



Why Inclusive Language?

Through language we understand the relationships around us and our position within our environment. **Exclusive language stunts the building of healthy relationships and can make people feel like outsiders.** In a study conducted by the US Department of State, researchers found that **one's learning and behavior is informed by relationships** (2019). When a person's brain consciously or unconsciously picks up on patterns of exclusive language around them, they begin to negatively relate themselves to their surroundings, and their sense of belonging to a community can be diminished.

The Impact of Exclusive Language, Microaggressions, and Stereotypes

- Undermines academic performance and persistence for Black and other minoritized students (Harper, 2015).
- Minoritized students may struggle with an inferiority complex that can be a barrier to academic success.
- Male-dominated academic majors are particular settings for microaggressions experienced by white women (McCabe, 2009).
- Women in these areas are often marginalized and made to feel abnormal for their educational/professional pursuits.
- Microaggressions can spark psychological stress responses symptomatic of racial battle fatigue for Black male students (Smith, Allen, Danelly, 2007).
- Stress is harmful to the mind and body and dramatically affects one's ability to learn and think critically.

Questions to take into consideration when deciding what language to use

- 1 Do I need to refer to someone's personal characteristics (e.g., sex, religion, racial group, disability, or age) at all?
- 2 When I address a group, am I acknowledging everyone with my choice of words?
- 3 Does my use of jargon or acronyms exclude people who may not have the same knowledge as me?