Avoid stigmatizing language

Words such as “abuse” have connotations of crime and violence. Instead of “drug abuse,” use the term “misuse” or an adjective in combination with the word “use.”

Be mindful of people-first and identity-first language

People-first language (e.g., “person with autism”) and identity-first language (e.g., “autistic person”) are two ways of considering a condition. Use whichever the person or group prefers.

Example

✔️ Use: people with disabilities, the disability community
❌ Avoid: the disabled

Use neutral language

When describing a health condition, use neutral terms like “with” or “has” rather than terms that connote pity or imply a person has a reduced quality of life.

Example

✔️ Use: she has cancer
❌ Avoid: suffers from cancer

Like what you’ve read? See the full guide from the American Chemical Society.

www.acs.org/inclusivityguide