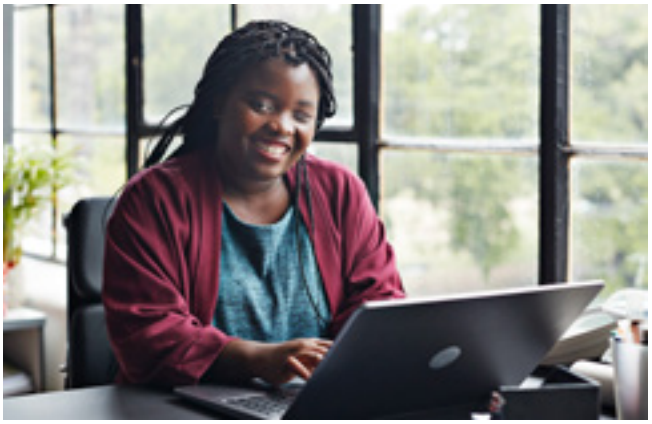
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Equity, Diversity, *and* Inclusion

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDELINES



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FOREWORD

For the first time, APA is systematically and institutionally examining, acknowledging, and charting a path forward to address its role in racism and other forms of destructive social hierarchies including, but not limited to, sexism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, classism, and religious bigotry. The organization is assessing the harms and is committing to true change. This requires avoiding language that perpetuates harm or offense toward members of marginalized communities through our communications.

As we strive to further infuse principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into the fabric of society, those committed to effecting change must acknowledge language as a powerful tool that can draw us closer together or drive us further apart. Simply put, words matter. The words we use are key to creating psychologically safe, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environments.

These guidelines aim to raise awareness, guide learning, and support the use of culturally sensitive terms and phrases that center the voices and perspectives of those who are often marginalized or stereotyped. They also explain the origins for problematic terms and phrases and offer suitable alternatives or more contemporary replacements. This document will be flexible and iterative in nature, continuing to evolve as new terminology emerges or current language becomes obsolete.

By embracing inclusive language and encouraging others to do the same, we firmly believe that we will not only communicate effectively with more people, but also better adapt to a diversifying society and globe.

Maysa Akbar, PhD, ABPP
Chief Diversity Officer

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

These inclusive language guidelines are written for those working to champion equity, diversity, and inclusion in the spaces that they learn, teach, work, or conduct research. This includes, but is not limited to, APA staff, volunteer leaders, members, students, affiliated organizations, and EDI professionals working across various industries.

The document draws directly from the **bias-free language guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*** (APA, 2020b). The guidance offered is intended to be used in conjunction with, not in place of, those guidelines.

Various APA publications also influenced the information presented within, namely the **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework** (APA, 2021b); numerous policy resolutions and practice guidelines; and the ***APA Dictionary of Psychology*** (APA, n.d.). We also relied on articles published in peer-reviewed psychology journals and the collective expertise of subject matter experts among our staff and APA committees.

Finally, we consulted inclusive language guidelines from the **Brandeis University Prevention, Advocacy and Resource Center** and the **Native American Journalists Association**.

Please note that the explanations in this document are distinct and separate from how these words are defined and interpreted under law.

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Inclusive Language in Writing

GENERAL TERMS RELATED TO EQUITY AND POWER

access
The elimination of discrimination and other barriers that contribute to inequitable opportunities to join and be a part of a work group, organization, or community (APA, 2021b).

ally/allies
People who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns. Being an ally is more than being sympathetic and feeling bad for those who experience discrimination. An ally is willing to act with, and for, others in pursuit of ending oppression and creating equality. Real allies are willing to step out of their comfort zones. Those who decide to undertake the ally role must recognize and understand the power and privileges that one receives, accepts, and experiences and they use that position to act for justice (Akbar, 2020).

bias
APA defines bias as partiality: an inclination or predisposition for or against something. Motivational and cognitive biases are two main categories studied in decision-making analysis. Motivational biases are conclusions drawn due to self-interest, social pressures, or organization-based needs, whereas cognitive biases are judgments that go against what is considered rational, and some of these are attributed to implicit reasoning (APA, 2021b).

climate
The degree to which community members feel included or excluded in the work group, organization, or community (APA, 2021b).

cultural competence
Ability to collaborate effectively with individuals from different cultures; such competence improves health care experiences and outcomes (Nair & Adetayo, 2019).

discrimination
The unjust and differential treatment of the members of different age, gender, racial, ethnic, religious, national, ability identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, and other groups at the individual level (e.g., behavioral manifestation of prejudice involving negative, hostile, and injurious treatment of the members of targeted groups; APA, 2021b) and the institutional/structural level (e.g., operating procedures, laws, and policies) that favor certain groups over others and has the effect of restricting opportunities for other groups.

diverse
Involving the representation or composition of various social identity groups in a work group, organization, or community. The focus is on social identities that correspond to societal differences in power and privilege, and thus to the marginalization of some groups based on specific attributes—for example, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, spirituality, disability, age, national origin, immigration status, and language. There is a recognition that people have multiple identities and that social identities are intersectional and have different salience and impact in different contexts (APA, 2021b).

equity
Providing resources according to the need to help diverse populations achieve their highest state of health and other functioning. Equity is an ongoing process of assessing needs, correcting historical inequities, and creating conditions for optimal outcomes by members of all social identity groups (APA, 2021b).

