Equity & Inclusive Language Toolkit

June 2024

BPHP

BREASTFEEDING
PUBLIC HEALTH
PARTNERS

Background

Breastfeeding Public Health Partners

Established in 2014, the Breastfeeding Public Health Partners (BPHP) is a group of national organizations that collaborate in the public health field to improve the health and overall well-being of infants, children, and families. Through individual and collective efforts, BPHP establishes and supports infant feeding practices that align with public health imperatives and address disparities across racial and demographic indicators. The active partnership meets bi-monthly to share organizational updates, leverage efforts, and strategize collaboration to tackle structural issues that lead to inequities in breastfeeding rates within maternity care practices and in state/community continuity of care, and within the inequitable access to lactation support and accommodation services.

Co-developed products by the partnership include the Charting the Course Together accredited webinar series with over 3200 registrants, a state/local toolkit, a template for HealthyPeople2020 comments, conference presentations, the article "Local and state programs and national partnership to reduce disparities through community breastfeeding support" in the International Breastfeeding Journal, 11(Suppl 1):26, a partnership charter, and a 5-year partnership evaluation report.

Members who contributed thoughts to the toolkit include:

Association for State and Territorial Health Officials
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute
MomsRising
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National WIC Association
Reaching our Sisters Everywhere
US Breastfeeding Committee

The BPHP is a coalition of organizations. Opinions expressed by the BPHP are not necessarily the position of all organizations listed above, and opinions expressed by BPHP representatives are not necessarily the position of each organization.

BPHP statement about inclusivity

Toward Inclusive Language and Imagery

BPHP supports the use of language and images that reflect the diverse way people experience parenting and lactation. This allows all individuals to feel seen, included, valued, and respected. In written education and communication, BPHP advocates for using terms such as parent or caregiver in addition to the word mother, and human milk feeding, chestfeeding, or lactation in addition to the word breastfeeding. If inclusive language and imagery edits are not yet possible, consider adding a statement that recognizes the omission. Create practices and policies to ask patients or clients for their pronouns and preferred terminology, ensuring that the language is tailored to the individual. The language used should also be appropriate for the client or patient's literacy level and for the language they speak.

Sections

Acknowledgements:

Knowing our audience

Conscious language

Lactation professionals and advocates will communicate with a wide variety of audiences: other lactation professionals, advanced practice clinicians, data and clinical scientists, elected officials, and people with the lived experience of being marginalized and excluded. Some of these audiences are leading the use of inclusive language and imagery while some of these groups are just beginning to incorporate inclusive language into their work.

"Conscious language" aims to reduce bias by considering word choice and framing to be inclusive, relatable, and empathetic. Access the guidance document Conscious Language Guide.

Learn more about conscious language by visiting Words Matter.

Resources for specific audiences or specific purposes

Lactation professionals and physicians

To read about the Journal of Human Lactation's gendered language policy, visit JHL Language Policy. To learn about using inclusive language in lactation research, visit JHL Inclusive Research Language. Read the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine's position statement ABM Inclusive Language.

Healthcare

To learn about using inclusive language in healthcare settings, visit Inclusive Language Handbook. To access a video from the American Medical Association about prioritizing equity with narratives and language, visit AMA Equitable Language.

Data professionals

The Harvard Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression project is a learning space for academics and data professionals. Access their webinar series by visiting Harvard SOGIE. The Gender Harmony Project helps set data collection standards and optimize the health care delivery system. Read the journal article about their processes and findings by visiting Gender Harmony.

Educators

For more resources about inclusive language for those working with and educating young people, visit LGBTQIA Educator Resources.

Acknowledging colonialism

Written and verbal statements that acknowledge Indigenous lands are an effort to address colonialism. Learn when, where, how, and why to use land acknowledgement at Beyond Land Acknowledgement. An academic discussion about the racist and colonial elements of gender identification was developed for a USBC webinar. Learn more by accessing the recording Colonial Roots of Gendered Language.

Working with the media

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation created resources for communicating inclusively when working with the media. For more information, visit GLAAD Reference.

