

Inclusive language summary

Introduction

Inclusive language is spoken or written language that avoids bias. Bias can be based on ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic status or a person's capabilities. As a CDU student, you need to understand what inclusive language is and use it to show you are being respectful of everyone in our community to foster a feeling of belonging.

Why use inclusive language?

The words we use can have a negative impact on others. CDU students should try to use language that is free from bias and other forms of social exclusion so that we can promote a safe environment. Here are some key terms:

- Stereotype – an exaggerated belief about a person or group
- Accessibility – the capacity for an underrepresented group to access or use a service or benefit from an opportunity
- Marginalisation – preventing access to important positions or opportunities within a society or group
- Inclusion – the intentional promotion of diversity to increase access to opportunities in all aspects of social life
- Equity – the intentional promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of social life
- Bias – a prejudice in favour or against somebody which causes unfair practices

Avoiding the language pitfalls of hidden biases

Hidden biases, also called implicit biases, are shown in our, often unintentional, language choices which express judgement and attitudes towards people or groups (our stereotypes).

Impact of bias in our language

When we use bias in our language, we are subtly influencing our interactions, often without our awareness. However, such biases reinforce negative stereotypes and can perpetuate social inequalities.

Writing in a culturally and socially responsible way

Before we submit a piece of writing, we should consider whether any of the terms we use which refer to race, ethnic groups, gender and so on are currently accepted and/or preferred as inclusive. Again, these language choices may not be caused by intentional bias but a lack of awareness that certain terms are out of date or no longer accepted.

A-Z of First Nations Terms

Many courses at CDU have units with an Indigenous perspective embedded in the curriculum. This means you may need to research or write about issues related to First Nations peoples. It is important to

be both accurate and appropriate when using terms in order to be respectful. The A-Z of First Nations terms has been developed with CDU staff from First Nations Leadership and First Nations Students and Engagement, and you may find it a useful resource to refer to when writing your assignments.