generalization
The process of deriving a concept, judgment, principle, or theory from a limited number of specific cases and applying it more widely, often to an entire class of objects, events, or people (APA, n.d.).

global citizenship
The umbrella term for social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale. The term can refer to the belief that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local, and nonlocal networks rather than single actors affecting isolated societies (United Nations, n.d.).

global majority
Also known as people of the global majority (PGM), a collective term that encourages those of African, Asian, Latin American, and Arab descent to recognize that together they comprise the vast majority (around 80 percent) of people in the world. Understanding the truth that Whiteness is not the global norm has the power to disrupt and reframe our conversations on race (Maharaj & Campbell-Stephens, 2021).

health equity
Ensuring that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care (Braveman et al., 2017).

human rights
Rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled. In response to widespread, horrific violations of human rights in the first half of the 20th century, the international community established **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948) and international human rights laws that lay down the obligations of governments to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights (APA, 2015b). Human rights are defined by the United Nations as "universal legal rights that protect individuals and groups from those behaviors that interfere with freedom and human dignity" (APA, 2021b).

inclusion
An environment that offers affirmation, celebration, and appreciation of different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences, thus allowing all individuals to bring in their whole selves (and all their identities) and to demonstrate their strengths and capacity (APA, 2021b).

intergenerational trauma
The transmission of trauma or its legacy, in the form of a psychological consequence of an injury or attack, poverty, and so forth, from the generation experiencing the trauma to subsequent generations. The transference of this effect is believed to be epigenetic—that is, the transmission affects the chemical marker for a gene rather than the gene itself. The trauma experienced by the older generation is translated into a genetic adaptation that can be passed on to successive generations (Akbar, 2017; APA, 2017a; Menakem, 2017; Whitbeck et al., 2004).

intersectionality
The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups to produce and sustain complex inequities. Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the theory of *intersectionality* in a paper for the *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (Crenshaw, 1989), the idea that when it comes to thinking about how inequalities persist, categories like gender, race, and class are best understood as overlapping and mutually constitutive rather than isolated and distinct (Grzanka et al., 2017, 2020).

marginalization
Relegation to or placement in an unimportant or a depowered position in society (APA, 2017a).

microaggressions
Commonly occurring, brief, verbal or nonverbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate derogatory attitudes or notions toward a different "other." Microaggressions may be intentional or unintentional, and the perpetrators may possibly be unaware of their behavior (APA, 2017a). Microaggressions can accumulate over time and lead to severe harm.

minority
A minority group is a population subgroup (e.g., ethnic, racial, social, religious, or other group) with differential power than those deemed to hold the majority power in the population. The relevance of this term is outdated and has changed as the demographics of the population change. Thus, refrain from using the term "minority" and use the specific name of the group or groups to which you are referring (e.g., people of color or communities of color vs. ethnic and racial minorities; APA, 2020b).

oppression
Occurs when one subgroup has more access to power and privilege than another subgroup, and when that power and **privilege** are used to dominate the other to maintain the status quo. Thus, oppression is both a state and a process, with the state of oppression being unequal group access to power and privilege, and the process of oppression being the ways in which that inequality is maintained (APA, 2021b).

pathway programs
Programs (e.g., in secondary schools and colleges) that foster increased access by marginalized groups to education, training, or a profession. It is preferable to use this term rather than "**pipeline**" (see definition of pipeline for explanation; APA, 2021b).

performative allyship
Also known as *optical allyship*, this term refers to someone from a nonmarginalized group professing support and solidarity with a marginalized group but in a way that is not helpful. Worse yet, the allyship is done in a way that may actually be harmful to "the cause." The "ally" is motivated by some type of reward. On social media, that reward is a virtual pat on the back for being a "good person" or for being "on the right side" of a cause, or "on the right side of history" (Kalina, 2020).

population health
The health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group. Population health includes health outcomes, patterns of health determinants, and policies and interventions that link these two. Attention to social and environmental, as well as medical, determinants of health is essential (Silberberg et al., 2019).

positionality
Our social position or place in a given society in relation to race, ethnicity, and other statuses (e.g., social class, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, religion) within systems of power and oppression. Positionality refers to our individual identities and the intersection of those identities and statuses with systems of privilege and oppression. Positionality shapes our psychological experiences, worldview, perceptions others have of us, social relationships, and access to resources (Muhammad et al., 2015). Positionality therefore means actively understanding and negotiating the systemic processes and hierarchy of power and the ways that our statuses affect our relationships because of power dynamics related to **privilege** and **oppression** (APA, 2019b).

prejudice
A negative attitude toward another person or group formed in advance of any experience with that person or group. Prejudices can include an affective component (e.g., nervousness, anger, contempt, pity, hatred) and a cognitive component (assumptions and beliefs about groups, including stereotypes). Prejudice is typically manifested behaviorally through discriminatory behavior. Prejudicial attitudes tend to be resistant to change because they distort our perception of information about the target group. Prejudice based on racial grouping is racism; prejudice based on perceived sexual orientation is homophobia and biphobia; prejudice based on sex or gender (including transphobia) is sexism; prejudice based on chronological age is ageism; and prejudice based on disability is ableism (APA, 2021b).

