Using the American Psychological Association's Guide for Inclusive Language

David Prescott, LICSW, ATSA-F
&
Molly Shepard, PhD

Tuesday, August 13, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm (ET)
8:00 am – 10:00 am (PT)

1

General Land Acknowledgment

- **Brandon, Vermont**
  - Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy)
  - N'dakina (Abenaki / Abénaquis)
- **Salem, Oregon**
  - Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla
  - Kalapuya
  - Ahantchuyuk
  - Santiam
  - Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
  - Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

2

Disclosures

We have no conflicts of interest to report!

3

Objectives

1. Describe the APA report on inclusive language.
2. Respond to the evolution of language in continued support of cultural diversity.
3. Explain the difference between person-first and identity-first language.
4. Construct reports and treatment plans that adhere to APA recommendations.

4

Intentionality

PRIVILEGE CENTERING INCLUSIVITY ALLYSHIP

5

Starting with "Why"

6

Obvious (?)

The wrong language can cost your job

7

Let's Start with "Why"

- At the foundation of all treatment is the **therapeutic alliance**, first described by Bordin, 1979
  - Nature of relationship: How do we fit into our clients' lives?
  - Which tasks of treatment are/aren't a good fit?
- Central to forensic treatment is the **responsivity principle** (Bonta and Andrews, 2017)
  - Do we want them to respond to treatment or not?
- The APA definition of **evidence-based practice** includes that treatment be provided "in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences."

8

Demonstrating respect, connection, and understanding are all central to the alliance, responsivity principle, and EBP.

Our words shape our thoughts; our thoughts shape our actions

David starts with inclusive language as a way of getting started with rapport. Should the client prefer other terms, then we talk in some depth about it.

9

Example

"If it weren't for my Native brothers in this place, I'd be a lot worse (with my behavior) than I am!"

(Later, when he is escalating)

"Mr. X, maybe you should go talk with your Native brothers."

(That statement, made by a staff, resulted in a grievance.)

10

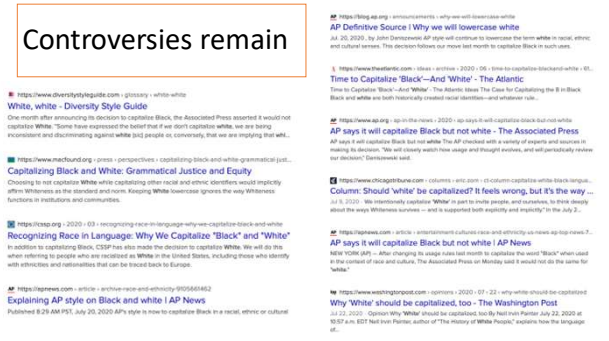
"You're in Indian country"

Is not the same as when the white person says:

"Hi everyone, thank you. It's great to be back in Indian country."

11

Controversies remain



12

Example

- "Look, Mr. Prescott, I'm a pedophile. I don't deny it. It's who I am."
  - Fair enough!
  - Is that all you are?
  - Would you like to be more than that label?
  - Do you limit who you can be when you give yourself a pejorative label?
- Problem: This use of language is rarely a two-way street
  - Imagine if I say:
  - "Look, you're a pedophile. Don't deny it. It's who you are."

13

"MAP"

- Subject: *I am sick and need help*
- *I am a pedophile using an alias. I cant stop with my thoughts against kids and its ruining my life. Please help me*
- Under these conditions, do we care if we call them what they want?
- Firefighters put the burning building out first and only then ask questions about liability and responsibility.
- The whole rest of the world is in judgments of MAPs and it doesn't make the problem better.

14

Ultimately…

- We need to examine our own personal ethics
- We can make new language our own
- We can adjust based on the needs of the individual

15

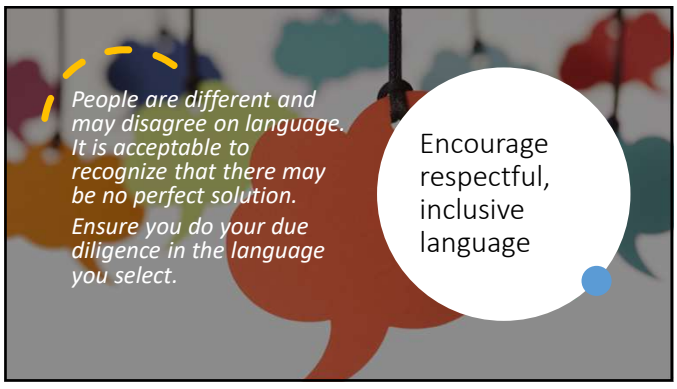
Poll!

16

APA's aims

Embrace	Embrace cultural responsiveness and intersectionality
Center	Center those who have been marginalized
Review	Review origins of problematic language
Dismantle	Dismantle destructive hierarchies resulting in marginalization
Achieve	Achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion
Explain	Explain harm caused by the power of language
Acknowledge	Acknowledge potential for offense
Incorporate	Incorporate feedback from first edition

17



18

Definitions & Foundations

Per APA, 2023

19

Cultural responsiveness

Understanding and responding appropriately to the different aspects of culture and diversity that an individual brings to interactions. It requires valuing diversity, desiring to increase knowledge about other cultures, and striving to create spaces where diversity is integrated.

