



# Inclusive Language Guide

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DATE: APRIL 2021 BY: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE PROJECT TEAM

# Why inclusive language?

OHSU members have made it clear that to become an anti-racist institution, our language must become more inclusive and that institutional guidance would support consistently respectful communication.

*Stakeholder survey asked does OHSU need such a guide?*

*Mean response: Agree*

# What is its purpose?

Inclusive language puts our humanity at the center; it allows everyone to feel recognized, valued, invited and motivated to contribute at their highest level.

*Think of a time you were excluded; how did it feel?*

# The Inclusive Language Guide is....

An evolving tool to help OHSU members learn about and use inclusive language in institutional communications, including in patient care (such as chart notes), instruction, presentations and more in four broad areas:

- Race and ethnicity
- Immigration status
- Gender and sexual orientation
- Ability (including physical, mental & chronological attributes)

# Words shaping deeds

Learning about and using respectful, identity-affirming language is key to creating a welcoming environment that is anti-racist and embraces diversity.

*The first goal of the OHSU 2025 Plan captures the centrality of diversity to OHSU values and strategy: "Building a diverse, equitable environment where all can thrive and excel."*

# Actions speak louder

However, to become an anti-racist institution, OHSU must take concrete action to change our culture and the individual and institutional expectations of OHSU members and stakeholders.

*If our words but not our deeds change,  
we have failed.*

# Inclusive Language Guide Project

- **June 2020:** OHSU commits to anti-racism
- **August:** Inclusive Language Guide project team created
- **Sept.:** OHSU stakeholder survey/272 responses
- **October:** Team uses responses to draft guide
- **November:** Review and editing
- **December:** Posted guide for comment on OHSU Now
- **Feb. 2021:** Final comments/edits, final first edition posted

# Inclusive Language Guide Project Team



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# What is racism?

- **Individual Racism** - refers to beliefs, attitudes, and action of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in a conscious and unconscious ways.
- **Interpersonal Racism** -refers to slurs, biases, or hateful words and actions.
- **Institutional Racism** - occurs in an organization where discriminatory treatments, unfair policies, or biased practices based on race that result in equitable outcomes.



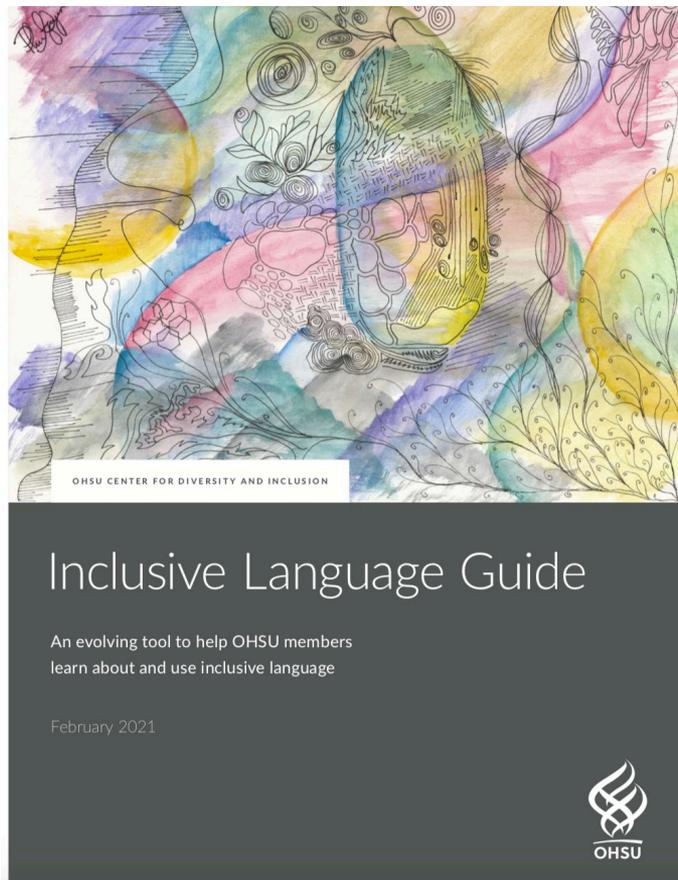
# What is anti-racism?

Being racist or anti-racist is about choices. Anti-racism is a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. This requires ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold the dominant culture and institutions. **Being a racist or an antiracist is not about who you *are*; it is about what you *do*.**

*“To be antiracist is a radical choice in the face of history, requiring a radical reorientation of our consciousness.”*

*- Ibram X. Kendi, Ph.D., author, historian*

# So what's in the guide?





# Principles: Instructive not prescriptive

- Identity is personal: only *you* get to say who you are
- Be humble: Acknowledge mistakes; Replace defensiveness with empathy; Apologize; Educate yourself.