privilege
Unearned power that is afforded to some but not others based on status rather than earned merit; such power may come in the form of rights, benefits, social comfort, opportunities, or the ability to define what is normative or valued (Bailey, 1998; Johnson, 2018; McIntosh, 1989). Privilege arises in relation to systems of **oppression**. A person has privilege not because they desire to have privilege or promote inequity but because they exist within a system where biased values, attitudes, and behaviors have become integrated and normalized (APA, 2019b). See **racial privilege or White privilege**.

social justice
Commitment to creating fairness and equity in resources, rights, and treatment of marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal power in society (APA, 2021b).

stereotype
A set of cognitive generalizations (e.g., beliefs, expectations) about the qualities and characteristics of the members of a group or social category. Stereotypes, like schemas, simplify and expedite perceptions and judgments, but they are often exaggerated, negative rather than positive, and resistant to revision even when perceivers encounter individuals with qualities that are not congruent with the stereotype (APA, n.d.).

structural competency
The trained ability to discern how a host of issues defined clinically as symptoms, attitudes, or diseases (e.g., depression, hypertension, obesity, smoking, medication noncompliance, trauma, psychosis) also represent the downstream implications of a number of upstream decisions about such matters as health care and food delivery systems, zoning laws, urban and rural infrastructures, medicalization, or even about the very definitions of illness and health (Metzl & Hansen, 2014).

PERSON-FIRST AND IDENTITY-FIRST LANGUAGE

person-first versus identity-first language

The discussion of person-first versus identity-first language was first applied to issues regarding people with disabilities. However, the language has been broadened to refer to other identity groups. Authors who write about identity are encouraged to use terms and descriptions that both honor and explain person-first and identity-first perspectives. Language should be selected with the understanding that the individual's preference supersedes matters of style. In person-first language, the person is emphasized, not the disability or chronic condition. In identity-first language, the disability becomes the focus, which allows the individual to claim the disability or the chronic condition and choose their identity rather than permitting others (e.g., authors, educators, researchers) to name it or to select terms with negative implications. It is often used as an expression of cultural pride and a reclamation of a disability or chronic condition that once conferred a negative identity. It is permissible to use either approach or to mix person-first and identity-first language unless or until you know that a group clearly prefers one approach, in which case, you should use the preferred approach (APA, 2020b).

Person-first language may also be appropriate in the following scenarios (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.):

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE
victim, survivor	person who has experienced... person who has been impacted by...
wheelchair-bound	person who uses a wheelchair
mentally ill	person living with a mental health condition person with a mental disorder person with a mental illness
abusive relationship	relationship with a person who is abusive
addict	person with a substance use disorder
homeless person	person without housing
prostitute	person who engages in sex work
prisoner, convict	person who is/has been incarcerated
slave	person who is/was enslaved

For more information on person-first and identity-first language, please refer to the **APA bias-free language guidelines for writing about disability** (APA, 2020b).

Authors who write about identity are encouraged to use terms and descriptions that both ***honor*** and ***explain*** person-first and identity-first perspectives

Age

ageism
Stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups based on their age. Ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs (APA, 2020a). Reverse ageism literature also indicates that young employees—broadly defined as people under 40—comprise a socially disadvantaged group that is likely to be exposed to workplace discrimination stemming from reverse-ageist ideologies (Kessler et al., 1999; Raymer et al., 2017).

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE
the elderly	older adults
elderly people	older people
the aged	persons 65 years and older
aging dependents	the older population
seniors	
senior citizens	

Avoid using terms such as "seniors," "elderly," "the aged," "aging dependents," and similar "othering" terms because they connote a stereotype and suggest that members of the group are not part of society but rather a group apart (see Lundebjerg et al., 2017; Sweetland et al., 2017).

For more information on problematic and preferred language use related to age, please refer to the **APA bias-free language guidelines for writing about age** (APA, 2020b).

Disability Status

ableism

Stereotyping, prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory behavior, and social oppression toward people with disabilities to inhibit the rights and well-being of people with disabilities, which is currently the largest minority group in the United States (APA, 2021b; Bogart & Dunn, 2019). Understanding the concept of ableism, and how it manifests in language choices, is critical for researchers who focus on marginalized groups such as the autistic community (Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021).

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE	COMMENT
Use of person-first and identity-first language rather than condescending terms		
special needs physically challenged mentally challenged mentally retarded handi-capable	person with a disability person who has a disability disabled person people with intellectual disabilities child with a congenital disability child with a birth impairment physically disabled person person with a physical disability	Use person-first or identity-first language as is appropriate for the community or person being discussed. The language used should be selected with the understanding that disabled people's expressed preferences regarding identification supersede matters of style. Avoid terms that are condescending or patronizing.
mentally ill	person with a mental disorder person with a mental illness person living with a mental health condition	
Description of Deaf or hard-of-hearing people		
person with deafness person who is deaf	Deaf person	Most Deaf or Deaf-Blind individuals culturally prefer to be called Deaf or Deaf-Blind (capitalized) rather than "hearing-impaired," "people with hearing loss," and so forth.
hearing-impaired person person who is hearing impaired person with hearing loss	hard-of-hearing person person who is hard-of-hearing	
person with deafness and blindness	Deaf-Blind person	
Description of blind people and people who are visually impaired		
person with blindness	blind person person who is blind	

