

Inclusive language

Using inclusive language at work plays a powerful role in diminishing stereotypes and making employees feel comfortable.

People may inherently connect certain words with a particular gender or group even though they may not be offensive. For instance, some terms, such as *rockstar*, are not viewed as derogatory in any way. However, women generally have been found to be less likely to apply for a position when a job advertisement includes this word because they view it as male-oriented.

The following chart may encourage employers and employees alike to use inclusive language so that all feel that they are welcome, seen, heard and respected, regardless of their backgrounds.

Non-inclusive term	Inclusive term
He/She (as a general term)	They
Husband or Wife	Spouse or Partner
Chairman/Chairwoman	Chair or Chairperson
Salesman/Saleswoman	Salesperson
Blindspot	Problem area
Tone-deaf	Is insensitive to or fails to understand others' feelings
Tribe or tribal knowledge	Team or team knowledge
Too many chiefs	Too many cooks in the kitchen
Manhours	Work hours or staff hours
Manpower	Staffing
Blackballed	Rejected
Blacklist	Block or blocklist
Whitelist	Allow
Girl or girls (if adults)	Woman or women
Guys (if not all men)	All, everybody, team
Ladies	Women
Culture fit	Culture-add or values fit
Minority/Non-white	Under-represented, ethnic minority, person of colour
OCD/insane/crazy	Precise, fastidious, particular

Non-inclusive term	Inclusive term
Homosexual	Gay, lesbian or LGBTQ+
Sexual preference	Sexual orientation
Opposite sex	Different sex
Sex change	Transitioning, affirming
Bossy	Driven
Third world	Developing countries
Poor	Low income
Victims	Survivors
Wheelchair bound	Person who uses a wheelchair
Mentally ill	Person with a mental health condition
Addict/Substance abuser	Substance use disorder
Alcoholic	Alcohol use disorder
Ninja	Multi-tasker
Rockstar	Fast learner, talented
Seniors	Older adults, persons 65 and older
Slaving away	Working hard/nonstop
Lame	Not enjoyable, dull, uninspiring
Mum/Dad (if family structure unknown)	Parents or guardians

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