*The guide contains a dozen principles; these are only a few.*



# *Be Kind and Affirming*

People first language: We are all people with various attributes

It is generally advised not to lead with the attribute, as if that attribute defines the whole person

-a person w/ a disability, not *a disabled person*

-a person with a substance use disorder not *a drug addict*

However there are exceptions referred to as Identity-first language which leads with a defining attribute.



# Recommendations

- A transgender person's name and pronouns are what they call themselves, not what they prefer to be called, so not *preferred name or pronoun*
- *“Please introduce yourselves. Share pronouns if you'd like to and feel welcome to share anything else” Dr. Alexis Dinno*

# Recommendations

- Instead of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), use Black, Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic and People of Color to be inclusive. Be specific when possible.
- Some individuals and groups have embraced this descriptor, while others feel alienated or unacknowledged by it. “People of color” is also widely used, but some point out that white is also a color, don’t wish to be defined by their skin color or find the phrase othering.
- Use Hispanic or use Latino in general; interpersonally, respect how individuals describe themselves - Latina/Latinx or Latino/Latinx.

## Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx

Hispanic, which includes descendants of all Spanish-speaking countries, or Latino/Latina/Latinx or Latino/Latinx referring to people of Latin American heritage, are acceptable broad descriptors. The latter represents masculine (Latino), feminine (Latina) and nonbinary (Latinx). Learn more:

TERMS FOR HISPANIC OR LATINO/LATINA/LATINX GROUPS			
TERM	DEFINITION	HISTORY	COMMENTARIES
Latino	Generally refers to geography, namely from Latin America, which is any place in the Americas that speaks a language descending from a Latin romance language. Includes below the U.S., the Caribbean and Brazil.	Latino was recorded as early as the 1940s in the U.S. and ultimately shortened from the Spanish <i>Latinoamericano</i> , or <i>Latin American</i> . The U.S. Census introduced the term Latino in 2000 and the term Hispanic 20 years earlier.	Hispanic and Latino can be viewed as interchangeable terms to describe the ethnicity and heritage of a population that makes up nearly 20 percent of the United States population.
Hispanic	Describes a person who has <b>lineage to a Spanish speaking country, or whose heritage derives from it</b> . It is not a prerequisite to speak Spanish. Includes Spain but excludes Brazil where Portuguese is spoken.	Hispanic refers to Spain and its people on the Iberian Peninsula. Hispanic derives from the Latin <i>Hispānicus</i> , the source of the name Spain. First recorded in English in the late 1500s. Hispanic reflects the imperialist history of Spain as a European colonizer in Latin America.	During the Civil Rights Movement, there was a cry to recognize U.S. Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban populations. The term Hispanic was adopted as a federal heritage category introduced in the 1980 U.S. Census. The term caught on, with support of Spanish-language TV and became a more broadly accepted label.
Latinx	A term used to describe individuals who are of/or relate to Latin American origin or descent. This term is a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina. <a href="#">Listen to pronunciation.</a>  (Latine is also an emerging gender-neutral descriptor.)	A new, gender-neutral, pan-ethnic label, Latinx, has emerged as an alternative to describe Hispanics/Latinos. Latinx has been around since 2004 but became better known after the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida. This term tends to be used more by younger people and those identifying as LGBTQ.	The Pew Research Center National Survey found that one in four U.S. Hispanics/ Latinos have heard of Latinx but only 3 percent use it. Some call it linguistic imperialism – English policing the Spanish language; Latinx does not correspond with Spanish grammar or conventional speech. The Real Academia Española, preserver of the Spanish language, rejected the term. Merriam-Webster added it in 2018.
Mexican American, Chicana, Cubano/a, Guatemalteca/o, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Dominicano, Dominicana, Puertorriqueño, etc.	Personalismo – Personalization in Latino culture implies setting trust to establish relationships	Personalized – Individuals tend to identify or be influenced by their origin, roots, and/or heritage to Spain or a Latin American country.	Many first acknowledge their roots of origin prior to selecting Hispanic or Latino. Soy Mexicana, Soy Otomi, Soy Dominicano
Mesoamerican Indigenous	A term used to describe Indigenous people from Mexico and Central America.	The Historical Linguistics of Native America notes more than 125 languages native to Mesoamerica. Language families include: Mesoamerica are Mayan, Mixe-Zoquean, Otomanguean, Tequistlatecan, Totonacan, Uto-Aztecian, and Xinkan. Not all speak Spanish.	Societies that flourished more than 1,000 years before the Spanish colonization of the Americas. Mesoamerican Indian/Indigenous cultures have a common origin in the pre-Columbian civilizations.