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE	COMMENT
visually challenged person sight-challenged person	visually impaired person vision-impaired person person who is visually impaired person who is vision impaired	
Use of pictorial metaphors, negativistic terms, and slurs		
wheelchair-bound person	wheelchair user person in a wheelchair	Avoid language that uses pictorial metaphors, negativistic terms that imply restriction, and slurs that insult or disparage a particular group. As with other diverse groups, insiders in disability culture may use these terms with one another; it is not appropriate for an outsider (nondisabled person) to use these terms.
AIDS victim	person with AIDS	
brain damaged	person with a traumatic brain injury	
cripple invalid	person with a physical disability	
defective nuts crazy	person with a mental disorder person with a mental illness person living with a mental illness	
alcoholic	person with alcohol use disorder	
meth addict	person with substance use disorder	

For more information on problematic and preferred language use related to disability, please refer to the **APA bias-free language guidelines for writing about disability** (APA, 2020b).

disability

Can be broadly defined as the interaction of physical, psychological, intellectual, and socioemotional differences or impairments with the social environment (World Health Organization, 2001). The members of some groups of people with disabilities—effectively subcultures within the larger culture of disability—have ways of referring to themselves that they would prefer others to adopt. The overall principle for using disability language is to maintain the integrity (worth and dignity) of all individuals as human beings (APA, 2020b).

neurodiversity

A term that evolved from the advocacy movement on behalf of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and has been embraced by other groups of individuals with neurologically based disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities [LDs]). Neurodiversity suggests that these disabilities are a natural variation in brain differences and that the workplace should adapt to them (Sumner & Brown, 2015).

Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

acculturation
The processes by which groups or individuals adjust the social and cultural values, ideas, beliefs, and behavioral patterns of their culture of origin to those of a different culture. Psychological acculturation is an individual's attitudinal and behavioral adjustment to another culture, which typically varies with regard to degree and type (APA, n.d.).

African American/Black
African American and Black are not always interchangeable. "African American" should not be used as an umbrella term for people of African ancestry worldwide because it obscures other ethnicities or national origins, such as Nigerian, Kenyan, Jamaican, Bahamian, Puerto Rican, or Panamanian; in these cases, use "Black." The terms "Negro," "colored," and "Afro-American" are outdated; therefore, their use is generally inappropriate (APA, 2020b).

American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African (AMENA)
There is no standard definition, the Middle Eastern racialized group includes people with ancestry from countries or territories such as Jordan, Iran, and Palestine; and North African includes people with ancestry from countries such as Algeria, Egypt, and Libya. People from AMENA countries have been racialized in the United States, especially after 9/11, so much so that the U.S. Census Bureau recommended the inclusion of AMENA as a category in the 2020 census (APA, 2019b; Krogstad, 2014), though ultimately this category was not used.

Asian/Asian American
When writing about people of Asian ancestry from Asia, the term "Asian" is appropriate; for people of Asian descent from the United States or Canada, the appropriate term is "Asian American" or "Asian Canadian," respectively. It is problematic to group "Asian" and "Asian American" as if they are synonymous. This usage reinforces the idea that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners. "Asian" refers to Asians in Asia, not in the United States, and should not be used to refer to Asian Americans. The outdated term "Oriental" is primarily used to refer to cultural objects such as carpets and is pejorative when used to refer to people. To provide more specificity, "Asian origin" may be divided regionally, for example, into South Asia. The term "East Asian" can be used; however, refer to the specific nation or region of origin when possible (APA, 2020b).

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color)
People use the term BIPOC to acknowledge that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice. The construction of the term "BIPOC" recognizes that Black and Indigenous people are severely impacted by systemic racial injustices (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a). The term BIPOC is still considered by many to indicate a hierarchy among communities of color. Instead of BIPOC, the preferred term(s) to use are "people/persons of color" and "communities of color."

color-blind beliefs
Refer to the denial or minimization of race or racism in society (i.e., "not see [skin] color"; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Neville et al., 2013). Color-blind beliefs in a racial sense purportedly are based on the assumption that acknowledgement of race reifies racial divisions in society. People who endorse color-blind beliefs believe that individual effort is sufficient for achievement in a meritocracy predicated on the assumption that everyone has equal opportunity for life success. People who hold color-blind attitudes believe that doing so reduces racial and ethnic prejudice and that acknowledging racial and ethnic differences promotes racial division. Research evidence shows that holding color-blind beliefs allows racial and ethnic prejudice to fester (Pahlke et al., 2012; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

color-blind policies
Institutional policies that are race-neutral in language and tone and yet have a disproportionate and harmful impact on people of color (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Block, 2016; Castro-Atwater, 2016; Penner & Dovidio, 2016). Research indicates that the United States is not a meritocracy (Farkas, 2003; Gale et al., 2017; Pearson et al., 2009). Color-blind belief systems undergird color-blind policies. Moreover, color-blind policies operate to maintain disparities and do not lead to equitable treatment across groups (APA, 2019b; Helms, 2008; Neville et al., 2016, 2000).

