

WP1.2- GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE *

PLACES communication is based on two fundamental concepts: inclusion and accessibility for all.

Inclusion means respecting everyone exactly as they are. It means that all people have the opportunity to participate fully in social life.

Collective terms and labels

The word “disabled” is a description not a group of people. Use “disabled people” not “the disabled” as the collective term.

Use the same terms:

e.g. for “visitors”: better than “people/persons with disabilities” is in this case also “visitors with disabilities”

e.g. for “passengers”: better than “people/persons with disabilities” is in this case also “passengers with disabilities”

Avoid medical labels:

They say little about people as individuals and tend to reinforce stereotypes of disabled people as “patients” or unwell.

Use an appropriate language:

Don’t automatically refer to “disabled people” in all communications – many people who need disability benefits and services don’t identify with this term. Consider using “people with health conditions or impairments” if it seems more appropriate.

Positive not negative:

Avoid phrases like “suffers from” which suggest discomfort, constant pain and a sense of hopelessness.

Wheelchair users may not view themselves as “confined to” a wheelchair – try thinking of it as a mobility aid instead.

Everyday phrases:

Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe daily living. People who use wheelchairs “go for walks” and people with visual impairments may be very pleased – or not – “to see you”. An impairment may just mean that some things are done in a different way.

Common phrases that may associate impairments with negative things should be avoided, for example “deaf to our pleas” or “blind drunk”.

Avoid	Use
(the) handicapped, (the) disabled	disabled people / visitors / passengers...
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has [name of condition or impairment]
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, subnormal	with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural)
cripple, invalid	disabled person
spastic	person with cerebral palsy
able-bodied	non-disabled
mental patient, insane, mad	person with a mental health condition
deaf and dumb; deaf mute	deaf, user of British Sign Language (BSL), person with a hearing impairment
the blind	people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people
an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on	person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression
dwarf; midget	someone with restricted growth or short stature
fits, spells, attacks	seizures

Some tips on behaviour

- use a normal tone of voice, don't patronise or talk down
- don't overemphasise, such as "But you just did a great job!"
- don't be too precious or too politically correct – being super-sensitive to the right and wrong language and depictions will stop you doing anything
- never attempt to speak or finish a sentence for the person you are talking to
- address disabled people in the same way as you talk to everyone else
- speak directly to a disabled person, even if they have an interpreter or companion with them

Try to use an inclusive language

Language shapes our thinking: Linguistic findings have long shown that language shapes our thinking and perception. This in turn has an impact on our actions. In addition, language not only reflects social realities, but also plays a key role in shaping them.

An inclusive language includes all people, regardless of gender, origin, religion, age, ability etc. and this is very important to us for communication and dissemination in the PLACES project.

- Inclusive language reflects all people.
- Inclusive language shows that all people can act.
- Inclusive language is understandable for everyone.
- All people can have their say.

Inclusive means that we address and value all people in our project!

For these reasons, clear and easily understandable simple language for *all* is important in PLACES project communication and dissemination strategy:

In contrast to certified Easy to read language (Inclusion Europe), plain language has no fixed rules: If you follow a few principles, you can make your content and texts linguistically simple and thus make it easier for more people to understand.

Texts in plain language are particularly suitable for people with:

- learning difficulties,
- reading difficulties and
- people who do not understand the language well.

Sentence level

- Sentences in plain language always have the same structure: Who or what is doing something? What is being done?
- Repetitions are permitted: "There is an accessible toilet, there are child-friendly rooms, there are special meals for children";
- Every sentence should be clear.
- A sentence should have a maximum of 15 to 20 words.

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- There should be no more than 1 comma in a sentence.
- Insertions and nested sentences should be avoided.
- When writing, active verbs should be used instead of passive forms.
- Avoid the genitive and subjunctive.
- Give simple examples and explanations.

Word level

- If possible, foreign words should not be used.
- Difficult and long (compound) words should always be explained.
- Compound words should be hyphenated.
- Proverbs, irony and metaphors should be avoided.
- Abbreviations should always be written out in full.
- Negations should be avoided, this brings more clarity.
- Synonyms should be avoided (1 term for 1 thing).

When speaking (PLACES events open to the public)

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Do not use irony.
- Do not speak “between the lines”.
- Take breaks and allow questions from the audience at any time.

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