Inclusive Language
Respect for Gender Diversity

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Why do we have an inclusive language guide?

At AGAA we treat each other with human dignity and respect. One of the ways we do this is through the language we use. Language is a powerful tool and can have significant impact, both positive and negative. Inclusive language enables everyone to feel valued and respected and can help create a safe, inclusive, and equitable workplace.

The way in which we speak to or refer to each other at work creates a culture in which people of all gender identities can feel valued, respected, and bring their entire selves to work. Non-inclusive language can make a group of people feel invisible, for example, the use of the term man to refer to all people can make it hard to see women as an equal member in a team. There is nothing wrong with using terms that accurately reflect an individual's gender, what we want to avoid is the use of assumptions and gendered terms when you do not know an individual's gender identity; when referring to a group; or when writing policy or guideline documents (for example). In these cases, the use of gender neutral language and/or explicitly inclusive language, i.e. "regardless of gender" is most appropriate and ensures that all are included.

Instead of assuming or reinforcing stereotypes

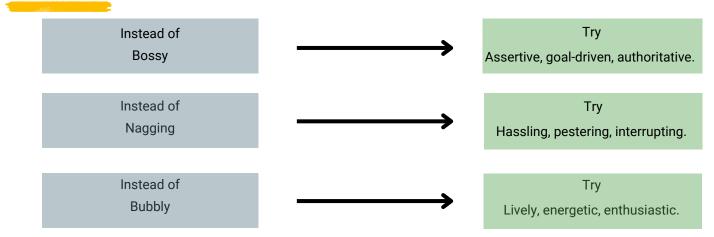| Instead of	Use
Gendered terms like 'he' or 'she' in cases where you are not referring to a specific individual, or where the individual's personal pronouns are not known	Gender-neutral terms such as 'they' or 'person'
Guys, Girls, Gents', or Ladies	All, Everyone, Team, or Folks
Husband or wife - avoid assuming the gender identity or marital status of another person's partner	Partner or Spouse
Foreman, chairman, spokesman	Supervisor, team leader, chair, coordinator, delegate, spokesperson
Manning	Staffing, headcount
Waitress or Stewardess	Waiter, Server, Flight Attendant
Male Nurse, Female Engineer	Nurse, Engineer
Mother or Father	Parent, parenthood - Use language that acknowledges that we have diverse relationships and families
Man-made	Artificial

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Gender identity: A person's innate sense of their gender – man, woman, non-binary, non-conforming etc.

Non-binary: Describes gender identities which do not exclusively fit within the binary concepts of men and women.

Pronouns: Words used to refer to a person's gender identity, examples include he/him, she/her, she/they, they/them

Transgender: A broad term for the experience of people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned with at birth.

Terms to rethink

Instead of		Try
Instead of Bossy	→	Try Assertive, goal-driven, authoritative.
Instead of Nagging	→	Try Hassling, pestering, interrupting.
Instead of Bubbly	→	Try Lively, energetic, enthusiastic.

Responding to non-inclusive language

The best way to set expectations about inclusive language is to address any non-inclusive language directly when it occurs. It is important that we focus on correcting our own missteps more than we do other people's.

For example, you may choose to:

- Call out the language or behaviour - avoid name-calling (e.g. calling someone sexist).
- Appeal to the person's better side – *"that doesn't sound like you to say that".*
- Take the person aside at a later moment and explain why the language was non-inclusive.

It is important to remember in the workplace that what may be funny to one person can be offensive or upsetting to another. Comments intended as a joke can be a form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour, therefore any jokes that are demeaning to demographics of people or characteristics are best avoided.

Remember:

- Getting called out doesn't mean you need to defend yourself – apologise and move on. Trivialising someone else's feelings does not help build inclusion.
- Instead of trying to defend or excuse your actions, try focusing on understanding the other persons perspective.
- If you are confused by their reaction you could ask *"Could you explain why what I said was wrong?".*

Support

If you would like more information on inclusive language for gender, AGAA recommends:
- Diversity Council Australia (DCA) - https://www.dca.org.au/

For more information on inclusive language for non-binary or people with the transgender experience, see the AGAA LGBTQIA+ inclusive language guideline.

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