

ACS Inclusivity Style Guide

TIP SHEET General guidelines

For more context, review the “[General guidelines](#)” section of the Inclusivity Style Guide.

Language evolves

Visit the full guide periodically to ensure your language stays up to date. Periodic reviews for outdated language are especially important for those maintaining web pages.

Involve a diverse group of people

Be as inclusive and collaborative as you can while creating content, particularly when writing for a broad audience. Do not rely on the same person every time a topic relating to a group they belong to arises.

Respect self-descriptions

Ask people how they want to be described, and respect that language. This includes the use of pronouns, the mention of racial or ethnic background, the use of honorifics or titles, and even the career role and spelling of someone’s name.

Be appropriately specific

Avoid relying on a label for a large group of people when discussing only a subset of that group.

Example

- ✓ **Use:** Black, Hispanic, and Asian students reacted positively.
- ✗ **Avoid:** Students of color reacted positively.

Mention personal information thoughtfully

Mentioning a characteristic such as race for some people and not others can introduce bias. Mention personal information only when it is immediately relevant to the topic.

Avoid labels

Avoid labeling people by a characteristic, and recognize that a particular characteristic does not define or describe a person as a whole.

Example

- ✓ **Use:** older people
- ✗ **Avoid:** the elderly