



KEYS TO COMMUNICATION INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE



Basketball Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country throughout Victoria and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We are respectful of the ongoing living cultures of Aboriginal Peoples from all of the Victorian Aboriginal Nations.

INTRODUCTION

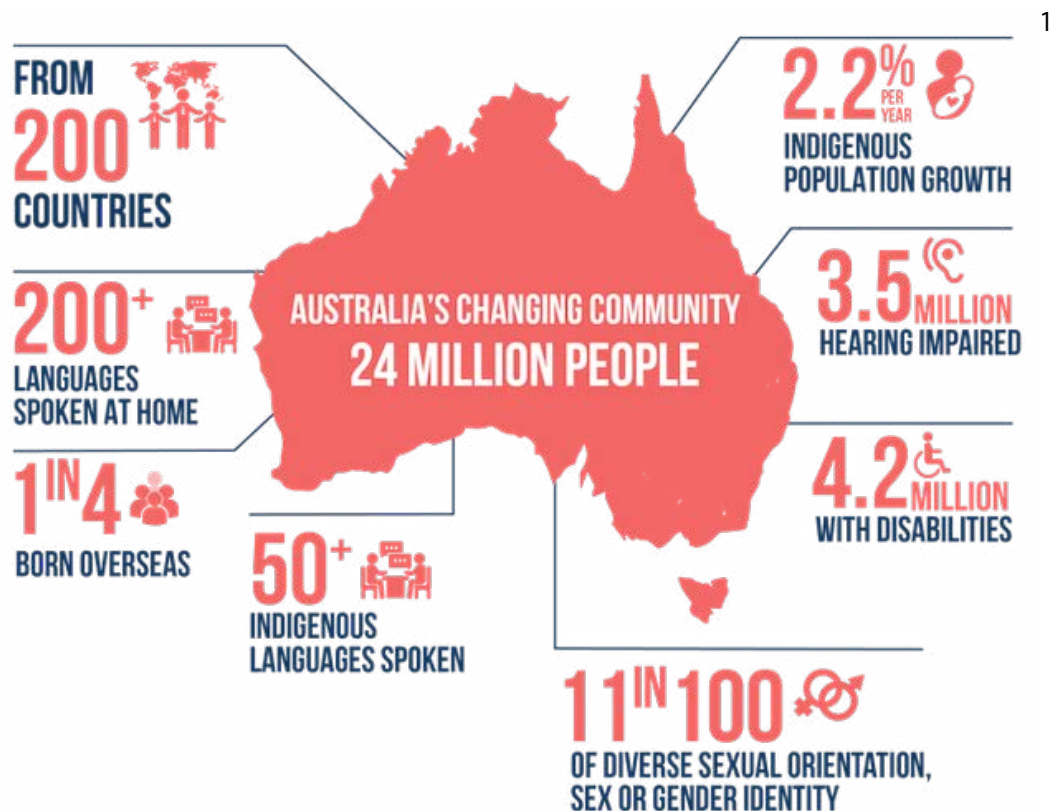
Basketball Victoria is committed to promoting inclusion practices and to ensuring that basketball is available to everyone who wants to take part.

This guide is intended to support the Basketball Victoria community to offer a safe and inclusive sporting environment to everyone who wants to participate.

Providing basketball for everyone not only benefits the participants, but also the community as a whole. It helps to break down barriers in attitudes and practices. It can assist basketball Associations and Clubs to increase membership, access new funding opportunities, gain greater community involvement and engage a greater pool of volunteers.

Barriers to inclusion may include uncertainty in how to communicate effectively and respectfully with members of diverse communities, as well as a fear of accidentally causing offence.

In this booklet we include specific considerations and suggest appropriate ways of communicating with people from diverse communities across Victoria, with the aim to build a basic knowledge and confidence for people holding leadership positions in basketball Associations and Clubs.



¹ <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/inclusion-and-diversity/inclusion-and-diversity-what-is-it>

WHY LANGUAGE MATTERS

The way we speak to each other creates a culture in which everyone can feel valued, respected, and part of the team (included), rather than under-valued, disrespected, and out of place (excluded).²

LANGUAGE MATTERS

Language reflects the values and knowledge of people using it, and can reinforce both negative and positive perceptions about others. Inclusive language acknowledges the unique values, culture, and experiences of individuals or groups.

Derogatory or discriminatory language undervalues individuals or groups, denigrates, humiliates, and perpetuates stereotypes and inequality in society. Language shapes realities and can render people invisible. Inclusive language can help to create a culture of mutual respect, dignity, inclusion, belonging, and community.