Choosing our words

Language evolves

Our understanding of words and phrases that are equitable, inclusive, and representative changes over time. Many terms will be new or misunderstood, and using unfamiliar terms may seem awkward at first. Guidelines may call for centering the person or the identity rather than their condition. People and communities are not identical. Some may prefer one term over another, so seeking clarity with the subject or audience of the communication is often necessary.

The following considerations apply to individuals and organizations, and should be part of developing materials, policy, and guidelines as well as informing changes in personal and organizational practice.

Points to consider

1. **Use people-centered language.** Primarily a guideline from organizations supporting people with disabilities, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this guidance can be generalized to communicating about other identities. People-first language emphasizes the person and then the condition or identity we are trying to describe.

   Learn more about the CDC guidelines by visiting CDC language guidance.

   Condition-centered: This elevator is for wheelchair-bound people.

   People-centered: This elevator is for those who use wheelchairs.

2. **Make gender visible when it is important to communication.** The United Nations provides the guidance that the use of "pairing" such as "boy and girl" or "she and he" is beneficial but not to be overused. Use gendered terms when identity or preferences are known, such as "mother" when the person being described identifies with and prefers that term.

   For more information about the UN guidelines, visit UN Gender Inclusive Language.

   Visible gender: Georgia shared her story about becoming a mother and the support she received from her doula.

   The writer knows that the word mother and being identified as female are important to this storyteller. For these reasons the writer emphasizes gender.

3. **Make gender visible when it is important to communication.** The United Nations guidance emphasizes the plurality of identities and people being reached. Instead of using "he" or "she" or " mother", consider using terms that are not gendered, or rephrase the message so there is no need for a gendered pronoun or a gendered word.

   For more information about the UN guidelines, visit UN Gender Inclusive Language.

   Invisible gender: This clinic serves those people who are pregnant and those wanting to become pregnant.

   The writer emphasizes the plurality of identities of those coming to this clinic; the emphasis here is about the services of the clinic rather than the particular identities of the patients.

4. **Use words that do not stigmatize.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides guidance in avoiding words that imply an inherent condition rather than the cause of an identity or the needs of a group. Many terms are archaic and have been used to intentionally cause harm or used unintentionally out of ignorance.

   To access the full list of terms that do and do not stigmatize, visit CDC Preferred Terms.

   Focus on the condition: We are offering breastfeeding support to the inmate George, who is a biologically female transsexual.

   Focus on the person: We are offering milk expression support to George, who is transgender (he was identified as female at birth). He is currently detained in the county lock-up.

5. **Seek to understand.** Ask clients, patients, or constituents what pronouns, words, and language they want you to use so they feel seen, valued, and included. Have people with a range of identities at the planning and decision-making table. Incorporate simple questions into forms and conversation so you can learn about the identities of the people you serve. Change policies for intake or communication procedures to allow individuals to identify their own terms, pronouns, or names.

   What pronouns do you use?

   I usually call this a breast; how do you refer to it?

   I see one first name on this identity card/in our system, but I heard you use a different name. What name would you prefer that I use?

   This name is on our documents, but I don't know if this is what you use or prefer. Please tell me if I should use a different name.

   What is the best way for me to refer to _____? (Body part, action, name, relationship)

   What do you want your baby to call you (or both of you for two parents)?

First Person: Mattea

When I first gave birth with my partner, and our providers would speak about the baby, it was often referring to me as "the" mom and in our case, there are 2 moms. I felt that it was indirectly downgrading my partner's role as a mom as well…So many of our queer friend couples refer to themselves as something other than "mom" too.

That has taught me to always be as inclusive as possible until I know more.   ~Mattea

Glossary of terms related to: Lactation and Maternal and Child Health.

For those who are working exclusively in the lactation field, referencing only "breastfeeding mothers" will exclude families who use the terms chestfeeding, who are pumping and using bottles, where the lactating parent does not identify as female, and those who have experienced infant loss. The impact is a particular problem when the language used in legislation and policies literally exclude people and families from protections or services. This toolkit was developed as an educational and resource tool but is not exhaustive of all options. Language, practices, and understanding evolve over time.

The following list of terms and less-gendered alternatives is adapted from resources developed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

For more information about this list, visit CDC Infant Feeding Terms.

To practice identifying gendered or inclusive terms related to lactation and childbirth, visit AAP Childbirth Terms.

