

# DEI Guidelines for Website, Marketing and Social Media

## Guiding Principles

- Seek to listen and understand across differences
  - Be curious, humble and committed to life-long learning
  - Always ask questions to further your understanding
- Allow room for mistakes from yourself and others
  - Own mistakes gracefully, point out mistakes gently
  - Don't allow fear of failure stop you from trying
  - Use the methods of [calling out and calling in](#) as needed
- Be willing to confront bias you may unconsciously vocalize or act on
  - Get comfortable being uncomfortable
- Be an advocate and an ally
  - Strive to give space to those who are underrepresented
  - Seek out new ways to advance DEI work
  - Support others when they take a stand
- Acknowledge that DEI work is difficult and practice self-care
  - Sometimes stepping away for a bit can be the best solution to conflict
  - This is a marathon, not a sprint; acknowledge that change takes time



## Images

- We want every person to “see themselves” in our promotions.
- When choosing inclusive images, strive for diversity in:
  - Ethnicity/race
  - age
  - ability
  - family makeup (not all family members look alike, etc.)
  - gender/non-binary
  - body type
- It may be helpful to use a system of rotating through ethnicities/age/abilities/gender in photos to ensure visibility to all.
- Choose photos **without** people present so the focus stays on the topic and not who's in the photo.

### Tips for Searching Stock Photo Sites

- Try adding "diverse" to search terms
- Use “ethnicity” filter

## Text

- Use the KISS Principle (Keep It Short and Simple).
  - Keep language free of jargon and acronyms that aren't widely known.
- When choosing language, consider non-native speakers and those who may not share your level of education.
  - Use the [Hemingway App](#) to help evaluate your text.
- Think about possible interpretations of the language you're using.
  - Is there a literal meaning to it?
  - Is there a simpler way to say it?
- Use [gender-neutral terms](#) when possible.
  - Ex. “humankind” instead of “mankind” or “business person” instead “businessman”
- Remember that words have power and negative language leads to discrimination, stereotypes, disenfranchisement and sometimes violence.
  - If you're not sure of the context or background of a word or phrase you're using, try googling it.
  - This [inclusive language guide](#) has a list of words/phrases best avoided.
- When promoting resources, stick to facts and stay neutral. Avoiding adding a spin with language like "celebrate" or “enjoy”.

- Acknowledge the work, not the creator, particularly if the creator is problematic (e.g. Michael Jackson, Roald Dahl). If you're not sure about a creator's background, it's best to err on the side of caution by using neutral language.
- Frame topics in history when possible/applicable.

### People First vs. Identity First Language

- [People first language](#)
  - Person first language emphasizes that the diagnosis doesn't define the person, the person has the diagnosis.
    - Ex. "a person with alcoholism" instead of "an alcoholic" or "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled"
- [Identity first language](#)
  - Identity first language emphasizes the idea that the condition is inseparable from the person and reinforces disability as a positive cultural identifier.
    - Ex. "autistic person," "disabled person," "blind person"
- If you are unsure if you should use person first or identity first language, if possible, ask the people you're referring to how they would like to be addressed.
- Don't assume disability means inability
  - Avoid using terms like "suffers from," "confined," "victim" or any other term that implies tragedy.

### Deaf Community

- Many deaf people who use sign language have a deeply ingrained sense of culture and community built around the experience of deafness and sign language, **use uppercase "Deaf" to signify that culture.**

### Online Resources for Referring to People with Disabilities

- <https://all-in.withgoogle.com/audiences/people-with-disabilities/>
- <https://all-in.withgoogle.com/>
- <https://www.nadtc.org/news/blog/person-first-and-identity-first-language-choices/>
- <https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=605>
- <http://www.racialequityvtnea.org/wp>

### Social Media

- Double check hashtags every time to screen for possible connotations or agendas.
  - This can be done with a simple Google search
- It's helpful to run language for promotions/social media past another person, particularly if it's a topic you may not be knowledgeable about or comfortable with.

### Patron Responses

- Be open to feedback.
- Assume positive intent when responding to patrons.
  - Keep language kind and light-hearted