LANGUAGE IS EXTREMELY POWERFUL

Language can – consciously or unconsciously – have very positive impacts on people. When inclusive language is used, it can make people feel included, valued, respected and empowered. It ensures people are given respect and a safe environment which helps facilitate meaningful participation.

LANGUAGE CAN BE HARMFUL

Language can be harmful if used in a derogatory manner or to offend, intimidate, belittle, disrespect, exclude, or devalue individuals. Language can also reinforce harmful stereotypes and contribute to inequality.³

² https://www.dca.org.au/sites/default/files/dca_wordsatwork_overall_guide.pdf

³ <https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AIA-Inclusive-Language-and-Events-Guide-3.pdf>

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Inclusive language changes as society continues to evolve. Words that may be acceptable now may not be acceptable in the near future. It is our responsibility to ensure that our language evolves over time. What does not change, however, are the general principles of inclusive language. Below are some of those principles:

- Always be respectful. Respect how people want to be addressed. Respect the language that certain groups want to be used regarding their communities.
- Where appropriate, ask about the language or terminology a person prefers and respect their wishes.
- Language should be applied with care and consideration, with an awareness of the diversity within and between groups.
- Do not make assumptions about people or their characteristics based on stereotypes or limited information.
- Address and remove stereotypes and myths in your language. You can do so by reflecting on your commonly held beliefs about certain groups of people and how this is reflected in your language.
- Use person-centric language, which focuses on the person and reflects their individuality. Person-centric language does not classify or stereotype people based on their association or identity with a group or culture.
- Only reference personal attributes or characteristics when it is relevant to the conversation or context (e.g. in media releases, campaigns or social media).
- Consider a strengths-based approach (i.e. focussing on abilities, knowledge, and capacities), rather than a deficit approach (i.e. focussing on deficiencies or supposed failings of a person, or group of people).
- Avoid language and expressions that disparage, trivialise, and make people feel invisible.
- Avoid language that minimises or disregards people's lived experiences.
- Be conscious of the implications of your language. Language is the most common way of communicating attitudes, thoughts, and feelings and can therefore shape attitudes and perceptions, and perpetuate stereotypes.
- If inappropriate language is used in your presence, correct the person and share the appropriate terminology, if it is safe to do so.
- Be aware of the context of the language being used. Some terms are appropriate when used by people belonging to a particular group as a means of claiming their identity, but are not appropriate, and can be seen as derogatory, when used by others outside that group.⁴

⁴ <https://staff.uq.edu.au/files/242/using-inclusive-language-guide.pdf>

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

People with disabilities play basketball for the same reasons as everyone else: for social interaction and developing new friendships, health and fitness, for fun, and to build positive self-esteem.

- Over 4.4 million people in Australia have some form of disability. That's 1 in 5 people.⁵
- 17% of Victorians are people with a disability¹
- Not all disabilities are visible

Basketball Participation for people with a disability

In planning Basketball participation for people with disabilities we acknowledge two key areas of participation.

Where in some cases integration for people with a disability into mainstream can be implemented the case may not be the same for all people with physical disabilities. Wheelchair basketball plays a significant role in achieving our goals of providing opportunities for all people with disabilities to participate.

People with an Intellectual Disability, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Vision Impaired

- associations and/or clubs regular weekly programs of varying levels specifically for target groups suited to the needs of the participants
- Specialist School Programs and Competition
- association run domestic competitions specifically for People with a disability
- integration into mainstream participation programs and competitions where suitable

People with a Physical Disability and/or Mobility Restrictions – Wheelchair Basketball

- associations and/or clubs running weekly programs of varying levels suited to the needs of the participants
- association run domestic competitions

Communication

Communication is a human right that many of us take for granted. For a variety of reasons, some people find it harder to communicate, be heard and access information. Whether someone has a disability or not, they have the right to be able to access information, to take part in sport and be heard.

We all communicate in many different ways, such as through speech, body language, facial expressions, sign language, communication boards and books, email, SMS, telephone, and communication aids. No matter what method we use to communicate, it is important that we get our message across and that we are understood.

Listed below are some useful tips to consider when communicating with a person with a disability:

- Communicate with someone with a disability just as you would with any other person. Treat adults as adults. Talk to the person using an age appropriate tone of voice.
- Be sure to speak directly to the person with a disability and not to their carer, parent, translator or support person.
- Use person-first language - refer first to the person then to the disability. For example, use 'a person with a disability', not 'a disabled person'.
- Don't feel guilty or embarrassed if you can't understand what the person is saying and don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat something. You can also ask them to physically show you, say it in a different way, or write down what they are communicating.