Term	Considerations	Alternative terms
Breast	Some people find the term "breast" contributes to gender dysphoria, and use other terms for this organ	Chest, lactating organ
Breastfeeding	Some people prefer terms that do not use the word breast for culturally sensitive reasons This word choice may also feel exclusionary to those who exclusively pump or surrogate parents, for example	Chestfeeding, lactation, nursing, bodyfeeding
Breast milk	No other mammalian milk uses the term of the organ producing the milk, but rather the type of mammal producing the milk	Human milk, expressed human milk

Mother or Mom	Automatically using this term risks misgendering the parent Parents should determine how they will be identified by their baby	Parent, gestational parent, name of the parent, response to the question "what do you want to be called by your baby?"
Mother-baby unit	Automatically using this term risks misgendering the parent or disregarding the parents' choice of terms	Parent-child unit, postpartum dyad, peripartum unit
Pregnant woman	Not every person who is pregnant or giving birth identifies as female or a woman	Pregnant person, birthing person

Glossary of terms related to: Gender identity and sexual orientation terms

This list of terms is adapted from a guide developed by National Public Radio (NPR) in collaboration with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

For the entire list of terms, visit Gender Identify Pronouns Expression Guide.

Term	Definition
Cisgender or simply "cis"	An adjective that describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
Dead name	(noun) The birth name of a transgender person who has changed their name as part of their gender transition. (verb) To call (a transgender person) by their birth name when they have changed their name as part of their gender transition.
Gender	A social construct of norms, behaviors and roles that vary between societies and over time. Gender is often categorized as male, female or nonbinary.
Gender expression	How a person presents gender outwardly, through behavior, clothing, voice or other perceived characteristics. Most identify these cues as masculine or feminine.
Gender transition	A process a person may take to bring themselves and/or their bodies into alignment with their gender identity.
Intersex	An umbrella term used to describe people with differences in reproductive anatomy, chromosomes or hormones that don't fit typical definitions of male and female.
LGBTQIA+	The acronym that refers to those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and more.
Nonbinary or genderqueer	Terms that can be used by people who do not describe themselves or their genders as fitting into the categories of man or woman.
Queer	An adjective that can describe a person who does not identify as any gender.

Sex	A person's biological status that is typically assigned at birth, usually on the basis of external anatomy.
Sexual orientation	The enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or other genders, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight orientations.
Transgender or trans	An adjective used to describe someone whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth. A transgender man, for example, is someone who was identified as female at birth but whose gender identity is male.
Two spirit	Native American male, female, and sometimes intersexed individuals who combine activities of both men and women with traits unique to their status as two-spirit people. This term should only be used with those who are Native American.

Examples

The Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute's materials to support early care and education professionals have been updated. These two examples demonstrate using multiple words to be more inclusive (mothers and families), while using a more neutral phrase for higher accuracy (human milk rather than breast milk).

Original text

Step 3. Inform women and families about the importance of breastfeeding

Updated text

Step 3. Inform women and families about the importance of human milk feeding.

Original text

Step 9. Contact and coordinate with community breastfeeding support resources: actively refer mothers and families.

Updated text

Step 9. Contact and coordinate with community human milk feeding support resources; actively refer families.

The NACCHO Continuity of Care Blueprint describes best practices using inclusive language and updated terms. This example mixes neutral terms (human milk, birthing person, and lactation) with "breastfeeding", a word that is widely understood as the most commonly used term. This demonstrates the use of multiple terms to recognize the plurality of understanding and perspectives.

Excerpt from the Introduction

"Human milk is the ideal first food uniquely suited for infants' optimal growth and development. Breastfeeding also has a substantial impact on the birthing person's health, which makes lactation support critical for improving community health."

First Person: Kristen

A few years ago when I entered into the role of Senior Nutritionist at WIC, I had a pregnant client who was transgender. The client used he/him pronouns and the name he went by differed from his legal name. There wasn't a way to properly identify him by name or gender in our electronic record system, aside from putting in a comment with the information. As a result, he was regularly misgendered and his "dead name" was used. These microaggressions were compounded by the trauma of a pregnancy that failed. It was heartbreaking to witness how defeated and traumatized he was throughout this journey.

