ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR
Infant Mental Health

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations and Style Guide Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health

These Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Guidelines were created by ILAIMH's DEI Committee to ensure that DEI values are embedded in all mechanisms of the Association, including events and documents put forth by different Committees. Please note, this document is meant to be a tool in planning for different Association functions.

The intent of the DEI Committee is to empower ILAIMH members to lean into ("the work") with a sense of vulnerability, openness, and a lens towards diversity, equity and inclusion. Through ongoing personal and professional reflection, we seek to support a community that acknowledges and addresses inequities within our own professional work, institutional structures, and societal structures, by providing guidance and resources.

This document is evolving and will be reviewed and updated at the end of every fiscal year.

Educational Guidelines:

- Polling membership for needs and preferences
- Intentional outreach to diverse groups
- Consult with the DEI Liaison and or a member of the DEI Committee
- Presentations must aim to be research-based, non-discriminatory and knowledge-based information
- Inclusion of people of color in all aspects
- Presentations made by diverse voices
- Defining Diversity and ensuring various perspectives, diversities are included in the
- Planning phases
- Language that is being used is inclusive
- Inclusive of al family members

Events

Marketing Purposes:

- Is all social media included?
- Is there the opportunity to market in different languages?
- Does the marketing material stay away from jargon language?

Cost of Event

- Has a budget been made to include those that cannot pay full price but would like to participate in the event?
- Ask if participants would like to donate more that cost payment – consider participant wish for confidentiality in requesting financial support or expressing financial need
- Who is being excluded from the event with the price?

Actual Event

- If zoom, was language translation services considered?
- Recording to make it accessible (live & recorded option)
- Caption/ translation
- Consider physical accessibility (examples: including local transportation and wheelchair access)
- What do attendees have to know to ensure their comfort (ex: temperature of site)
- Consider food allergies
- Religious observances
- Consider breastfeeding and pumping needs, is there a space other than bathroom that can be provided to attendees (make sure this space is IN the room)

Developing Documents:

There are many resources available online that address the use of inclusive language that reflects the diversity of our society, each with its own angle on the issues of language and inclusiveness. Listed below are some basic guidelines for writing documents, followed by links to some online resources for further detail and exploration.

The intent of this listing is to promote the use of language choices that are caring, thoughtful, and respectful of the many realities of peoples' lives and experiences. We hope that this guide will increase our understanding and knowledge of individuals and groups within and beyond our own communities and encourage reflection about how we make language choices.

While some language terms are and will continue to be unequivocally offensive and derogatory, other language use preferences will continue to change and evolve. The intent for this set of guidelines is to change and evolve as well.

Language use preferences are always changing and evolving and may vary within a given group. Below are some of the common threads, with examples:

Use language that is gender neutral

- *Instead of:* Who is going to man our display table at the conference?
- *Use:* Who is going to staff our display table at the conference?

Avoid phrases that are demeaning or condescending and shift away from using the word *should*

- *Instead of:* It is so simple, even your *mother* could do it.
- *Use:* It is so simple, even *a beginner* could do it.

When referring to culture, race, ethnicity, use language that is specific wherever possible, i.e. avoid clumping groups of people together when more precise terms are accurate and available:

- *Instead of:* The study sample included 200 people of color.
- *Use:* The study sample included 78 Black men, 32 Black women, 43 Hispanic men, and 47 Hispanic women.
- *Instead of:* The writer of the blog "American Indians in Children's Literature" is a Native American woman.
- *Use:* The writer of the blog "American Indians in Children's Literature" is a Nambé Pueblo Indian woman.

Sexual Orientation: If it is necessary to refer to the sexual orientation of a group of people, the most commonly accepted terminology is LGBTQ or LGBTQ+. When using a pronoun for an LGBTQ person, they is generally preferable to he/she.

- "Two-spirit" refers to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity. Note that use of the term is restricted to Native people, as its specific meaning varies from tribe to tribe

Use "**people-first language**" and "**put people first**" rather than defining them by their current circumstance or ability.

- *Instead of:* Some of the clients are mentally ill people
- *Use:* Some of the clients are people with mental illness
- *Instead of:* Several homeless families participated in the program
- *Use:* Several families experiencing homelessness participated in the program

**However, some people with disabilities feel that people-first language separates them from a significant part of their identity, and advocate instead for identity-first language. This view is being expressed especially in the autistic, deaf, and blind communities.

- *Instead of:* The seminar leader was a woman with autism.
- *Use:* The seminar leader was an autistic woman.

Refer to people of all ages with respect, using terms that are neutral, describe behavior rather than intention, and do not stereotype:

- *Instead of:* the elderly, old person, senior, the aged
- *Use:* older people, mature person, experienced person
- *Instead of:* The child was being destructive. (Implies intent to destroy.)
- *Use:* The child took the toy apart. (The child's motivation may have been curiosity, destruction, or something else.)

ONLINE RESOURCES RE: LANGUAGE

Below are some resources that offer more in-depth explorations of style and terminology from various perspectives and disciplines. Note that recommendations and preferences in these guides are not always in agreement, reflecting different perspectives and the continuing evolution of the meaning of specific words and phrases.

- A basic guide from the Administration for Children and Families of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Scroll down to Inclusive Language and Conscious Style at the bottom of the list. Style and Mechanics | The Administration for Children and Families
- These Guidelines for Reducing Bias, from the American Psychological Association (APA), focus on written language: http://supp.apa.org/style/pubman-ch03.00.pdf
- A comprehensive A-Z list of definitions and recommendations from the National Association of Black Journalists: https://www.nabj.org/page/styleguide
- NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists has a stylebook on LGBTQ terminology: https://www.nlgja.org/stylebook/terminology/
- This video explains the origin and meanings of the term Two-Spirit as used by LGBTQ people in tribal communities: https://youtu.be/A4lBibGzUnE

Created by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee,
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