

Exercise No. 4: Me, My Team, and Our Language

Answer the following questions. Based on your responses, write down specific action steps you would like to focus on implementing this year and next.

1. Do I use expressions that enunciate or imply ideas that are sexist, racist, or otherwise biased, prejudiced or denigrating to any particular group of people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, age, ability, socio-economic status, or any other characteristic mentioned in our *Code of Ethical Conduct*?
2. Do I use coded and/or gendered language in my communications with others?
3. Do I regularly address people on my team, if I notice they use offensive, coded, and/or gendered language? Do I ask them to stop using it?

Action Points

	My Response	Action Point
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

For Your Information

1. **Coded/Gendered Language** – Words or phrases associated with a particular gender, specifically male or female, often based on stereotypes.
2. **Inclusive Language** – Language that aims to avoid offense and fulfill the ideals of equality by avoiding expressions that enunciate or imply ideas that are sexist, racist, or otherwise biased, prejudiced or denigrating to any particular group of people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, age, ability, socio-economic status, or other differences. Using inclusive language shows awareness of the values of different perspectives, identities, and ideas.

Coded/Gendered and Inclusive Language Examples

Coded/Gendered	Inclusive
Ladies, gentlemen, guys	Colleagues, team, people
Maternity leave, paternity leave*	Parental leave, parental time off
Husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend**	Partner, spouse
Mr., Mrs., Ms.	Individual first names, non-gender specific titles
Chairman, salesman	Chairperson, salesperson, professional
Blacklist, whitelist	Allow list, deny list
Black	Black people
Non-white individuals	Specify: Black people, people of color, African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indian, etc.
Poor, impoverished	Low-income
Disabled, handicapped	People with disabilities

* Except to the extent necessary to distinguish policy benefits.

** Although using terms such as 'husband' and 'wife' may not be offensive, they imply a traditional, gendered understanding of marriage. Using 'partner' or 'spouse' can be more inclusive and acknowledges the diversity of relationships and identities.

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To conclude this exercise, ask yourself the following important questions:

	Question	Yes/No	Why/Why Not
1	Do I use expressions that enunciate or imply ideas that are sexist, racist, or otherwise biased, prejudiced or denigrating to any group of people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, age, ability, socio-economic status, or any other characteristic mentioned in our <i>Code of Ethical Conduct</i> ?		
2	Do I use coded and/or gendered language in my communications with others?		
3	Do I regularly address people on my team, if I notice they use offensive, coded, and/or gendered language? Do I ask them to stop using it?		