I made it my mission to change our practices and policies so that people in the LGBTQIA+ community could feel welcomed at WIC and affirmed in their pregnancy and lactation journeys.

~Kristen

To learn more Kristen's experience with inclusive language use, [click here to access Kristen's video.](#)

Glossary of terms related to: Equity

The following list of terms related to racial and cultural equity is adapted from the University of Washington Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion glossary.

To access the entire list, visit [UW DEI Glossary.](#)

Term	Definition
Ally	Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.), acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.
Bias	A form of prejudice that results from a need to classify individuals into categories.
BIPoC	An acronym used to refer to Black, Indigenous and people of color. Members of these communities may choose to self-identify using this acronym.
Cultural appropriation	The non-consensual/misappropriate use of cultural elements for profit purposes – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment or respect for its value in the context of its original culture.
Decolonize	The active and intentional process of unlearning values, beliefs and conceptions that have caused physical, emotional, or mental harm to people through colonization. It requires a recognition of systems of oppression.

Diversity	Referring to a wide range of identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.
Equity	The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups; includes acknowledgement of historically underserved and underrepresented populations.
Implicit Bias	Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.
Inclusion	The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences.
Institutional Racism	Institutional racism, refers specifically to the ways in which institutional or organizational policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on racial discrimination. Similar terms are systemic racism (perpetuated racism in systems founded on racist principles and practices), and structural racism (cultural values ingrained in daily life and considered "the way things are").
Microaggression	The verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, insults or actions, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages.
Patriarchy	Actions and beliefs that prioritize masculinity. Patriarchy is practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society while also influencing how we interact with one another interpersonally.
People of Color	A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latine/x, and Native American backgrounds, as opposed to the collective "White".
Privilege	Exclusive or general access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group.
Race	A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, and ethnic classification.
Social Justice	Social justice constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others.

Tokenism	Performative presence without meaningful participation, such as a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group.
White Supremacy	A power system structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as White, whether consciously or subconsciously determined; and who feel superior to those of other racial/ethnic identities.

Examples

The NACCHO Continuity of Care Blueprint demonstrates how to use this vocabulary in guidance or advocacy-related materials.
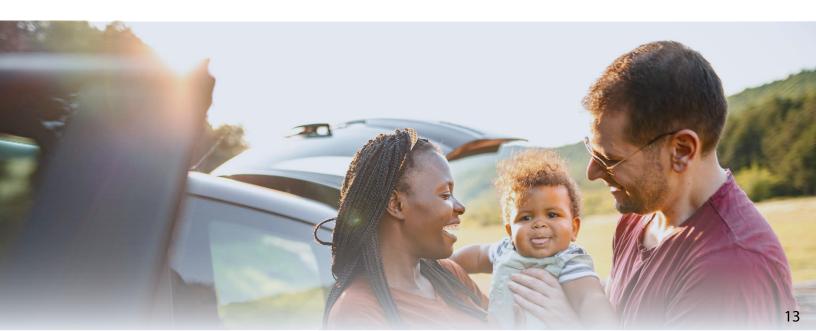
Page 8

Provider and institutional racism, implicit bias, and discrimination also adversely affect the breastfeeding journey for many Black families.

Page 59

Increase access to congruent lactation care that matches families' needs and preferences, while also creating financially compensated opportunities for BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other persons routinely underrepresented to lead, manage, and collaborate with community programs, develop lactation-related resources, deliver training, and other career advancement opportunities.

Page 66

Recognizing each person's capacity for allyship (being an ally), identify and use one's own privilege to advocate for local services and amplify the voices of other people in the field who do not hold the same privilege.

Learn more about word choice with these resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides guidance for the use of inclusive language in communication products. CDC Preferred Terms

---

The American Medical Association provides guidance for the use of inclusive and equitable language narrative, and concepts. AMA Equity Guide

---

The state of Massachusetts created a style guide for inclusive language to bring an equity focus health policy work products. MA Style Guide

---

The Maternal Health Learning and Innovation Center collects equity resources for the Maternal and Child Health field. MHL Equity Resources

---

The American Academy of Pediatrics Breastfeeding Curriculum committee developed a tool to prompt discussion around the use of gendered language in childbirth work. AAP Inclusive Communication