20

Inclusion

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

21

"isms" & "phobias"

22

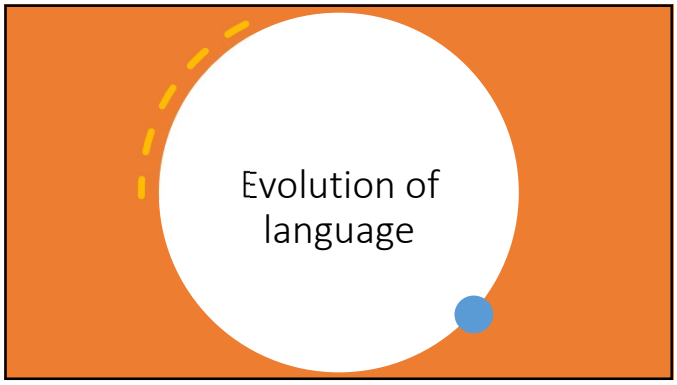
Anything missing?

23

Racism

- Cultural
- Institutional
- Structural
- Interpersonal
- Internalized
- Colorism
- Texturism
- Tokenism

24



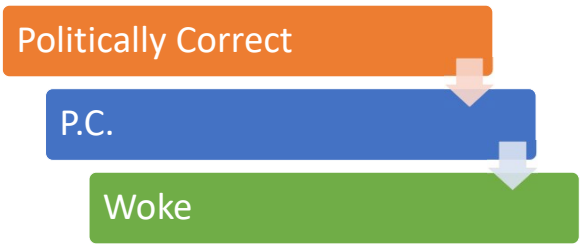
25

Purposes of language

Classifying	Describing	Clarifying	Enhancing inclusivity
Stigmatizing	Insulting	Harming	Othering
Advocating	Counteracting harm	Reclaiming	Repurposing

26

Example



27

Rethinking Political Correctness

- "In cultures regulated by political correctness, people feel judged and fear being blamed. They worry about how others view them as representatives of their social identity groups. They feel inhibited and afraid to address even the most banal issues directly. People draw private conclusions; untested, their conclusions become immutable. Resentments build, relationships fray, and performance suffers."

Ely, Meyerson, & Davidson (2006)

28

NYT Opinion Article

"Woke" has also followed a trajectory similar to that of the phrase "politically correct," which carried a similar meaning by the late 1980s and early 1990s: "Politically correct," unsurprisingly, went from describing a way of seeing the world to describing the people who saw the world that way to describing the way other people felt about the people who saw the world that way. […]

This led to the right refashioning "politically correct" as a term of derision, regularly indicated with the tart abbreviation "P.C." The term faded over the years, and by 2015, when the presidential candidate Donald Trump was declaring that "political correctness is just absolutely killing us as a country," "woke" already had greater currency.

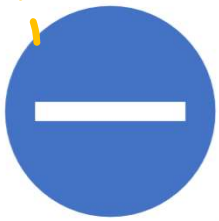
Over the past few years, it has become all but impossible to use "woke" neutrally. It has been refashioned, like "P.C.," as an insult.

McWhorter, 2021

29

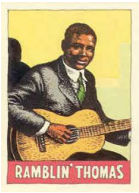
…continued

Perhaps Black English will yield a new neutral term for wokeness. Two outcomes would be likely. One is that if it goes mainstream, some will object that the crossover is a form of cultural appropriation. The other is that sooner rather than later, that new term would come to be processed as a slur for the same reasons that "P.C.," "liberal" and "woke" were.



30

Origins of “woke”



“If I don't go crazy,
I'm sure gonna lose my mind
'Cause I can't sleep for dreamin’,
sure can't **stay woke** for cryin’.”

31

Lead Belly’s “Scottsboro Boys”

32

In case you missed it…

“Go to Alabama and ya better watch out
The landlord'll get ya, gonna jump and shout
Scottsboro Scottsboro Scottsboro boys
Gon' tell ya all about”

“**Stay woke**
Keep they eyes open”

33

A few more examples…

34

Evolution of language

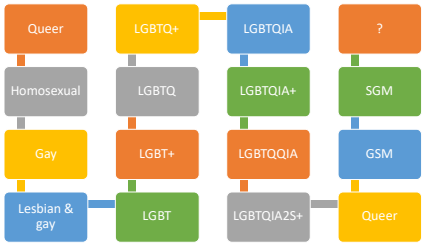
35

Evolution of Black

- 1960s
  - "Black is Beautiful"
  - Afro-American
- 1980s
  - Rev. Jesse Jackson (1988): "To be called African Americans has cultural integrity. […] It puts us in our proper historical context."
- 1990s
  - Ghee (1990): due to newness "the term Black does not adequately contribute to a positive self-concept because it cannot provide the self with a necessary reference point for self-actualization"
- 2010s
  - Greater association with being Black American than to African heritage
  - Enhanced inclusivity of all ancestry

36

Gender and sexual orientation



37

And our very own guiding agency…

"Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse"

38

39

Guiding bodies

- APA
- ATSA
- International
- Federal
- State

40

Person-first versus identity-first language

Influential Origins

41

Identity-first

Moral model	Pity Shame
Medical model	Impairments Diagnoses
Minority and diversity models	Aspect of identity Expression of pride Reclamation of harm Connection to community

42

Social model

Humanization | Positivity

Person literally comes before their disability (Wright, 1983)

Person-first

43

The great debate

- No consensus on preference
- Variety of disabilities
- Variety of etiologies

44

So, what do we do?