culture
The values, beliefs, language, rituals, traditions, and other behaviors that are passed from one generation to another within any social group. Broad definitions include any socially definable group with its own set of values, behaviors, and beliefs. Accordingly, cultural groups could include groups based on shared identities such as ethnicity (e.g., German American, Blackfoot, Algerian American), gender (e.g., women, men, transgender, gender-nonconforming), sexual orientation (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual), and socioeconomic class (e.g., poor, working class, middle class, wealthy; APA, 2019b).

enculturation
First introduced by anthropologist Melville Herskovits (1948), the term *enculturation* is defined as "the process by which individuals learn and adopt the ways and manners of their culture" (Matsumoto, 2004, p. 156). Enculturation emphasizes socialization to, or maintenance of, one's culture of ethnic or familial ethnic origin (APA, 2012; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Zhang & Moradi, 2013). This process considers how, for example, U.S.-born or highly U.S.-acculturated individuals may be more actively learning their ethnic origin culture, rather than maintaining it (APA, 2019b).

ethnic bias
Differential treatment toward individuals based on their ethnic group, often resulting in inequities in such areas as education, employment, health care, and housing. With regards to testing and measurement, ethnic bias refers to contamination or deficiency in an instrument that differentially affects the scores of those from different ethnic groups. Ideally, researchers strive to create culture-fair tests (APA, n.d.).

ethnic identity
An individual's sense of being a person who is defined, in part, by membership in a specific ethnic group. This sense is usually considered to be a complex construct involving shared social, cultural, linguistic, religious, and often racial factors but identical with none of them (APA, n.d.).

ethnicity
A characterization of people based on having a shared culture (e.g., language, food, music, dress, values, and beliefs) related to common ancestry and shared history (APA, 2021b).

The term BIPOC is still considered by many to indicate a hierarchy among communities of color. Instead of BIPOC, the preferred term(s) to use are *"people/persons of color"* and *"communities of color"*

Hispanic, Latin(a/o), Latinx

When writing about people who identify as Hispanic, Latino or Latinx, Chicano, or another related designation, authors should consult with their participants to determine the appropriate choice. Note that "Hispanic" is not necessarily an all-encompassing term, and the labels "Hispanic" and "Latinx" have different connotations. The term "Latinx" (and its related forms) might be preferred by those originating from Latin America, including Brazil. Some use the word "Hispanic" to refer to those who speak Spanish; however, not every group in Latin America speaks Spanish (e.g., in Brazil, the official language is Portuguese). The word "Latino" is gendered (i.e., "Latino" is masculine and "Latina" is feminine). "Latinx" can also be used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary term inclusive of all genders. There are compelling reasons to use any of the terms "Latino," "Latina," "Latino/a," and/or "Latinx" (see de Onís, 2017), and various groups advocate for the use of different forms. Use the term(s) your participants or population uses; if you are not working directly with this population but it is a focus of your research, it may be helpful to explain why you chose the term you used or to choose a more inclusive term like "Latinx." In general, naming a nation or region of origin is preferred (e.g., Bolivian, Salvadoran, or Costa Rican is more specific than Latino, Latinx, Latin American, or Hispanic; APA, 2020b).

Indigenous

Although an official definition of "Indigenous" is not agreed on, the United Nations has developed an understanding of the term based on self-identification; historical continuity to precolonial and/or presettler societies; links to territories and resources; distinct social, economic, and political systems; and possession of distinct languages, cultures, and beliefs (Native American Journalists Association, n.d.).Per the APA *Publication Manual*, *Seventh Edition*, capitalize "Indigenous" and "Indigenous People" when referring to a specific group but use lowercase for "people" when describing specific persons who are Indigenous. For more information, see **Section 5.7** of the *Publication Manual* (APA, 2020b).

Indigenous Peoples around the world

When writing about Indigenous Peoples, use the names that they call themselves. In general, refer to an Indigenous group as a "people" or "nation" rather than as a "**tribe**." For information on citing the Traditional Knowledge or Oral Traditions of Indigenous Peoples as well as the capitalization of terms related to Indigenous Peoples, see **Section 5.7** of the *Publication Manual* (APA, 2020b).

Indigenous land acknowledgment

Indigenous land acknowledgment is an effort to recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of a particular location and to understand our own place within that relationship. Usually, land acknowledgments take the form of written and/or verbal statements. It is becoming more and more common to see land acknowledgments delivered at conferences, community gatherings, places of worship, concerts, festivals, and so forth (Native Governance Center, n.d.).

people of color

This term represents a shift from the terms *minority* or *colored people* to refer to individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Instead, use *people of color* or *communities of color* when referring to groups from diverse backgrounds. When appropriate, you may use the terms *underserved, underrepresented*, or *marginalized* to describe populations; however, use the specific group title whenever possible. For example: LGBTQ+ students, Black students, undocumented students, etc. (APA, 2020b)

people of European origin

When writing about people of European ancestry, the terms "White" and "European American" are acceptable. Adjust the latter term as needed for location, for example, "European," "European American," and "European Australian" for people of European descent living in Europe, the United States, and Australia, respectively. The use of the term "Caucasian" as an alternative to "White" or "European" is discouraged because it originated as a way of classifying White people as a race to be favorably compared with other races. As with all discussions of race and ethnicity, it is preferable to be more specific about regional (e.g., Southern European, Scandinavian) or national (e.g., Italian, Irish, Swedish, French, Polish) origin when possible (APA, 2020b).