---

The National Institute for Children's Health Quality shared insights into the use of inclusive and expansive language in maternal and child health. NICHQ Inclusive Language

---

The National Center for Transgender Equality created a Frequently Asked Questions document to explore facts, language, and understanding around transgender people. Transequality FAQ

Many academic institutions and national organizations have offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion and have definitions on their public-facing websites:
- University of Iowa: UIowa DEI
- Housing and Urban Development: HUD DEI

National Public Radio, in collaboration with the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, created a glossary of terms and a guide to better understanding language around gender identity. NPR Glossary LGBTQ Terms

---

The United Nations developed guidance for the use of inclusive language, particularly for their workspaces. UN Gender-Inclusive Guidelines

---

Handshake, a talent recruitment forum, shared a blog post for those wishing to improve their understanding of inclusive language best practices. Handshake Inclusive Language

---

Dean Space, an influencer who is transgender, shared a blog post about the rationale for sharing pronouns. Dean Spade Pronoun Go-Rounds

---

The 2015 and 2022 Transgender Surveys are the largest studies of their kind, documenting the lives, experiences, and conditions of transgender people in the United States. TransSurvey

First Person: Monica

I was 12 when I first started interpreting for my family, and I've done so for the past 28 years. I see firsthand what happens when a person feels excluded and can't access materials or information because in some way, they are left out. It isn't just filling in the right words, it is about always capturing a meaning that makes sense, and draws people in. Embedding inclusive language and curiosity about who people are into all we do, well beyond a simple statement of inclusiveness, can make our work truly community centered. Language is identity. ~Monica

Being understood

"Messengers forget to translate jargon when they're talking to non-experts. When this happens, jargon no longer enables efficient communication—it prevents it."

PHRASES Motivating the Public To Support Public Health: A Toolkit For Communicating

With Non-Experts

Use plain language

Plain language means that wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.

For more information about plain language, visit International Plain Language Federation.

Points to consider

There are five general considerations when using plain language: the audience or purpose, finding the most appropriate structure, the design or layout, wording or expression, and evaluation.

Guidelines for wording are:
- **Tone**: use personal pronouns and write in a formal yet conversational style.
- **Word choice:** use the simplest word that conveys your meaning.
- **Jargon:** avoid jargon unless your reader is familiar with it. If not, explain technical terms.
- **Sentences:** keep sentences between 15-20 words on average, with each no more than 30-35 words.
- **Verbs:** in most cases, prefer the active voice rather than the passive.

Examples of plain language

These authors avoid jargon, acronyms, and complicated words. Technical words are explained. Sentences are short and verbs are active. The tone is formal yet conversational.

How Much Milk Does My Baby Need?
Babies' tummies are tiny. It doesn't take much to fill your baby up, but you'll need to feed your newborn baby a lot: 8-12 times in a 24-hour period. Feeding your baby that often will be good for your baby. It will also tell your body to keep making milk.

Excerpted from WIC Breastfeeding Basics.

Breastfeeding shouldn't hurt.
Make sure your baby is latching on correctly.

Make sure to breastfeed regularly so that your breasts don't become engorged - uncomfortably full, hard, or warm.
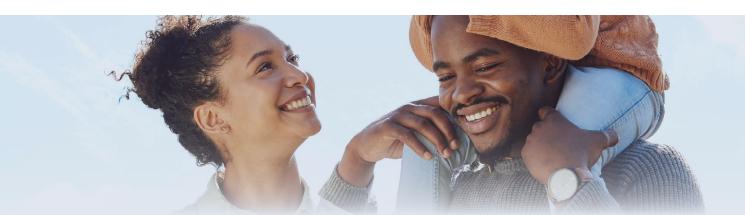
You may feel some discomfort right after birth because breastfeeding helps your uterus shrink and reduces the amount of uterine bleeding. This is good for you. It will only last a day or so. You can ask for medication to reduce this discomfort.

Excerpted from Minnesota WIC Breastfeeding Resources.

Learn more about plain language with these resources

Public Health Reaching Across Sectors developed guidance for communicating in clear and simple ways about public health. PHRASES.

The Public Health Communications Collaborative created a workbook for using plain language in public health. Plain Language for Public Health.

