

A vibrant, abstract background of swirling rainbow colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) with a green arrow pointing down towards the text.

# Inclusive vs Exclusive Language: What will you choose to say?

**Dr. Gina Forrest**  
**Chief Culture Officer**

<https://www.caresource.com/in/plans/medicaid/>  
[www.AspireIndiana.org](http://www.AspireIndiana.org)

## Land acknowledgment...



We pause to acknowledge the land we are on. Land that was once the land of Miami, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Kickapoo, Delaware, Chickasaw, Wea, Wyandot and Piankashaw people. As we live, work, play on stolen land – let us remember to be good stewards of the land and to remember the Indigenous Peoples of today, tomorrow and yesterday.

Our time  
together...

Listen with an open mind.

Ask questions.

You might have a tummy-feeling.

Assume good intentions.

Learning environment

This is a journey - not  
a race.

This takes time.





## Inclusive Language

- Language that doesn't exclude or stereotype based on age, gender, sex, race, ethnicity, orientation and more!

- ~ 170,000 words are in the English language
- Average person knows ~ 20,000-35,000 words
- The longest word in the English language, has ~ 189,819 letters
- ~ 7,000 languages in the world

- “...~3,000 words will cover 95% of everyday writing - common texts and speech like newspapers, blogs, most books, movies, etc.”
- Out of those 3,000 words - only the first 1,000 words are used in 89% of everyday writing.



# What word/phrase has changed over time?

What word/phrase has changed over time?

- 1300s = girl meant “young person”
- 1300s = nice meant “foolish”
- 1300s = naughty meant “nothing” (had nothing);
  - 1400 = meant “being worth nothing”
- 1500s = bully meant “sweetheart”

How has  
technology  
changed our  
language?

- Cookie
- Spam
- Cloud
- Hashtag
- Friend
- Bug
- Hotspot

## Inclusive terms

POC = People of Color

BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, People of Color

Latino/a/x

Native American/Indigenous Peoples/First Nations

Black and Brown

Black and/or African American

LGBTQ+ ~ LGBTQIAA+ ~ QUILTBAG

Notes:

- Please don't use a hyphen
- Individuals have their preference
- When writing, make a note

## Gendered Language

-language that has a bias towards a particular sex or social gender

- Guys, Gals, Ladies, Gentlemen
  - Everyone, All, Folx
- Mankind
  - Human kind
- Freshman/Freshmen
  - First year
- Man-made
  - Artificial
- Policeman/Fireman
  - Police Officers/Firefighters
- Chairman
  - Chair
- Alumni/Alumna/Alumnus/Alumnae
  - Alumnx
- Landlord
  - Owner
- Salesman
  - Salesperson
- Manpower/Man hours
  - Workforce
- Husband/Wife
  - Spouse, Partner, Significant Other

# Pronouns

A word used instead of a noun or a noun phrase.

Why use them?

- Respect
- Respect
- Identify
- Identify
- Respect

Hi, I'm Gina, she/her. What's your name?

If you don't know how someone identifies:  
Use they/them pronouns

Excuse me, could you get their attention?  
Excuse me, could you get the person in the blue shirt's  
attention?

1	2	3	4	5
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself

# Family

- Parents/Mom/Dad/Mom and Dad
  - Adult, Grownup, Caregiver, Your people, Raisin\*
- Son/Daughter
  - Children
- Extended Family
  - Family
- Family Resemblance
  - Hush
- Members of a household
  - Family members

Socio-economic status:

Combined education,  
income, occupation

Please avoid:

- Blue Collar
- White Collar
- Trailer trash
- White trash
- Pull yourself up by the bootstraps

Please use:

- People whose income is below the federal poverty level
- Describe it



## Age

Unless in context, please don't refer to people by their generation.

Please avoid:

- Over the hill
- Cougar
- Adorable
- You look good for XX age
- You still X at your age
- Senior moment
- Elderly
- Seniors
- Senior citizens
- Youngsters

Please use:

- Older adults
- Older people
- Specific age range
- Youth/teen

## Race and Ethnicity

...socially constructed category based on observed phenotypic manifestations of presumed, underlying, genetic difference

...a grouping of people according to a shared geographic, national, or cultural heritage; both biological and non-biological differences

### Phrases/words to avoid:

- Long time no see, no can do
- Powwow
- Spirit animal
- Sold down the river
- Gypped
- Jewed
- Uppity
- Grandfather clause
- Peanut Gallery
- Ghetto
- Hip Hip Hooray
- Minority
- Sold down the river/Just call a spade a spade
- Go off the reservation

## Ableism:

Stereotyping, prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory behavior, and social oppression toward people with disabilities to inhibit the rights and well-being of people with disabilities

### Please avoid:

- Mentally/Physically challenged
- Mentally retarded
- Handi-capable
- Mentally ill
- Wheelchair-bound
- Cripple/invalid
- Crazy/nuts/defective

### Please use:

- Person with a disability
- Person who has a disability
- Person with a mental condition
- Person with a mental illness
- Wheelchair user, person in a wheelchair
- Person with a physical disability
- Accessible parking
- Accessible restroom

## Jargon, Slang, Idioms

Jargon = Words/phrases used by a particular profession

- Technology, sailing

Slang = Very informal

- Hangry, lit, salty, boo

Idiom = phrase that doesn't mean what it implies

- Kill 2 birds with one stone
- Beat a dead horse

## Addiction

a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences

### Please avoid:

- addict, junkie, alcoholic, drunk, habit, abuser

### Please use:

- Person in active addiction
- Person with a substance misuse disorder
- Person with a substance use disorder
- Person with an alcohol use disorder
- Substance-free, positive, negative

## Nursery Rhymes

- Old Mother Goose and the Golden Egg
- Ten Little Indians
- Ten Little Monkeys
- Eeny Meeny Miny Mo
- Oh, Susannah
- Jimmy Crack Corn
- Do your ears hang low?
- 5 Little Monkeys
- Camptown Races

....there's more

Please avoid:

- committed suicide
- failed/successful suicide
- completed suicide
  
- child prostitute
- sex with an underage person
- nonconsensual sex
  
- Killing it
- Take a shot at, pull the trigger

Try:

- died by suicide; suicided
  
- child who has been trafficked; raped
  
- great job

# Questions?



Dr. Gina Forrest

Chief Culture Officer

[gina.forrest@aspireindiana.org](mailto:gina.forrest@aspireindiana.org)

317-370-6548 office cell phone

[www.linkedin.com/in/drginaforrest](https://www.linkedin.com/in/drginaforrest)