

Inclusive Language

Language is a powerful tool which can shape and affect the way clubs present themselves, build relationships and connect with others. This guide will help you to understand why inclusion is important and all the things your club can do to be more inclusive when communicating.

What is inclusive language?

To adopt inclusive language means to communicate in a way that everyone can understand and to make all members feel welcomed, respected, and valued through language. Inclusive language avoids biases, slang, or expressions that exclude groups of people based on characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, and sexual orientation.

Why should we use inclusive language?

Within motorsport, we want to inspire and enable more people to participate in our sport in a safe, fair, fun, inclusive, and progressive environment. One of the key ways in which this mission is distributed is communication. The way in which we communicate can promote inclusion, and highlight how motorsport is open to all. It is everyone's responsibility to achieve this, and this is reflected and distributed in the way we talk and use language with one another.

What if I get it wrong?

In all cases for inclusive language, if you are unsure as to what is correct or what an individual may prefer, just ask! Each person has a different preference when it comes to their identity and the language used. The best way to make sure that each person feels acknowledged and included, is to make them feel heard, understood and valued. Do not hesitate to ask them what they would prefer in a respectful manner as this means you are going to reflect their choice and style of how they talk about themselves.

If you are unsure whether a term or word is acceptable, use a search engine to research.

Language is ever-changing, and what is best practice evolves over time. We won't all get it right all of the time, but it is important that there is

education and learning about how we can work towards more inclusion through language.

Sometimes the first reaction if you've said something wrong and/or are corrected, is to get defensive. We all make mistakes! Everyone is constantly learning, and learning how to communicate more inclusively takes time, practice, and effort. A polite, genuine apology for any offence and an effort to adapt for the future is generally a well-received response.

If you experience something upsetting, offensive or insulting in our sport, you may wish to report using Race with Respect. For further information and our Respect Code, please head to our website [here](#).

Top Tips for Inclusive Language

- **Try to avoid acronyms** – although acronyms can make a club's life much easier, they can also be considered a barrier for communication to those who are not familiar with what they mean and stand for. By using the full term, there will be less confusion. Sometimes there are acronyms which are unavoidable and widely or commonly used in society, such as LGBTQ+. Ultimately, question the use of an acronym and never presume knowledge that others know what you are referring to.
- **Use simple language** – in your communications and conversations, try to use simple language without expressions, idioms, jargons or colloquial sayings that others might not understand or be rooted in negative connotations and stereotypes.
- **Adopt gender neutral language** – to communicate inclusively, you should avoid any assumptions that exclude or highlight members based on their gender. This could reinforce stereotypes or discriminatory attitudes and make people feel unwelcome when coming to an event. For example when referring to groups of people, it is more inclusive to say everyone, colleagues,

volunteers, and officials.

Gender neutral language also extends itself to the labels people use to describe themselves and other people. Here are a few examples of more inclusive alternatives:

Term	Alternative
Chairman	Chair, chairperson
Guys	Everyone, all
Female driver	Competitor, driver
Female engineer	Engineer
Mum, dad	Parent
Husband, wife	Spouse, partner

Gender neutral language is important for many reasons. For example, the reason why spouse and partner is a more inclusive alternative is because it does not assume that an individual is in a heterosexual relationship. Equally, by saying female engineer and specifying someone's gender, you are othering someone which might make them feel different and alienated.

Included within gender neutral language are pronouns. When in doubt of which pronoun to use, use "they" and "theirs" and if you don't know, ask! Everyone is different and has different preferences so the best option is to always ask if you're unsure. When writing to a group or preparing instructions, briefing notes or regulations, always use 'they'/ 'them' pronouns rather than 'he'/ 'him' or 'she'/ 'her' as these don't make a gendered assumption. Using they/ them/ there is also preferable to using phrases such as 'he or she' or 'his or her', as it is more inclusive of non-binary or gender fluid individuals.

- **Use person-first and identity-first language** – Person-first and identity first language is a type of inclusive language used normally for people with disabilities. Some people prefer disabled person, some people prefer person with disability. This is a personal choice with no correct answer. In these cases, listen to how people refer to themselves and use that term. Only point it out if its relevant to the conversation and ask if in doubt.
- **Be mindful of terms related to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion and culture** – there is lots of language that can discriminate and cause offense due to having roots in racism and discriminative practices. Language evolves and there are terms

used widely in the past that are not acceptable now. In order to make everyone feel safe and respected, you should be aware of language and terms that may cause offense and discriminate, and take note of how people refer to themselves. Don't make any assumptions as there are many complexities surrounding different ethnicities, nationalities, races, cultures and religions, and try to be as specific as possible when referring to an individual or their community. If you get corrected, say thanks and learn from it.

- **Avoid ageist language** – ageism is the "stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination based on age" (Changing the Narrative). To be more inclusive, don't refer to age when communicating if it isn't necessary. This includes using terminology which can be perceived negatively such as the elderly, pensioners, old person, geriatric, young man/lady, boy, girl, youths and so on.

Useful external resources

Here we are signposting a number of different resources from external sources which have useful information about inclusive language. Be aware there can be disagreement between different communities on certain terms or practices, which is why we have included a variety:

- [A practical guide to gender-neutral writing \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 \(Equality and Human Rights Commission\)](#)
- [Glossary of LGBTQ+ terms \(Stonewall\)](#)
- [Inclusive Language Guide \(Oxfam\)](#)
- [Social Model of Disability: Language \(Disability Rights UK\)](#)
- [Inclusive Content \(NHS\)](#)
- [The usefulness of gender neutral language \(gendered intelligence\)](#)
- [Inclusive communication when writing about disability \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [Writing inclusive documentation \(Google\)](#)

For more information guides visit the Motorsport UK Club Toolkit.

For guidance and suggestions of further guides, email the Motorsport UK Club & Community Development Team at club.development@motorsportuk.org

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