race
The social construction and categorization of people based on perceived shared physical traits that result in the maintenance of a sociopolitical hierarchy (APA, 2021b).

racial identity
An individual's sense of being defined, in part, by membership in a particular racial group. The strength of this sense depends on the extent to which an individual has processed and internalized the psychological, sociopolitical, cultural, and other contextual factors related to membership in the group. Given the socially constructed nature of racial categories, racial identifications can change over time in different contexts (APA, n.d.). Worrell (2015) argued that culture can be and is used interchangeably with racial and ethnic identity and contended that these are the psychosocial manifestations of race and ethnicity, respectively.

racial and ethnocultural justice
Applies social justice meanings (Prilleltensky, 2012) specifically to inequities affecting people of color. Thus, it explicitly attends to the ways that race and ethnicity have affected the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities for equitable participation, power, and influence (e.g., distributive, procedural, retributive, relational, and cultural justice; Prilleltensky, 2012). Racial and ethnocultural justice within psychology also attends to the ways that **oppression** and **marginalization** have shaped the psychological, relational, and practical experiences of people of color; psychologists aspiring for racial and ethnocultural justice strive to apply this understanding to develop their professional activities in ways that address the negative effects of injustice and challenge the existence and maintenance of racial and ethnic oppression (APA, 2019b).

racial privilege or White privilege
Unearned power that is afforded to White people based on status rather than earned merit that protects White people from the consequences of being racist and benefitting from systemic racism; such power may come in the form of rights, benefits, social comforts, opportunities, or the ability to define what is normative or valued. As White people are dominant in the U.S. racial hierarchy, racial privilege in the United States is a benefit of being White. This does not mean that White people seek to be privileged, only that they inherently benefit from being dominant in a biased system (APA, 2019b; Goodman, 2011).

racial socialization
Refers to the developmental process by which race-related messages about the meaning of race and racism are transmitted by parents and extended families intergenerationally. It consists of various kinds of parental messages, activities, and behaviors; teaching children about their racial–ethnic heritage and history and promoting racial pride (*racial pride/cultural socialization*); highlighting the existence of inequalities between groups and preparing youth to cope with discrimination (*racial barriers/preparation for bias*); emphasizing individual character traits such as hard work over racial or ethnic group membership (*egalitarianism*); focus on the necessity of individual excellence and the development of positive character traits (*self-development*); promoting feelings of individual worth within the broader context of the child's race or ethnicity (*self-worth messages*); emphasizing negative characteristics associated with their racial identity (*negative messages*); conveying distrust in interracial communications (*promotion of mistrust*); engaging in race-related activities and behaviors (*socialization behaviors*); and avoiding mention of issues pertaining to race or ethnicity (*silence about race;* Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett et al., 2012; Scottham et al., 2006). Together, these multiple aspects of racial socialization are thought to combine to provide youth of color with a view of both the significance and meaning of race (and ethnicity) in U.S. society (Neblett et al., 2016).

racial/racialized/race-based trauma
A form of race-based stress, referring to people of color and Indigenous individuals' reactions to dangerous events and real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination. Such experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing racial discrimination toward other people of color. Although similar to posttraumatic stress disorder, racial trauma is unique in that it involves ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and reexposure to race-based stress (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019; Kniffley, 2018; Mosley et al., 2020).

racism
A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on phenotypic properties (e.g., skin color and hair texture associated with "race" in the United States). This "system"—which ranges from daily interpersonal interactions shaped by race to racialized opportunities for good education, housing, employment, and so forth—unfairly disadvantages people belonging to marginalized racial groups and damages their physical and mental health, unfairly advantages individuals belonging to socially and politically dominant racial groups, and "ultimately undermines the full potential of the whole society" (APA, 2021a; Jones, 2002). The following more specific forms of racism also exist:

- **structural racism**
  Results from laws, policies, and practices that produce cumulative, durable, and race-based inequalities and includes the failure to correct previous laws and practices that were explicitly or effectively racist.

- **institutional racism**
  Results from policies, practices, and procedures of institutions—such as school, health care, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems—that marginalize diverse racial groups.

- **interpersonal racism**
  Occurs when individuals from socially and politically dominant racial groups behave in ways that diminish and harm people who belong to other racial groups. Interpersonal racism is therefore distinct from bigotry (negative attitudes about an outgroup, not necessarily tied to race) or prejudice (a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience).

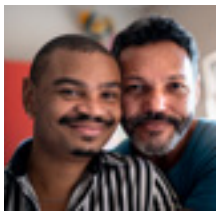
- **internalized racism**
  Refers to the acceptance by diverse racial populations of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves—including negative stereotypes and beliefs about complexion and color (i.e., colorism) that reinforce the superiority of Whites and can lead to the perception of themselves as devalued, worthless, and powerless (APA, 2021a).

White supremacy
The ideological belief that biological and cultural Whiteness is superior, as well as normal and healthy, is a pervasive ideology that continues to polarize the United States and undergird racism (APA, 2021b). For more information, see also **White privilege**.

For more information on problematic and preferred language use related to race and ethnicity, please refer to the **APA bias-free language guidelines for writing about racial and ethnic identity** (APA, 2020b).