⁵ <https://and.org.au/resources/disability-statistics/#ref4>

The sections below go into more detail about some specific disabilities and useful communication tips for each.

Some general considerations

- Don't assume someone is ill or unhealthy because they have a disability.
- Consciously seek to see the individual person before you see their disability. Avoid making assumptions about people with a disability and pre-judging what they can or cannot do as a result of their disability.
- Be mindful of being patronising. Sometimes misplaced encouragement can be patronising. People with a disability are not amazing, inspirational, or brave for doing things that other people may do on a day-to-day basis.
- Remember that it is ok to offer assistance to people with a disability, but it's important to ask before you jump in to help. Always ask first "Do you need a hand?" or "Would you like assistance?"

Using the right words

Always use terminology that places the person first and the disability second. Avoid out-dated or demeaning words associated with disabilities or language that suggests that people with disabilities are victims, sufferers, or a burden.

If you are unsure of the right words to use to describe a disability, there are support groups and disability organisations will be able to assist you. Do not refer to a person who does not have a disability as 'normal' - or a person who has a disability as 'special'.

Both an intellectual disability and an acquired brain injury fall under the cognitive impairment category. A cognitive disability affects a person's ability to process information.

The person may also have more difficulty than other people with one or more types of tasks. Not all cognitive impairments are the same and people with cognitive impairments vary greatly in their abilities - each person will have individual abilities, strengths, and challenges.

Make sure you cater for everyone and that you treat every participant with respect. Keep drills and skills interesting. Have variations for each drill so that the more advanced participants can still benefit and enjoy the session without getting bored.

Some ways of communicating may be effective with some participants and not with others. Take the time to work out what works best for each person.

Further information can be found here - [Inclusive Language - People with a Disability](#)

Communication Tips for Coaches

- Learning names is important and assists communication
- Ensure you have the participant's attention. Try to make eye contact and use their name. Some people with an intellectual disability (for example, some people with autism) may not be comfortable making eye contact. In this case, use the person's name and continue to encourage eye contact. For some participants it may just take some time to become comfortable with their coach.
- A whistle may assist with getting your participants' attention.
- Use plain, simple language without being condescending. Keep questions, directions, and answers simple and easy to understand.
- When giving instructions, be specific. Break up the instructions to have one idea or key concept per sentence.
- Avoid using acronyms, jargon, puns, metaphors, or abstract language.
- Allow extra time for the person or group to respond. People with intellectual impairments may take longer to process what you have said and to formulate a response.
- If you have a participant with a speech impairment, be patient and do not try to finish their sentences.
- Body language can be an important visual cue to help people with intellectual impairments understand spoken language.
- Use other visual supports to help communication. These can include gestures, signs, cones, flags, colours, symbols and pictures.

People with a Physical Disability and/or Mobility Restrictions

Physical impairments do not affect cognitive abilities unless associated with other underlying factors. Physical impairments can cover a wide range of levels of restriction. For example, an amputee may have full use of their remaining limbs while a person with quadriplegia has limited voluntary movement in both arms and legs.

Accessibility tips for coaches

Ensure that the stadium or court you are using is easily accessible, including accessible parking and accessible toilets. If there are stairs, there will need to be a ramp to enable participants in wheelchairs or those who have trouble using stairs to access your program.

Whether someone was born with an impairment or acquired one during their life, their restriction may not prevent them from participating in sport. The challenge is to modify tasks and routines to accommodate their mobility restriction. Try to think outside the box and adapt the drills creatively.

For people using a mobility aid, their personal space can include their wheelchair, crutches or walking frame. Do not touch, push, or lean on a person's wheelchair or move their crutches or walking frame without their permission. Push the person in the wheelchair only when asked.

Some people who use a wheelchair may be able to walk, but they choose to use a wheelchair to help conserve energy and prevent fatigue, or to assist with their balance. The wheelchair may also help them move about the court more freely and efficiently.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Hearing impairments can range from profoundly deaf to a moderate or mild hearing loss. People who are deaf and hard of hearing use a variety of hearing devices and communication tools to help them communicate. These include hearing aids, communication books, interpreters and Auslan (Australian sign language).

The first letter in the word Deaf is capitalised when referring to the Deaf community, Deaf culture and Deaf language. It is not capitalised when referring to physical deafness.

Auslan is the sign language of the Australian Deaf community. Just like the English language is spoken in different places, there are different variations of sign language in different countries. Gestures and facial expressions are important in Auslan as they help to convey meaning and emotion.

