

## **Communications that Empower and Promote Equity and Inclusion**

### **ASK THE EXPERTS October 15, 2020: Alison Paul, GPLH**

**Inclusive communications** are free from words or phrases that reflect prejudice, stereotypes or discriminatory views of particular people or groups and do not deliberately or inadvertently exclude people.

**Diversity** – The presence of differences; the collective of differences of values, beliefs, backgrounds including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and more.

**Inclusion** – The extent to which diverse individuals are able to fully participate in decision-making processes within a group or organization. The extent to which individuals with different identities feel valued, leveraged, and welcomed.

**Equity** – An approach that recognizes unique disparities and provides relevant support symptoms to overcome barriers to achieve fairness and justice.

- Diversity tells us who is in the room.
- Inclusion is the means through which those in the room are heard.
- Equity means everyone has access to the resources and systems they need to thrive.
- Equality is about “sameness” of status, opportunity and power rather than fairness.

<b>Empowering Statements</b>	<b>Disempowering Statements</b>
Present people as self-determined human beings. Strength-based. Asset-based.	Characterize people as incapable, or lacking some quality or ability. Deficit-based.
<b>Listen</b> to the people you want to describe. How do they describe themselves?	Use stereotypes, labels, generalizations
Includes the people that <b>tell their story</b> , know themselves, and are aware of what they need and barriers in their way. What do you want – not need	Based on the notion that external “others” know best how to meet people’s needs: showing white people as “active, saviors” “Black people as passive, recipients”
Provides context for situation	Blames, shames, only refers to symptoms
Currently or formerly incarcerated people	Inmate, offender, felon, convict

- Inclusive writing is people-first: People with disabilities, not disabled people.
- Avoid stereotypes. Can you include quotes and ideas that come directly from the constituency you support rather than put words into their mouths, or make assumptions? Spend time listening and learning.
- Good intentions do not produce equity. Be accountable and transparent. Own mistakes.
- Be aware of the difference between symptoms and root causes. Think deeply about root causes before you write, speak or act.
- Avoid blame, shame, and denial for what are really institutional or structural failures.
- Use data responsibly, not to belittle or disparage or make people feel “less than.”
- Focus on the common good: “Our vision is that all children will be healthy.”
- At this point in time, capitalize the B when referring to Black people
- Learn from uncomfortable conversations

**Always ask yourself: Am I making anyone feel excluded by my communications?**

**Additional Communication Resources:**

<https://www.luminafoundation.org/talking-equity/>

Guidance for communicating about justice and equity in aspirational ways that move beyond buzzwords.

<https://prosperitynow.org/resources/communicating-race-and-racial-economic-equity>

A compilation of best practices, definitions of terms, and recommendations from a wide range of resources that are helpful for naming, framing, defining and understanding the issues.

<https://bigduck.com/insights/writing-with-an-antiracist-lens/>

Helpful guidance with messaging and additional resources