

# Avoiding Biased Language

General Rules for  
Mankind (or  
Humankind)



# First Rule: People are people...

- Instead of referring to people as if they embodied some trait, refer to them as “as person with . . . .”
- So . . . NOT “schizophrenic” BUT a “person with schizophrenia”.
- So . . . NOT “redhead” BUT a “person with red hair”.



# First Rule: People are people...

- But this can get a bit cumbersome & ridiculous .  
..
- “Christian” vs. “people with Christian beliefs”?
- “Democrats” vs. “people identifying with the democratic party”
- So this rule is generally used when the trait is



# Second Rule part 1: Sexual Orientation...

- Different from gender identity: [LGBTQ+](#)
- See earlier rule # 1
- APA preferred terminology:
  - Gay man
  - Lesbian
  - Bisexual man
  - Bisexual woman



# **Second Rule part 2: Describing Sexual Behavior...**

- Be as clear and technical as possible because the definitions can be very imprecise
- Not “have sex” but “engaged in penile-vaginal penetration” etc.



# Third Rule: Racial and Ethnic Categories...

- Again . . . Be as clear and technical as possible because the definitions can be very imprecise
- Although we are all the human race, historically “race” has been used as a distinguisher



# Third Rule: Racial and Ethnic Categories...

- APA has punted to the Census Bureau
- African American or Black
- White (Caucasian or European-American)
- Asian
- American-Indian (vs. Native American vs. First Nations)



# Third Rule: Racial and Ethnic Categories...

- Ethnicity: Latino vs. Hispanic (presumably could be white, black, Asian or native)
- Portuguese speakers?



# Fourth Rule: Disabilities...

- See First Rule
- “individual with a disability” vs. “a disabled person” or “the disabled”
- There seems to be an evolvment here: crippled -> handicapped -> disabled -> physically challenged -> differently abled -> ?



# Fifth Rule: Occupations...

- Avoid using words with “man”
- Page 67 from your textbook
- This can get a little crazy
- Freshman vs. first-year student?



# Sixth Rule: Gender and Pronouns...

- Avoid using the gender specific terms when a generic one works as well
- See examples on pages 68-69