Professional Auslan interpreters translate English to Auslan and Auslan to English. When communicating with a person who has an interpreter, be sure to direct your conversation to the person you are talking with and not the interpreter.

Auslan – Signbank

Communication Tips for Coaches

- Gain the person's attention before speaking. A wave or a gentle tap on the shoulder should be enough. Make eye contact.
- Don't be afraid to ask the person how they would like to communicate.
- Use body language, gestures, and facial expression to support what you are saying.
- When giving directions, demonstrate the skill, drill, or instruction
- When you give instructions, make sure your mouth is clearly visible to all participants. This assists with lip reading. Be careful not to cover your mouth with your hand or turn your back.
- Use visual cues, including cones, colours, flags and waving
- If you are using a whistle, ensure you also use a visual cue. For example, raise your hand in the air when you blow the whistle.
- Think about the position of the sun or lighting around you: Are there shadows on your face? Is there sun glare behind you making it difficult to see your face?

- Reduce background noise where possible and try to avoid situations with competing noise. If there is competing noise, bring the participants in close to address them.
- Speak clearly and at a natural pace. Don't shout.
- Use plain English and give time for the message to be understood, particularly if there is an interpreter present.
- Encourage the participant to teach you relevant or basketball-specific signs. Use a whiteboard in coaching during a timeout or in a huddle. Write down key words about what went well or what needs improving.
- When demonstrating an error or incorrect action, make it clear that the demonstrated action is NOT what is required. Facial expressions or shaking of the head/hand can help get this message across. Follow up by demonstrating the correct action.

VISION IMPAIRMENT

Low vision or total loss of vision can be caused by a number of conditions, disease, or an accident. A person can be born with a vision impairment or may have acquired it during their life. Conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and cortical visual impairment are all common causes of low vision and blindness.

When you assist a person with a visual impairment, let them hold on to you. Not you to them. Always ask if assistance is needed before giving it.

Use a larger font size when printing information for a person with low vision. Seek advice about the size of the print they would prefer. General information for people with low vision should be provided in:

Arial 18 point bold.

Communication Tips for Coaches

- It is OK to ask the participant what the person can see. Do not assume that the person can't see anything.
- Learn the participants' names. Call them by their name when giving instructions so that they know you are talking to them.
- When meeting someone, identify yourself and others that are with you. Don't assume the person will recognise you by your voice.
- Speak clearly and naturally. Try to speak with tone and emotion in your voice.
- Be specific when giving directions. It can be helpful, for example, to say how far away the baseline is or how high the ring is and what angle it is from the participant's body. You could say "The ring is about two metres above your head and directly in front of you."
- Avoid language that needs visual reinforcement, such as 'over there'. Instead, direct the person who has a vision impairment to their left or right.
- Indicate when you are leaving or finishing a conversation
- Cut down background noise where possible and try to avoid situations with competing noise. If there is competing noise, bring the participants in close to address them.

LGBTIQ+

Adopting inclusive language makes a positive difference not just to the LGBTIQ+ community but for everyone. When we use LGBTIQ+ inclusive language, we demonstrate respect for LGBTIQ+ people, build trust and create a more inclusive culture.

Language is inclusive when we use words in ways that acknowledge and demonstrate respect for how people describe their own bodies, genders, and relationships.⁶

Victorian Government research shows using inclusive language makes a real difference to LGBTIQ+ people.

Our top three tips are:

- If someone discloses to you that they're from one of the LGBTIQ+ communities, respectfully ask what terms they use to describe themselves, then use those terms.
- Don't question or make assumptions about someone's gender, sexuality or relationship. Accept and respect how people define their gender and sexuality.
- Use language that acknowledges that we have diverse relationships and families. This can mean using words like "partner" or "parents", particularly when describing groups of people.⁷

Basketball Victoria resources: Promoting sexual and gender diversity in Basketball

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Providing an inclusive and welcoming environment can be a great opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become actively involved in the community. This has the flow-on effect of reducing serious health risks, while increasing cultural pride and promoting respect and diversity within sport and the Australian community.

It is important that we understand and take into account some of the following considerations when communicating with and coaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. These considerations will not necessarily apply to all individuals, but knowledge of them may help avoid misunderstandings and unintentional conflicts.

By varying your methods of communication and using appropriate terminology for your group, you can minimise breakdowns in communication.

Some general considerations

Family is important and family approval and acceptance of you as a coach and your training program is important.

'Shame job' is a term that is used to explain the reluctance of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to be singled out for achievement or recognition. Even if the recognition is positive, it may be that the participant does not want to be seen as better than their peers. This can result in the participant actually performing below their skill level, in order to gain less attention, or simply choosing not to be involved again.