Language should be selected with the understanding that the individual's preference supersedes matters of style. If you are uncertain about how a person identifies, it is recommended that you ask their preference.

Otherwise… person-first is encouraged.

But… it also wouldn't be psychology, without an "it depends."

45

Likely identity-first preferences

- Blind person / community
- Deaf person / community
- Deaf-Blind person / community
- Autistic person / community
- Disabled person / community
- HIV-positive person / community
- Little person
- Dwarf
- Queer person / community
- Sex worker (or SWer)

46

General person-first examples

- Person living with a mental illness
- Person in recovery from substance use
- People experiencing houselessness
- Person who has been incarcerated
- *Person with sexual offense history*

47

Let's test your skills!

48

Ageism

49

Ableism

50

Racism

51

Trick question!

All the terms provided are appropriate in certain contexts.

Read the guidelines to find out more!

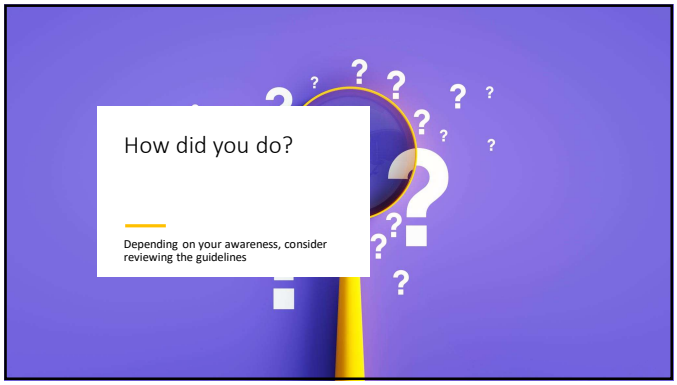
52

Heterosexism, Cissexism, Sexism

53

Classism

54



55

New additions to the 2nd edition

56

Pregnancy

Geriatric
- Advanced maternal age
- Pregnancy after age 35

Gender-inclusivity
- Pregnant person / parent
- Birthing person / parent
- Chest feeding

57

Body Size and Weight

Avoid	Avoid body mass index (BMI)
Ask	Ask preference on "fat" or "plus sized"
Ask	Ask permission to discuss appearance or body changes
Use	Use terms like "lower / higher weight"

58

Neurodiversity

- Autism
- ADHD/ADHC
- Learning Disabilities
- Neurotypicality

59

Religious discrimination

- Social ostracism
- Hate crimes
- Antisemitism
- Islamophobia

60

Socioeconomic Status

Blue-Collar worker
- Skilled tradesworker
- Manual laborer

White-collar worker
- Salaried professional

Ghetto
- Underresourced area
- Low socioeconomic are

61

Microaggressions to avoid

Stand up for	Blind spot	Tone deaf	Lame	Make your voice heard
Eskimo	Indian-giver	Pipeline	No can do	Pipeline
Powwow	Spirit animal	Killing / nailing it	Take a stab / shot at	Target population

62

Additional considerations

63

What do we think about these?

Child prostitute	Child who has been trafficked
Sex with an underage person	Child who has been raped
Nonconsensual sex	Rape
Date / acquaintance rape	Rape or sexual assault

64

Discussion

No judgment, only interest!

65

References

American Psychological Association. (2023). *Inclusive language guide* (2nd ed.). https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf

Andrews, E. E., Forber-Pratt, A. J., Mona, L. R., Lund, E. M., Pilarski, C. R., & Balter, R. (2019). #SaytheWord: A disability culture commentary on the erasure of "disability". *Rehabilitation Psychology, 64*(2), 111–118. https://doi.org/10.1037/rep0000258

Ely, R. J., Meyerson, D., & Davidson, M. N. (2006, September). Rethinking Political Correctness. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2006/09/rethinking-political-correctness

Madrid Gil, S. (2023). Woke culture and the history of America: From colonisation to depersonalisation. *Church, Communication and Culture, 8*(1), 18-42. https://doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2023.2174890

McWorter, J. (2021, September 21). Woke Words With John McWhorter, a Times Virtual Event *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/21/opinion/woke-john-mcwhorter-language-event.html

McWorter, J. (2021, November 16). 'Woke' Went the Way of 'P.C.' and 'Liberal' *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/16/opinion/woke-progressive-liberal.html

Nicholson, H. L. (2023). "I am African American": Racial-ethnic self-designation, self-concept, and major depression among African Americans. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry. 69*(3), 551-558. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764022111474

66