***Institutional racism* results from policies, practices, and procedures of institutions—such as school, health care, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems—that marginalize diverse racial groups.**

Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity



gender
The socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles of a particular sex (APA, 2021b).

gender-exclusive language
Terms that lump all people under masculine language or within the gender binary (man or woman), which does not include everyone. When describing a generic or hypothetical person whose gender is irrelevant to the context of the usage, do not use gendered pronouns such as "he" and "she" or gendered pronoun combinations such as "he or she" because these pronouns and pronoun combinations assume gender; instead, use the singular "they" because it is gender inclusive. When describing a specific person, use that person's pronouns (e.g., **"he," "she," "they," "ze," "xe"**) (Conover et al., 2021). Ask the person for their pronouns rather than make assumptions. Also avoid gendered nouns when describing people who may be of any gender, as in the following examples: you guys, ladies and gentlemen, policeman, chairman, congressman, and freshman (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.). Instead, use gender-inclusive nouns to describe people who may be of any gender, as in the following examples: everyone, folks, folx, friends, loved ones, or y'all; distinguished guests; police officer; chair or chairperson; congressperson or member of congress; and first-year student or first year.

gender identity
A component of gender that describes a person's psychological sense of their gender. Many people describe gender identity as a deeply felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or a nonbinary gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender nonbinary, gender-neutral, agender, gender-fluid) that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth, presumed gender based on sex assignment, or primary or secondary sex characteristics (APA, 2015a). Gender identity applies to all individuals and is not a characteristic only of transgender or gender-nonbinary individuals. Gender identity is **distinct from sexual orientation**; thus, the two must not be conflated (e.g., a gay transgender man has a masculine gender identity and a gay sexual orientation, a straight cisgender woman has a feminine gender identity and a straight sexual orientation).

- **cisgender**
  Refers to "a person whose gender identity aligns with sex assigned at birth" (APA, 2015a).

- **transgender**
  "An umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender role do not conform to what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth" (APA, 2015a). The term "transgendered" is inappropriate because of the connotations that being transgender is something that is done to a person and to create distance from misconceptions that being trans requires a before/after, surgery, or other formal transition (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE	COMMENT
birth sex natal sex	assigned sex sex assigned at birth	
born a girl, born female born a boy, born male	assigned female at birth (AFAB) assigned male at birth (AMAB)	
hermaphrodite tranny transvestite transsexual (unless being used medically)	LGBTQ+, LBGTQIA+, etc. transgender people trans and gender nonbinary folks or folx genderqueer queer*	The term "tranny" is considered a slur. *Consider your audience when using the term "queer"; not everyone receives this word positively; many members of the LGBTQIA+ community have now reclaimed it.

gender-inclusive language

Terms used to be more gender equitable. It is the opposite of gender-exclusive language. Examples of gender-inclusive nouns for general use: everyone or everybody, distinguished guests, folks or folx, friends, humans, individuals, loved ones, person, people, y'all. Examples of gender-inclusive occupational nouns: chair or chairperson, congressperson or member of congress, first-year student or first year. When describing a specific person, use that person's pronouns (be sure to ask for their pronouns rather than assume; Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

gender and pronoun usage

Do not use the term "preferred pronouns" because this implies a choice about one's gender. Use the term "pronouns" or "identified pronouns" instead. When writing about a known individual, use that person's identified pronouns. When referring to individuals whose identified pronouns are not known or when the gender of a generic or hypothetical person is irrelevant within the context, **use the singular "they"** to avoid making assumptions about an individual's gender. Use the forms "they," "them," "theirs," and so forth (APA, 2020b).

sexual and gender minorities (SGM)

Please note that the use of the term *minority* can be considered pejorative. The umbrella term "sexual and gender minorities" refers to multiple sexual and/or gender minority groups. The term is also used to write about "sexual orientation and gender diversity." Abbreviations such as LGBTQ, LGBTQ+, LGBTQIA, and LGBTQIA+ may also be used to refer to multiple groups. The form "LGBT" is considered outdated, but there is not consensus about which abbreviation including or beyond LGBTQ to use. If you use the abbreviation LGBTQ (or a related one), define it and ensure that it is representative of the groups about which you are writing. Be specific about the groups to which you refer (e.g., do not use LGBTQ and related abbreviations to write about legislation that primarily affects transgender people; instead, specify the impacted group). However, if in doubt, use one of the umbrella terms rather than a potentially inaccurate abbreviation (APA, 2020b). SGM populations include, but are not limited to, individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, **Two-Spirit**, queer, and/or intersex. Individuals with same-sex or same-gender attractions or behaviors and those with a difference in sex development are also included. These populations also encompass those who do not self-identify with one of these terms but whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or reproductive development is characterized by nonbinary constructs of sexual orientation, gender, and/or sex (**National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.**).

sexual orientation and identity
Refer to an enduring disposition to experience sexual, affectional, or romantic attractions to men, women, nonbinary people, and so forth. It also encompasses an individual's sense of personal and social identity based on those attractions, behaviors expressing them, and membership in a community of others who share them (Brief for American Psychological Association et al., as Amici Curiae supporting petitioners, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015, p. 7). The term "homosexual" should not be used in place of "sexual orientation."

