Resource:
Educator's Guide to Inclusive Language

SASKATOON SEXUAL HEALTH

Inclusive language is language that acknowledges and celebrates all forms of sexual and gender identities. This language form allows students to fully engage with and absorb sexual health information without feeling like their identities are being challenged or ignored. Inclusive language is a vital part of delivering sexual health education that is sex-positive and that values all students.

Inclusive language may feel challenging and awkward to use. Take the time to look through these suggestions, and find time to practice whenever possible.

You may also want to take the time to explain to your students why you are using inclusive language, and encourage them to use it as well!

Below are some basics about using inclusive language:

> Try using inclusive language in a conversation with friends or colleagues. Practice makes progress!

- **Language about anatomy:**
    - Refer to people's body parts without gendering them. For example, rather than saying "the woman's vagina", say "the person's vagina" or just "the vagina".
    - Refer to specific organs whenever possible instead of saying "male" and "female" anatomy. You can use "male" or "female" bodies as a last resort, but note that this language can be triggering for some people.
    - Instead of saying "men" and "women" when referring to anatomy, use "people with/bodies with" language: e.g., "people with penises", "bodies with vaginas", etc.
    - Rather than saying "biological sex", say "sex assigned at birth".

- **Language about contraceptives:**
    - Refer to condoms as "internal" and "external" rather than "female" and "male". This is not only inclusive, it is also more accurate!
    - When talking about hormonal birth control, you can mention that they work only for people with ovaries (rather than "only for women").

- **Language about puberty:**
  - Avoid making generalizations about what happens during puberty based on gender. For example, instead of saying "men grow facial hair", say "some people may grow facial hair". This language also recognizes that puberty can vary between individuals: not all cisgender men grow facial hair, and some cisgender women do.Talk about the effects of estrogen, testosterone, and other hormones on specific body parts. You can also emphasize that all bodies have testosterone and estrogen in them!
  - Refer to tampons and pads as "menstrual hygiene products" rather than "feminine hygiene products"

- **Language about relationships:**
  - Use terms such as "partner" or "significant other" rather than "boyfriend/girlfriend" or "husband/wife". This is especially important for students who may not want to out themselves or their partners.
  - Similarly, use "parent/guardian" rather than "mother/father"; "sibling" rather than "brother/sister"; and "grandparent" rather than "grandmother/grandfather".
  - Although there are no agreed-upon gender-neutral terms for "niece/nephew" or "aunt/uncle", you can decide with your class what a term may be: for example, some people use "nibling" for "niece/nephew" and "auncle" for "aunt/uncle".
  - Use the term "birth parent" to refer to the parent that gave birth to a person.