Creating translations

Technical translation

Developing translations cannot be a simple word-for-word exchange of one language for another. Rather, translations require multiple steps to ensure that the same message is clearly conveyed in both languages. There are seven steps required for a high-quality translation:

1. Understand the original text, document, and purpose through research
2. Initial translation, which is best done into the original language of the person translating
3. Proofread the translation to make it feel as if it were originally created in the new language, with those language speakers in mind
4. Check spelling and eliminate any errors
5. Check for mistakes or inconsistencies
6. Layout the translation. Translations may require many more or fewer words than the original language and thus need more or less space in the document
7. Verify the document

For more information about these seven steps, visit Technical Translations.

Beyond translation

Creating translations with equity and inclusion in mind requires attending to developing materials that are clear and meaningful, as well as paying attention to cultural differences. Materials should convey the same meaning and flow naturally, in spite of the language that is used. There are seven steps to developing translations that embody cultural humility and affirmation.

1. The translation should be completed by someone with training, and ideally include a review by another professional who may have more subject matter expertise.
2. Pay attention to maintaining the text's reading level, removing jargon and idioms, and keeping a natural flow in the text.
3. Some terms, phrases, or images may need adjustment to be culturally appropriate.

4. Back the translation to English to test the reading level and cultural considerations
5. Check the translation with people for whom it is being created
6. Use the feedback to modify the translation
7. Include the intended audience when sharing out the translated materials

To learn about developing culturally inclusive and affirming translations, visit Beyond Translation.

Learn more about translations with these resources

Harvard Catalyst has developed tips for incorporating translations into research. Equity in Translation.

The University of Minnesota Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants created guidance for communicating with refugees, particularly in the context of COVID-19. Equitable Language Access.

The World Atlas of Language Structures has information about gendered pronouns and words in different languages. Gendered Pronouns.

Selecting images

> ## "Images play an important role in normalizing breastfeeding and reducing the societal and cultural barriers faced by breastfeeding families."
> ### U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, "Landscape of Breastfeeding Support" Image Gallery

Image selection

Creating educational and promotional materials related to human lactation nearly always includes selecting images. These images serve different purposes:
1. Representing those people currently engaged with a service or organization
2. Representing those people the service or organization hopes to reach
3. Demonstrating best practices for supportive policies or environments
4. Providing guidance for lactation-related practices, such as positioning or paced bottle feeding
5. Providing guidance on clinical issues, such as illustrating mastitis or cleft palates

It is widely understood that most of the images that have been used, historically, are based on white, cisgender, middle class people. More and more organizations in the lactation field are working to identify and curate images that represent a broader understanding of humanity, with diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identification, and family composition, to name a few.

Using stock images

Traditionally, organizations have used stock images for creating educational and promotional materials. Over time, stock images have become more inclusive of different races, ethnicities, and family structures. There are some general considerations for using stock images.

1. Stock images are high quality photos with a variety of color palettes to match logos, branding, or themes.
2. Stock photo agencies usually operate by subscription or with a credit-based system.
3. There are legal implications with using photos created by another person or entity. It is important to read all licensing rules associated with a stock image service. Attributing the photos to the person or agency that created or curated the photos may be necessary.
4. Photos found on search engines are not necessarily free and available to use. Even without a copyright symbol, they may not be in the public domain.
5. There are ethical concerns with using stock images. Some platforms do not adequately compensate the artists who contribute photos to build their own reputation. Stock images may not fully represent the audience of the materials and may come off as inauthentic.

In addition, candid photos can be used in place of stock images when developing educational and promotional materials involving images. Candid photos, especially within lactation, can bring in a level of genuineness, reflect experiences more aligned with reality, and better represent inclusivity for different communities. For more information about candid photos and its impact, review A Candid Advantage? The Social Benefits of Candid Photos.

For more detailed information about choosing and using stock photos, visit Stock Photo Secrets.

Creating an image gallery

Many organizations, coalitions, and programs are curating or creating their own collection of images that represent their communities. Some considerations for creating an image gallery include:

- Clearly define what is wanted and meant by diversity and representation for the intended audience
- Develop a selection process and criteria that includes members of the community being represented
- Secure appropriate releases from image subjects; this process may require legal consultation based on the scope of the project
- Confirm image selection with members of the community being represented so that choices of images is done collectively
- Research optimal platforms and methods to store, display, and protect the integrity of the images so they cannot be stolen or altered without consent
- Secure appropriate releases for use of images in a way that protects the artist, the subject, and the organization
- Develop methods and processes for keeping the image gallery up to date

Image gallery examples

The Asian Breastfeeding Taskforce curated a collection of images within their Asian-American, Pacific Islander, and Hawaiian Native community. AAPI Images.

