/ways/200008.shtml
- http://www.uidaho.edu/~/media/Files/administration/Provost/New%20Faculty%20Orientation/3%20Inclusive%20Language.ashx
- http://thestamp.umd.edu/multicultural_involvement_community_advocacy/programs/inclusive_language/resources