

CULTURAL COMPETENCY PROGRAM - COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

This document will help you with communicating in a culturally relevant-responsive way, and an inclusive-sensitive manner and be compliant with CC.COMP.42 Nondiscrimination in Health Programs Activities, the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service (CLAS) Standards, and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

We want to be culturally responsive, inclusive, sensitive, and contribute to people feeling they are welcome and respected. Using gender neutral and culturally sensitive wording is best practice, aligns with regulations, and it fosters inclusivity. We need to be aware of the language we use whether creating materials or talking with or about others in general, for staff, members, families, providers, or the community. Please utilize the below list when communicating. The list includes either offensive/insensitive or non-inclusive phrases or words that have been heard and/or found in materials. Note: When reviewing documents, perform a search for the words as written below in the various ways (utilize the “find” function – or select “Control F”) and replace them with inclusive/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, himself/herself	themselves
woman, man, men or women, men/women gender specific screenings – well-woman etc.	the member or the individual, members, individuals, person. Note: In general, we need to use medical terms – do not “gender” services. Remove the gender term and leave as “preventative screening” or “annual well-check”. Documents often reference “women should have a mammogram...” and instead should say “members should have a mammogram” etc.
pregnant women, pregnant woman	pregnant individuals, pregnant members, child-bearers, child-bearer – Note: there are members who do not identify as a woman who are pregnant
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 with Male, Female options – Note: 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 and the many gender identities that exist.	when needing to know sex – include sex terms: male, female, or intersex. when needing to know gender – include gender/gender identity terms: woman, man, transgender, gender diverse, boy, girl, nonbinary, gender fluid, two-spirit, etc.- many more terms available. Consider asking “sex assigned at birth” to obtain sex information and “gender identity-diversity” to be more inclusive with the gender terms.
both sexes	for sex there is male, female, intersex (often intersex is left out but should be included). If inferring gender/gender identity-diversity, there are many terms (see above) (based on context change “both sexes” to say “individuals” or “members” or just say “sex” of member or “gender identity-diversity of member”)

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Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss	use first and last name or just the first name to avoid a wrong assumption
ladies and gentlemen	folx, everyone, friends
hey guys, you guys	hey folx, everyone, friends
biological sex	Assigned Sex at Birth and if needed add (what the doctor says you are at birth). Note: Many believe gender identity is biological as well and by saying biological sex, this infers it is not. And this term doesn't fully capture the complex biological, anatomical, and chromosomal variations that can occur.
<i>Offensive – Insensitive</i>	<i>Non-offensive - Sensitive</i>
hearing impaired	deaf or hard of hearing – Note: many deaf members state they are not impaired, and nothing is wrong with them, they have different abilities so stating impaired is insensitive.
visual impairment	blind or low vision – Note: similar reasons for not saying impairment as deaf/hard of hearing above.
LEP members	members with limited English proficiency (person first language)
disabled person	person with a disability (person first language)
gender reassignment surgery, sex change	gender affirming surgery, aligning mind and body – Note: reassignment or sex change are insensitive because individuals have always been who they are on the inside, and they are not “changing” or “reassigning” – they are affirming and aligning.
sexual preference	sexual orientation – Note: preference implies a choice, and it is not a choice, it is a part of anyone's identity.
hermaphrodite, hermaphroditism	Use intersex if applicable or if referencing gender affirming procedures, use “gender affirming treatment”
transgenders, a transgender, transgendered	a transgender individual - Note: Transgender should be used as an adjective, not a noun. For example, “Tony is a transgender individual”. Adding “ed” is insensitive-being transgender is a part of someone's identity, nothing happened to make someone transgender as the “ed” may suggest.
Homeless person, homeless member, the homeless,	For example, instead of “homeless person,” use “person experiencing homelessness, unhoused, houseless, unsheltered, or housing insecurity.” Not only are you able to put someone's personhood first but it indicates that one's current housing situation is not permanent, nor does it define that person. This inclusive language describes individuals and families without a physical address.

For additional questions on creating culturally sensitive materials: Email Christopher Gonzalez, Health Equity Manager at christopher.gonzalez2@azcompletehealth.com