The Melanated Mammary Atlas improves the care of persons with black and brown skin with a collection of clinical lactation photos of all types of breast conditions. Melanated Atlas.

The Hmong Breastfeeding Coalition held a photo contest to start developing a collection of breastfeeding Hmong families, as a step to address low breastfeeding rates in their community. HBC Photos.

The United States Breastfeeding Committee used federal funding to provide coalitions and organizations with grants as a way to curate an image gallery. Learn more at USBC Images.

First Person: Xee

I've been to 3 different clinics with my pregnancies. All these 3 clinics see pregnant women, deliver babies, and also see babies and postpartum women. In the lounge, I don't see any breastfeeding pictures posted. I also don't see any breastfeeding pictures or anything that says "breastfeeding" posted in the patient rooms. With my first two pregnancies, I didn't bother to ask the doctors about breastfeeding because I thought clinics are not the right place to get breastfeeding help. But during my last pregnancy, I decided to ask the doctor about breastfeeding, and she was very helpful.

Clinics do support breastfeeding if the patient asks for it, but clinics just don't have breastfeeding pictures/signs up in their lounge and in the patient rooms. I want clinics, especially clinics that serve pregnant women and see babies, to be aware that they're lacking in promoting breastfeeding visually. ~Xee (and Brady)

To hear more about Xee's experience, click here to access Zoua and Zee's video.

Developing functionally inclusive materials

Universal design

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

For more information, visit Universal Design.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention created guidance for communicating with and about people with disabilities: Disability and Health.

Accessible documents for those with low vision or are blind

There are eight simple steps to follow when creating materials inclusive of and accessible to people who use a screen reader or who have low vision or are blind.

To access more details about each element, visit Creating Accessible Documents.

1. Give documents a structure using heading styles. This breaks up the document and provides logical structure for the reader.
2. Use pre-set bullet points, numbering, and tables. Use special formatting for longer tables or avoid using tables altogether.
3. Use a table of contents for documents over 10 pages.
4. Provide alternative text for images. This is also called Alt Text and provides a brief description of the image for those unable to see the image.
5. Choose font size large enough to be easily read and color that is high contrast.
6. Add hyperlinks to be more useful to the reader. The hyperlink should make sense as stand-alone information.
7. Turn on the accessibility features of the documents, and check accessibility by using appropriate editing software.
8. Convert the document to a PDF.

To access a video demonstrating how a screen reader reads a document that is not accessible, visit Inaccessible PDF.

One example of an organization dedicated to materials being functionally accessible is Ability Net.

Carnegie Museums has examples of high contrast colors at Carnegie Color.

Remediation

Remediation of pdf documents means attaching tags (digital identifiers) to different elements of an existing document so it may be read by a screen reader. A document that can be read aloud is more inclusive of those who are blind or have low vision, as well as those who have experienced traumatic brain injuries or are living with cognitive or learning disabilities.

Tools and resources for remediation can be found at Equidox and 247 Accessible Documents.

Creating materials accessible to those with colorblindness

About 12 million Americans are colorblind, 99% of whom are red-green colorblind. Paying careful attention to color when creating educational or promotional materials can expand inclusivity.

For more information about developing documents accessible to those who experience color blindness, visit Design for Color Blindness and Colorblind Guide.

1. Use both colors and symbols
2. Keep color to a minimum, with fewer colors in the document's color palette
3. Use both patterns and textures to show contrast
4. Be careful in selecting colors for contrast
5. Avoid bad color combinations such as red and green or green and brown, among others

As seen by someone without colorblindness   **As seen by someone who is colorblind**

To learn how a person with color blindness views different color combinations, visit Visualizing Colorblindness.

Venngage has guidance for selecting colorblind-friendly palettes. Palettes.

The Perkins School for the Blind offers resources and guidance for developing inclusion for those who are blind. Visit Perkins School.

