

# Inclusive language Reference Sheet

Words are powerful and can have a big impact on making people feel safe and seen. Here's a basic, non-exhaustive list of inclusive writing principles to ensure you don't exclude anyone based on race, gender, age, or disability.

For more words to avoid and their alternatives, browse our [inclusive language brand guidelines](#).

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- Avoid referencing age, race, or ethnicity unless relevant. If it is, refer to age, race, or ethnicity as adjectives instead of nouns, e.g. "Hispanic people" instead of "Hispanics," or "older people" instead of "the elderly."
  - When publicly talking about people with disabilities, consider your audience. Some people prefer identity-first language (disabled person/people), while some prefer person-first (people/person with disabilities). For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) [rule is person-first](#), but Webflow's disabled community affinity group prefers identity-first. When in doubt, ask.
  - Avoid terms that refer to psychiatric disabilities, like "crazy," "insane," "psycho/psychotic," etc. Alternatives: wild, hectic, unreal, unbelievable, etc.
  - Avoid using "guys," "man/men" or words including them, "he/she," or any other gendered language to refer to people (unless pronouns are verified) or groups of people. Alternatives: folks, team, all, they/them/theirs, humans/human beings, etc.
  - The phrase "identifies as" invalidates trans and non-binary people's experience. Trans and non-binary people don't identify as the gender — or lack of gender — they are that gender. Say, "They are non-binary," not "They identify as non-binary."
  - Avoid referencing situations or using words or images that reinforce racial, ethnic, religious, gender, or other stereotypes and biases. For example, "The Asian shop owner is a real go-getter" This would be more accurately stated as: "The shop owner is a real go-getter."
  - Avoid the term "non-white" or other terms that treat whiteness as a default — and never capitalize "white" or "whiteness."
  - When referring to Black people, capitalize "Black." When referring to Native or Indigenous people, capitalize "Native" and "Indigenous."
  - Terms like "blacklist," "whitelist," or "master" refer to metaphors about race and enslavement. Alternatives: block, permit, allow, main, primary.

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Often, the best way to write more inclusively is just to get more specific about what you're trying to say. e.g. "that's unheard of" rather than "that's crazy."

All in all, don't make assumptions. Ask how people identify themselves, and generally be aware of complexities within racial, ethnic, gender, and religious identities.