

# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE CHEAT SHEET

*An Unconventional Tour (2019), Celese Heward Photography*



**Vision:** Arts for All

**Mission:** Access to creative expression through inclusive arts programs and practice.

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Inclusive language is sometimes called non-discriminatory language. It includes words, phrases and tones that are free from prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views and don't deliberately or inadvertently exclude people.

It is essential that people with disability are portrayed as real individuals, without relying on stereotypes, using offensive terms or sensationalist analogies.

We believe that the media has the opportunity to lead by using and promoting inclusive language, at all times.

We've created a language guide that can help when determining which language to use in the media.



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**Please note that this is intended as a guide only.  
Please check with the individual about how they  
like to be represented in writing and articles.**

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 <b>Don't use</b>	 <b>Do use</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Disabled person Handicapped person Autistic person Epileptic person etc....	Person with disability Person with physical disability Person with [specific disability]	Perhaps the most common mistake, using this sort of phrasing emphasises the disability rather than the person's identity. The alternative centers on the individual in question.
The deaf The blind etc...	Person who happens to be blind or low vision. A person who happens to be deaf.	A person with disability may have a different experience than another person with same disability. It is best practice to always check with the individual on their preference. Please note that people who are Deaf that use sign language prefer to be referred to as Deaf with a capital "D". When referring to the Deaf community and those who collectively use signing to communicate it is preferred to represent this with a capital "D".
Mentally challenged Physically challenged Disadvantaged	Person with mental illness, person with physical disability	These are limiting terms, which suggest the individual is incapable or lacking in capabilities. A disability may mean a person has certain access requirements, however it should not be promoted as a disadvantage or barrier to success.
Autistic person	Person with autism, person with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Asperger's. Person on the spectrum	The word "autistic" is commonly misused. As with a person with a physical disability, persons with autism are not defined by their disability.
Midget	Short stature, a person with dwarfism, little person.	It is best practice to always check with the individual on their preference.
Wheelchair bound Confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user	A wheelchair is there to enable mobility and is liberating not confining.
Disabled toilets (or other facility)	Accessible toilets	A disabled toilet would mean a toilet that didn't work, however an accessible toilet is a facility modified to be inclusive to those with a disability.
Special needs	Person with disability	Special needs is a commonly used phrase, most often found within the education system. We recommend that the media does not use this terminology unless with explicit instructions or approval from the person or organisation who is being interviewed.
Normal/abnormal	Able bodied, person with disability	These terms exclude people with disability by suggesting they are a different class of people and that there's something 'wrong' with them.
People like this These people	Try to refer to people individually where possible	When you categorise people with disability as one homogenous group, it removes their individuality and adds to the stereotypical narrative of that disability. Categorising also emphasises the 'difference' between those with disability and those without and suggests that lives can be seen in a simplistic or one dimensional way.

 <b>Don't use</b>	 <b>Do use</b>	<b>Why?</b>
That person is Bipolar suffering from	Person with disability or specific illness. For example, person who has Bipolar.	Mental illness is often misrepresented in the media. A person isn't Bipolar, they have Bipolar. As an example, you wouldn't say "that person is elbows", you would say "that person has elbows." The disability doesn't define the person.
Victim, Tragic, sufferer		Try not to use negative, dramatic terminology. This is disempowering and patronising and suggests people with disability should be pitied.
Brave, Special, Heroic, Inspirational, Overcoming the odds		Words like these are also patronising, as they imply that it is unusual for people with disability to be successful or capable. It isn't unusual or unique for someone with disability to have talents or skills. Try to avoid sensationalising.