Summary of resources

Lactation and maternal and child health

The *Journal of Human Lactation's* gendered language policy: JHL Language Policy

Using inclusive language in lactation research: JHL Inclusive Research Language

The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine's position statement: ABM Inclusive Language

The American Academy of Pediatrics lactation and childbirth-related terms: AAP Childbirth Terms

NACCHO Continuity of Care Blueprint (glossary on page 71): Continuity of Care Blueprint

The Maternal Health Learning and Innovation Center equity resources: MHL Equity Resources

The National Institute for Children's Health Quality guide: NICHQ Inclusive Language

Healthcare and public health guidance materials

The Diversity Movement guide to inclusive language in healthcare: Inclusive Language Handbook

The American Medical Association video about prioritizing equity: AMA Equitable Language

The American Medical Association inclusive language guide: AMA Equity Guide

Public Health Reaching Across Sectors communication guide: PHRASES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention inclusive language guide. CDC Preferred Terms

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention communications guide: CDC language guidance

NACCHO's work on language and narrative practices: Advancing Health Equity Guide

NACCHO's work on equity and social justice: NACCHO health equity program

General glossaries and style guides for inclusive language

Healthline Media guide to conscious language: [Words Matter](#)

National Public Radio and Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation glossary: [Glossary LGBTQ Terms](#)

The United Nations inclusive language guidance: [UN Gender-Inclusive Guidelines](#)

Handshake blog on understanding inclusive language best practices: [Handshake Inclusive Language](#)

influencer Dean Space blog on lived experience and sharing pronouns: [Dean Spade Pronoun Go-Rounds](#)

University of Washington's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion glossary: [UW DEI Glossary](#)

The State of Massachusetts inclusive language style guide: [MA Style Guide](#)

University of Iowa diversity, equity, and inclusion definitions: [UIowa DEI](#)

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development definitions: [HUD DEI](#)

University of Colorado guide for educators: [LGBTQIA Educator Resources](#)

Plain language

International Plain Language Federation: [IPLF](#)

The Public Health Communications Collaborative workbook: [Plain Language for Public Health](#)

Data

The Harvard Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Project: [Harvard SOGIE](#)

The Gender Harmony Project: [Gender Harmony](#)

Media

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation resource guide: [GLAAD Reference](#)

Colonialism and Land Acknowledgements

Native Governance Center guidance for land acknowledgements: [Beyond Land Acknowledgement](#)

USBC's webinar with Dr. Aunchalee Palmquist: [Colonial Roots of Gendered Language](#)

Transgender-specific guidance and resources

The National Center for Transgender Equality resource for facts and language: [Transequality FAQ](#)

The 2015 and 2022 US Transgender Surveys: [TransSurvey](#)

Translations and language access

Tech Translator guidance to crafting translations: Technical Translations

National Academy of Medicine guide for inclusive and standardized translations: Beyond Translation

Harvard Catalyst guidance for equity in research-related translations: Equity in Translation

The University of Minnesota guide for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants: Equitable Language Access

The World Atlas of Language Structures guide: Gendered Pronouns

Representative images

Stock Photo Secrets guidance: Stock Photo Secrets

The Asian Breastfeeding Taskforce image gallery: AAPI Images

The Melanated Mammary Atlas gallery of breast conditions for persons with dark skin: Melanated Atlas

The Hmong Breastfeeding Coalition image and art gallery: HBC Photos

USBC image gallery, open to coalitions and organizations: USBC Images

Materials and resources related to persons with disabilities

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention communication: Disability and Health

Universal Design explanation and guidance: Universal Design

The Perkins School for the Blind resources and guidance: Perkins School

Abilitynet guidance for developing accessible materials: Creating Accessible Documents

Pope Tech video demonstrating how a screen reader reads documents: Inaccessible PDF

Equidox tools and resources for remediation: Equidox

247 tools and resources for remediation: 247 Accessible Documents

The Verge guide to selecting images for those with color blindness: Visualizing Colorblindness

Venngage guidance for selecting colorblind-friendly palettes: Palettes

Carnegie Museums examples of high contrast colors: Carnegie Color

Colorblind Guide resources for those with colorblindness: Colorblind Guide