For more information on problematic and preferred language use related to sexual orientation and gender diversity, please refer to the APA bias-free language guidelines for writing about **sexual orientation** and **gender** (APA, 2020b).

Socioeconomic Status

classism
The assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on actual or perceived social class, and the attitudes, policies, and practices that maintain unequal valuing based on class (Collins & Yeskel, 2005). Classism can be expressed via prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes, language, or behaviors directed toward individuals based on perceived or actual social class. This can occur in interpersonal interactions, education, housing, health care, legal assistance, politics, public policy, and more (APA, 2019a; Lott & Bullock, 2007).

class privilege
Encompasses the unearned advantages, protections, immunities, and access experienced by a small class of people who typically carry special status or power within a society or culture (Class Action, n.d.). This status and privilege are typically conferred based on wealth and financial status, occupational prestige (e.g., the perceived societal valuation of an occupational class or job title), title/leadership within a culture, or fame/recognition. These advantages are typically granted to the disadvantage of others and contribute to the establishment of perceived and concrete hierarchies within a community, culture, and/or society (APA, 2019a).

socioeconomic status (SES)
Encompasses not only income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. SES encompasses quality-of-life attributes and opportunities afforded to people within society and is a consistent predictor of a vast array of psychological outcomes (APA, 2019a).

TERMS TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE	COMMENT
the poor low-class people poor people	people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold people whose self-reported incomes were in the lowest income bracket	Many people find the terms "low-class" and "poor" pejorative. Use person-first language instead. Define income brackets and levels if possible.

For additional terms related to socioeconomic status, please refer to the ***APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice for People with Low-Income and Economic Marginalization*** and the **APA bias-free language guidelines for writing about socioeconomic status** (APA, 2020b).

***Socioeconomic status (SES)* encompasses quality-of-life attributes and opportunities afforded to people within society and is a consistent predictor of a vast array of psychological outcomes**

Culturally Appropriative and Pejorative Language

Indian-giver

The term Indian-giver is offensive and is said to have roots in misunderstandings about trade customs in early relationships between Indigenous people in the Americas and White settlers. Suggested alternatives: take something back or rescind a gift (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

"long time no see" or "no can do"

These terms as well as other expressions using "broken" English originate from stereotypes making fun of nonnative English speakers, particularly applied to Indigenous people and Asians. Suggested alternatives: "It's been a while!" and "Sorry, I can't" (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

pipeline

A term that is considered offensive and triggering to Indigenous communities as a result of oil companies transporting crude oil through the sacred lands of American Indians or Native Alaskans living in the United States, contaminating their water supply. The National Congress of American Indians (2019) recommends that allies for Indian country should avoid careless use of words that refer to historical trauma or socioeconomic conditions. Suggested alternative: **pathway**.

powwow

Using the word powwow erases the cultural roots, significance, and true meaning of the word. Suggested alternatives: meeting, party, or gathering (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

spirit animal

In some cultural and spiritual traditions, spirit animals refer to an animal spirit that helps guide and/or protect a person through a journey; equating this with an animal you like strips the term of its significance. Suggested alternatives: favorite animal, animal I would most like to be (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

tribe

Whenever possible, identify Indigenous people by their specific tribes, nations, or communities. Headlines and text should also refer to tribes by their proper names, not a catch-all phrase like "Oklahoma Native American Tribe" or "Native American group." While many Indigenous people share a common history of oppression and colonialism, tribal nations are diverse and different; failing to use the actual name of the tribe you are referring to is neither accurate, fair, or thorough and undermines diversity by erasing the tribe's identity (Native American Journalists Association, n.d.). Outside of being used to describe racial, ethnic, and/or cultural groups, the word "tribe" was historically used in a dehumanizing way to equate Indigenous people with being "savage" or "primitive"; modern misuse could be interpreted as racially charged. Please use your judgment as to when it is appropriate to use these suggested alternatives: friends, group, pals, team (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

"sold down the river"

This expression refers to enslaved people who were sold as punishment, separating them from their families and loved ones. Suggested alternative: betrayed (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

"to get gypped"
The offensive term "gypped" is derived from "gypsy," connected to the racial stereotype that Romani people are swindlers. Suggested alternative: to get ripped off (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

"to get Jewed"
The term "Jewed" is based on the anti-Semitic stereotype that Jews are cheap and/or money hoarders. Suggested alternative: to get haggled down (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

Violent Language

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE	COMMENT
killing it	great job! awesome!	If someone is doing well, there are other ways to say so without equating it to murder (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).
take a shot at, take your best shot pull the trigger take a stab at	give it a go try	These expressions needlessly use imagery of hurting someone or something (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).
go off the reservation	disagree with the group, defect from the group	This phrase has a harmful history rooted in the violent removal of Indigenous people from their land and the potential consequences for someone that left the reservation (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

Language That Doesn't Say What We Mean

TERM TO AVOID	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE	COMMENT
committed suicide failed/successful suicide completed suicide	died by suicide suicided	These verbs frame suicide as a crime (committed) or an achievement (fail, successful, completed), implying judgment about suicidality (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).
child prostitute sex with an underage person nonconsensual sex	child who has been trafficked child who has been raped rape	Sex with someone without their consent is rape; it is important to name this (Brandeis University PARC, n.d.).

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