Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE LANGUAGE-LGBTQ+

Below are recommendations for word choices to help people to refrain from offensive or abusive language. However, language continues to evolve. When possible, ask the person for their preference on how to be referred to. For more information to promote positive environments for people who identify as LGBTQ+ visit and enjoy the multiple resources the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health
<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/links.htm>

❌Avoid Saying	❓Why?	✅Say Instead
Hermaphrodite	Hermaphrodite is a stigmatizing, inaccurate word with a negative medical history	Intersex
Homosexual	Homosexual often connotes a medical diagnosis or discomfort with gay/ lesbian people. The term is used to stigmatize gay people by reducing their lives to purely sexual terms.	Gay, lesbian, bisexual
Sexual preference, lifestyle, or sexual identity	The terms to avoid suggesting that being gay is a choice and something that can be changed.	Sexual orientation
born male or born female.	Assigned language accurately depicts the assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex assigned at birth often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or karyotyping (chromosomes).	Assigned at birth
Transgendered, transvestite, a transgender (n.), tranny, transsexual	Transgender is an adjective, not a noun. Transvestite is an antiquated psychiatric term to reference for men who cross-dress. Transsexuality most often implicates hormonal/surgical transition from one binary gender to another. Transgender is an umbrella term; many transgender people do not identify as transsexual.	Transgender (adj.)
Sex change, pre-op, post-op	Sex change, pre-op, and post-op center around anatomy or surgeries instead of the holistic process of transitioning.	Transition
He, She, or It- when referring to a person when the pronouns are unknown	"They" is a neutral or gender-inclusive pronoun and a pronoun of choice for some individuals who do not identify as either male or female.	Use "they" or ask for pronouns
Both genders or opposite sexes	Both imply there are only two genders.	All genders
Firemen, policemen	People from all genders do these jobs	Firefighter, police officer
Ladies and gentlemen	Use language that is exclusive to all genders.	Distinguished guests, folks
Mr./ Mrs./Ms. &Sir/Ma'am	A gender-neutral honorific is appropriate for non-binary or gender-neutral people. It is also appropriate to double the honorific instead of sir/ma'am.	Formal title, name, or gender-neutral honorific such as Mx. (Pronounced Miks or Muks)
"that's so gay"	Example of a microaggression that connotes that either no one wants to be perceived as gay or stereotypes and minimizes the LGBTQ+ experience	"that's so {insert any positive/negative adjective to best capture your thought}
"You don't act gay"	This is an example of a microaggression that is rooted in stereotypical attitudes, bias, and the universal LGBTQ+ experience.	Always avoid saying this.

Glossary of Terms:

Binary: Used as an adjective to describe the genders female/male or woman/man. Since the binary genders are the only ones recognized by general society as being legitimate, they enjoy an (unfairly) privileged status.

Bisexuality: An umbrella term for people who experience sexual and/or emotional attraction to more than one gender

Cisgender: Describes a person whose gender identity matches the sex (male or female) originally assigned at birth. (i.e., people how are not transgender). Cisgender describes only a person's gender identity, not their sexual or romantic attractions.

Intersex: Describing a person with a less common combination of hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy that are used to assign sex at birth. There are many examples such as Klinefelter Syndrome, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia. Parents and medical professionals usually assign intersex infants a sex and have, in the past, been medically permitted to perform surgical operations to conform the infant's genitalia to that assignment. This practice has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults speak out against the practice. The term intersex is not interchangeable with or a synonym for transgender (although some intersex people do identify as transgender).

Microaggression: is the term most commonly used to define the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their membership to a traditionally marginalized group. (From Diversity in the Classroom, UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development, 2014).

Nonbinary: A preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g., Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (and increasingly), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/presentation/expression of a cisgender or transgender person.

Pansexual: A person who is pansexual is attracted to people based on their personality regardless of gender.

Transgender: Refers to people whose gender identity (the sense of gender that every person feels inside) or gender expression is different from the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Note: Transwomen are women who were assigned male at birth and Transmen are men who were assigned female at birth

Transition: An accurate term that does not fixate on a person's anatomy or on surgeries, which many transgender people do not or cannot undergo. It is also helpful to clarify a person's direction of transition when first referencing that person is transgender. For example, a transgender female is transitioning from male to female.

Resources:

Annie E Casey Foundation. June 2021. "Definitions of Common LGBTQ Concepts and Terms" www.aecf.org/blog/lgbtq-definitions

Movement Advancement Project. January 2017. "An Ally's Guide to Terminology: Talking About https://www.lgbtmap.org/allys-guide-to-terminologyLGBT People & Equality."2017 edition. MAP's Talking About LGBT Issues series.

The Safe Zone Project (n.d.) "LGBTQ-Inclusive Language Do's and Don'ts"

UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development. Diversity in the classroom www.faculty.diversity.ucla.edu