Cultural ceremony (or 'family business') can result in unexplained absences from training and programs or be the reason for apparently vague reasons for non-attendance. As a coach, you should respect and be sensitive to the different cultural requirements of individual participants.

Respect is not always given just because you are a coach, respect may need to be earned. One way to help with this is to gain the support of someone who already holds a position of respect in the community.

⁶ <https://www.theequalityproject.org.au/blog/lgbtiqa-inclusive-language-guide>

⁷ <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/LBGTIQ-Inclusive-Language-Guide.pdf>

The concept of time can be fairly flexible in some communities and some effort and perseverance may be needed for participants to understand that 5pm training means they should arrive and be ready at 5pm. A participant turning up late may not be a sign of disrespect or lack of commitment. It may simply reflect that structured time is less important. Continue to encourage participants to arrive and be ready on time but do not single out or embarrass an individual in front of the group.

Communication Tips for Coaches

- English may be someone's second or third language, so use plain and simple language and explain terminology
- Use demonstration and other visual supports to communication already mentioned in the previous sections
- In some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, looking someone in the eye, particularly elders, is extremely rude and disrespectful. This means that some younger participants may not look a coach in the eye. Be mindful that they may simply be showing respect for your position. Coaches can look for other signs that the participant is listening, such as nodding their head.

Further information can be found here : [Inclusive Language – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples](#)

Basketball Victoria resources:

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement Guide

Welcoming Indigenous Australians to your Association

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

Australian society is made up of people from many different cultures and languages. Aspects of life in Australia and the English language may be new and unfamiliar for a range of people who live here. For some people gaining access to information, services, supports, and activities within their community can be very difficult. Sport can offer people great opportunities to overcome barriers to participating.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participate in sport for the same reasons that all people do. Sport can provide physical, social, and emotional benefits that assist in the growth and development of people. Involvement in sport and recreational activities can improve the resettlement experience for young people and their families and help them to meet people in the local community.

It is important that our language reflects and is respectful of our communities' diversity.

- 46% of Australians have at least one parent who was born overseas
- 19% of Australians speak a language other than English at home

The Centre for Multicultural Youth and CM Sport support sporting organisations to engage meaningfully with Australia's multicultural communities, to create more accessible and inclusive sporting environments for all.

GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE FOR COACHES & OFFICIALS

Gender-neutral language is a generic term covering the use of non-sexist language, inclusive language, or gender-fair language.

The purpose of gender-neutral language is to avoid word choices which may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory, or demeaning by implying that one sex or social gender is the norm. Using gender-fair and inclusive language also helps reduce gender stereotyping, promotes social change and contributes to achieving gender equality.⁸

Gender Neutral Language in Coaching

Word/Term	Usage	Gender-Neutral Replacement	Replacement Usage
Man to Man	"We are playing Man to Man defence"	Matchup	"We are playing Matchup defence"
Man up	"Man up on someone"	Matchup	"Matchup on someone"
Boys/Girls	"Let's go boys/girls"	Everyone/Team	"Let's go everyone"
Her/Him	"Send her/him left"	Them or use number reference	"Send them left" or "Send number 10 left"
She/He	"He/She is trying to steal the ball"	They	"They are trying to steal the ball"
Guys	"Guys move over there please"	Remove "Guys", Everyone/Team	"Move over there please"
3 Man Weave	"We are doing 3 man weaves"	Player	"We are doing 3 player weaves"
2 Man Game	"We are in 2 Man Game on a reversal"	Player	"We are in 2 Player game on a reversal"
1 Man, 2 Man etc	"You're the 1 man"	Remove "Man"	"You're the 1"

⁸ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf

Gender Neutral Language in Officiating

There are many situations where officials interact with players and coaches before, throughout, and after games. Below are some examples of these interactions and how we can adjust language to be more inclusive.

Using Team Names, Colours and player numbers is a great way to be inclusive and assist people to feel respected and safe.

Situation	Word/Term	Example	Replace with
Start of the game, calling teams back in after a timeout	Girls/Boys Ladies/Guys	"Let's go Girls/Boys/ Ladies/Guys"	"Let's go everyone/ teams/team name"
Lining up for foul shots	Girls/Boys Ladies/Guys	"Line up Girls/Boys Ladies/Guys "	"Line up everyone"
Defender is holding	Girls/Boys Ladies/Guys	"Hands off Girls/Boys Ladies/Guys "	Team name/colour or use number reference "Hands off number 10"