HUMBER
THE CENTRE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS
EQUITY & DIVERSITY
H R   S E R V I C E S

Fact Sheet: Inclusive Language: Sexual Orientation

Humber College is committed to ensuring that principles of equity and diversity are instilled as values throughout Humber's culture. Increasing the use of inclusive language in all communications throughout the College can enhance inclusion in Humber's learning, working and living environments. "Inclusive language strives to promote all people – regardless of difference – as full and valued members of society by selecting vocabulary that avoids exclusion, the use of false stereotypes, and the use of descriptors that portray groups of certain people as dependent, powerless, or less valued than others"1[1]. This document provides a list of recommended guidelines and tips on how to enhance communication in discussions or written content when referring to different sexual orientations. "Sexual orientation" is a personal characteristic that forms part of who you are. Sexual orientation encompasses the range of human sexuality, including, gay, lesbian, bisexual, twospirited, queer and questioning.

Recommended tips:

- Where appropriate, incorporate examples of same-sex partners and families, reflective of the lives and experiences of the LGBTTIQQ2S community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transitioning, intersex, queer, questioning and two-spirited communities), for example in assignment questions.

- Avoid using the words "gay" or "homosexual" as umbrella terms. Use LGBQTTIQQ2S to refer to a broad community or use specific terms when it is relevant to do so, for example, lesbian, gay man, and bisexual woman.

- Sexual orientation is a preferred term over "sexual preference" or "lifestyle choice", which suggests a degree of voluntary choice.

- There is a difference between a person's gender and sexual orientation; the use of the term "gender" is preferred over the term "sex."

- Be mindful of appropriate and respectful in-group versus out-group naming. "Queer" is an acceptable „in-group" term, however, it is often better to refer to "queer communities" rather than calling an individual "queer" unless they have already told you this is how they identify.

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[1] University of British Columbia. http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/styleguide/content/inclusive_lang.html

For more information on human rights, equity and diversity related terms please visit the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Diversity website at http://hrs.humber.ca/diversity.

Sources:

The information in this document was compiled by the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Diversity | HR Services with information adapted from:

1. Liem, A. (2011, March 10). University of British Columbia: Inclusive Language Guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/styleguide/content/inclusive_lang.html

2. Communications Marketing - University of Victoria. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://communications.uvic.ca/publications/style/section-5.html

3. Northern Affairs Canada. (2013, March 11). ARCHIVED - Common Terminology. Retrieved from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1358879361384/1358879407462

4. Public Health Agency of Canada, Using the Right Terms. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/publications/public/various-varies/communicating_aboriginal/appendix-eng.php

[1] University of http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/styleguide/content/inclusive_lang.html