

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY



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Why is gender-sensitive language important?



Shapes attitudes of “normal” and acceptable.



Challenges unconscious assumptions about gender.



Gives a more accurate picture of our society.



Lays the foundation for gender equality.

Gender-sensitive Communication Toolkit

Examples
Tools
Check-lists



What is gender-sensitive communication?

Gender equality made manifest through language and images



Key terms

Avoid

Consider

Favor

Sexist /
Gender-
discriminatory /
Gender-biased

Gender-neutral
/ Gender-blind

Gender-
sensitive

Should I mention gender?

- Will it help understanding your point? **YES** | **NO**
- Are you referring to people in general? **NO** Or a specific group? **YES**
- Do you wish to be inclusive of those of non-binary gender? **NO**

Key principles

- Recognise and challenge stereotypes
- Avoid omission and making others invisible
- Avoid trivialisation and subordination

Challenge stereotypes



How to: Challenge stereotypes



Be inclusive and avoid omission



Fire is man's greatest invention

How to – Be inclusive and avoid omission



Avoid subordination



How to – Avoid subordination



Jessica Smith and Adam Smith are invited to attend tonight's dinner



Increase accuracy

- In 2014, **14% of people** aged 18-65 stated that they had experienced sexual violence in the previous year.
- In 2014, **23% of women and 5% of men** aged 18-65 stated that they had experienced sexual violence in the previous year.

Test your knowledge

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Toolkit on Gender-sensitive Communication

Example 1

In total, there are 7 examples of clear gender bias (circled red below) and 2 examples (circled yellow) that could be classed as such. We explain below next to the red arrows why the author may wish to change his/her language.

Preamble

Gendering of an inanimate object (important): Caring the male as generic and focusing only on the experiences of men and boys

Precarious employment is arguably **men's** greatest challenge in the modern age. Michländ is still recovering from the effects of the recent economic crisis, but the benefits have not been equally shared among **men** citizens. Although unemployment has started to fall, the rise in **men's** jobs is threatening the ability of families to make ends meet. More and more **men** are facing poverty and insecurity, through no fault of their own. This development affects **men** of workers from all occupations – from builders and police **men** to **men** who work in education, health care and social services.

Gendered occupation is being used even though not all working staff are women. Not necessary to gender this occupation as gender is irrelevant. Gendered adjective: of the last government have left many families struggling. Our social inclusion strategy aims to ensure that **men** and **men** receive the same opportunities. Clear gender bias: reflects notion that all employees are men. Gendered occupation is being used even though not all police officers are men. Gendered adjective: men

embodies the **men** needed to overcome the spectre of precarious employment and give everyone a decent chance **men**.

Clear gender bias: reflects notion that all employees are men. Gendered adjective: men

This strategy aims to ensure that:

- Every employee has sufficient income and social protection to protect **men** from poverty.
- There are adequate measures to support the work-life balance of **men** and **men**.
- Early years interventions are in place for parents and children **men**.
- Boys and girls everywhere have access to a decent education **men**.

Gendered occupation is being used even though not all police officers are men.

Gendered adjective: men

There is nothing wrong with the phrase 'boys and girls' in itself, but when it is always said in this order it can become gender-discriminatory as it affects the cultural value assigned to each gender. Sometimes it is worthwhile to switch the order around.

It is positive that the strategy includes specific measures to support women, but the rationale behind these measures needs to be clear to ensure that they are not based on, nor reinforce, stereotypical thinking.

The framing here could also be better: the work-life balance of men not important? Are the authors assuming that women and men have different responsibilities and, if so, is it right for them to make that statement in an unqualified way?

Checklists & alternative words

Chapter 6: Practical tools (checklists and summary tables)

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Examples of common gendered nouns and alternatives

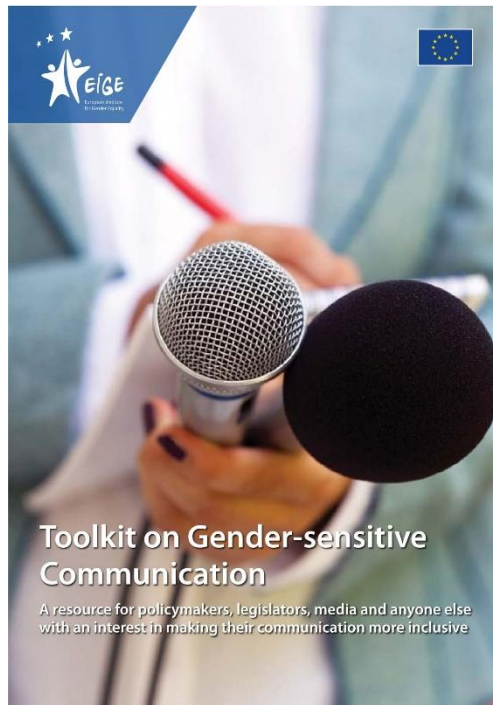
Gendered nouns	Alternatives
X Businessman or businesswoman	✓ Business executive
X Chairwoman or chairman	✓ Chair or chairperson
X Female lawyer	✓ Lawyer
X Policeman or policewoman	✓ Police officer
X Repairman	✓ Repairer, technician
X Steward or Stewardess	✓ Flight attendant
X Salesman	✓ Salesperson, sales clerk
X Workman	✓ Worker
X Man	✓ Person, individual, human being
X Mankind	✓ Humanity, human beings, people, men and women
X Spokesman	✓ Spokesperson, representative
X Manpower	✓ Workforce, human power, labour force, workers
X Cameraman	✓ Camera operator, for plural: camera crew
X Policeman	✓ Police officer

Examples of common adjectives that carry a gender connotation and alternatives

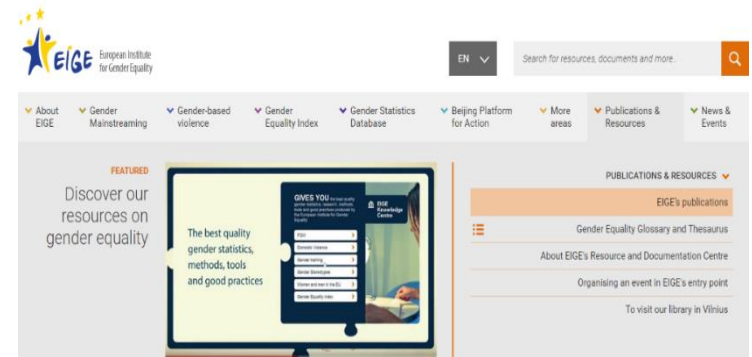
Gendered adjectives	Alternatives
X Bossy or pushy	✓ Assertive
X Emotional or hormonal	✓ Passionate, enthusiastic, empathetic
X Ditsy	✓ Silly
X Frigid (no male equivalent)	✓ Lacking sexual responsiveness
X Frumpy	✓ Dowdy and old-fashioned
X Shrill	✓ High pitched, grating voice
X Loose (no male equivalent)	✓ Having sexual confidence
X Hysterical	✓ Irrational
X Mumroy	✓ Dowdy and old-fashioned
X Wile	✓ Strong, energetic

What does the toolkit include?

Printed booklet



E-publication



Online tool

