Gender-sensitive Communication

Solutions for how to use gender-sensitive language

**Gendered pronouns (he or she)**

- He/she; she/he; he or she; she or he; s/he
- His/her; her/his; his or her; her or his.
- Use the third person plural (‘they’).
- Use gender-neutral pronouns, such as “ze”.
- Rephrase to omit pronoun.
- Replace with definite article (the) or indefinite article (a).

**Information about gender and gendered nouns (“female lawyer”)**

- Do not provide irrelevant information about people’s gender.
- Avoid using gendered nouns. Use gender-neutral descriptions instead (e.g. police officer).
Simply use the occupation title with no gender description.

**Gendering inanimate objects**

- Use the pronoun ‘it’ to talk about inanimate objects.

**Stereotypical images**

- Make sure that the images you choose to use in communication materials do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Include a wide mix of people in different environments.

**Invisibility or omission**

- Do not use ‘man’ or ‘he’ to refer to the experiences of all people.
- Make clear that you are referring to men and women by naming each.

**Subordination and trivialisation**

- Ensure that your language actively promotes gender equality by not trivialising or subordinating women.
- When referring to women you should use the term Ms which does not denote marital status.
- Always use the same naming conventions for men and women when referencing.
- You should be aware of the word order of your phrases and make sure that you are not always putting the male version first.
Avoid patronising women using more innocuous terms.