\*The Spanish language also uses pronouns *el, ella, ellos, nosotros* and formal and informal language—*tú y usted*.



# Recommendations

Just as American language has tended to center on the white experience, descriptors of immigration status tend to center on and affirm people with citizenship. Tendency to dehumanize, criminalize and/or vilify those without citizenship.

Rather than referring to residents who are not citizens with such dehumanizing terms as alien or illegal alien or simply illegal, the word “undocumented” is advised, ideally:

- The person or family is undocumented, not they are an undocumented family.
- Or, the person or family lacks documentation; or lacks a path to citizenship.



# Asset-based: amplify community voices, not *give voice to the voiceless*

- Our mission is to amplify the voices in our community **vs** Our mission is to give voice to the voiceless.
- The communities we partner with are strong and powerful **vs** The communities we serve are strong and powerful.
- Youth in our community are our future. We must invest in them as leaders **vs** We provide youth with jobs in order to prevent them from committing crimes.



# Recommendations: Capitalization

**Black:** In summer 2020, the AP began capitalizing Black in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense, conveying an essential and shared sense of history, identity and community among people who identify as Black, including those in the African diaspora and within Africa. The lowercase black refers to the color, not a person.

**Indigenous:** Capitalized when referring to original inhabitants of a place. These two decisions align with long-standing capitalization of distinct racial and ethnic identifiers such as Latino, Asian American and Native American or American Indian.

**brown:** The AP does not capitalize “brown” as in “brown people,” as it is a broad and imprecise term unless capitalized in a direct quote. Interpretations of what the term includes vary widely and many people find “brown people” offensive or demeaning.

**white:** The AP continues to lowercase the term white in racial, ethnic and cultural senses. The AP reasons that white people generally do not share the same history and culture, or the experience of being discriminated against because of skin color.



# The guide is not....

- Fuel for the “language police”
- An exercise in political correctness
- Intended to shame or shut down discussion

*The guide is intended to inform personal growth.*

# Implementation

The Center for Diversity & Inclusion will work with operational leaders and institutional stakeholders to integrate use of the guide and determine a process for incorporating community feedback to keep it updated.

# Implementation

Updating language on such platforms as Oracle and Epic will take time; in some cases the evolution of government descriptors will be needed, but...

# Go for it

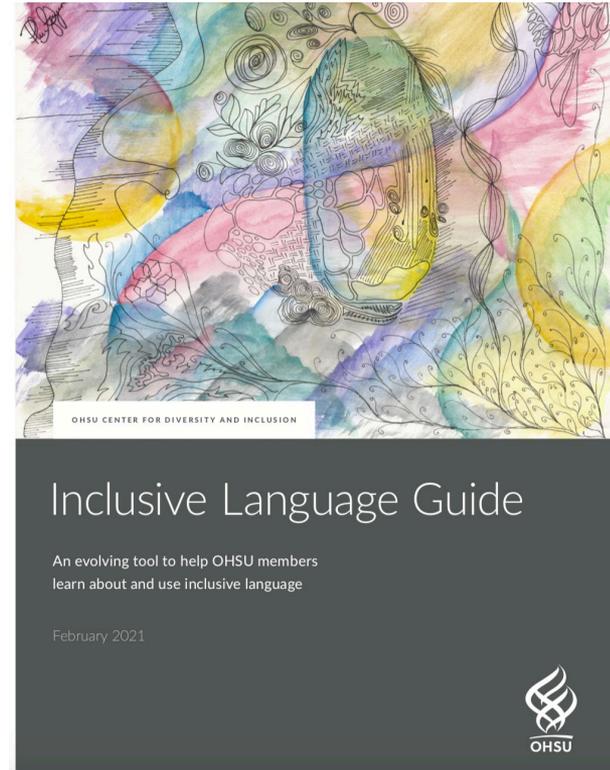
OHSU members should begin utilizing the guide for presentations, instruction, chart notes and other oral and written communications over which you control the content.

# Find the guide...

**On O2:** Center for  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Resources

<https://o2.ohsu.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/resource-guides.cfm>

*Final first edition posted by  
end of February.*



# Questions?

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Thank You