

An Overview of the Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines (ILCSG)

AMIA DEI Communications Subcommittee

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Webinar Overview

- From inception to implementation: The journey we undertook
- Importance of inclusive language
- A brief review of the guidelines
- Where can I find these resources?
- What feedback did we receive?
- Moving forward – what's next?

Disclaimer

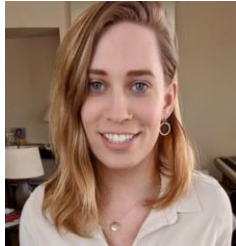
- Our purpose is **NOT** to impose any restrictions in the use of language
- Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines (ILCSG) is **NOT** a “*use this not that*” guideline
- We acknowledge the fact that *language changes over time*
- ILCSG **IS A** living document

ILCSG is Member-led, Board Approved

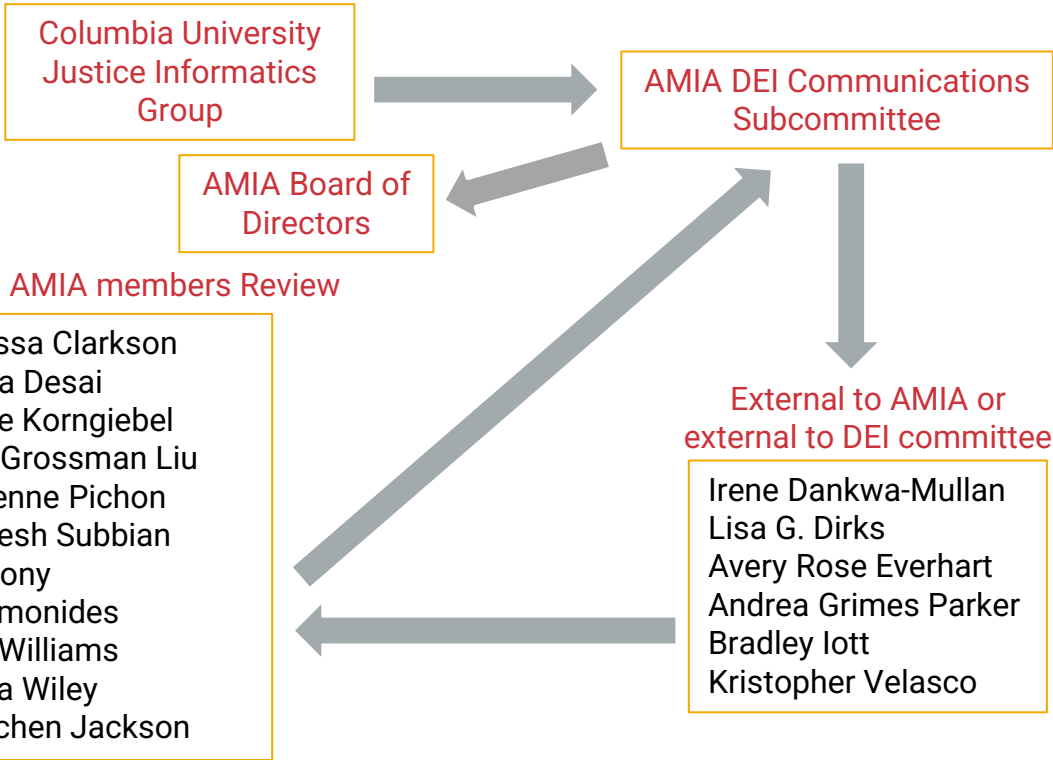
Dr. Tiffani Bright Dr. Oliver Bear Don't Walk IV



Dr. Randi Foraker



Dr. Clair Kronk



DEI Communications Subcommittee



Mission Statement

To **amplify** diverse informatics voices, **advocate** for DEI activities, and **support** DEI-related research through AMIA and other communication channels.

- **Advocate** for inclusive language use
- **Promote** culturally competent, sensitive, and empathetic communication
- **Engage** in activities across DEI subcommittees

Subcommittee Members

* co-chairs
** former co-chair

***Hu Huang, Ph.D., FAMIA** (he/him), Astellas Pharma Global Development, Inc.

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What is “inclusive language”?

“language that **avoids** the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people...” (Collins Dictionary)

“language [that] **acknowledges** diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities.” (Linguistic Society of America, LSA)

“language that is respectful and **promotes** the acceptance and value of all people.”
(University of Queensland)

“language that is **free from** words, phrases, or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or **discriminatory views** of particular people or groups.” (government of British Columbia)

Importance of Inclusive Language at AMIA



- Using language that affirms and accurately describes the **diversity of lived experiences** is important to advancing AMIA's DEI commitment and **scientific knowledge**
- Living document intended for authors, reviewers, and AMIA members as an **educational resource** for AMIA submissions

Gender

“The first author is a woman. She should be in the kitchen, not writing papers.”

Race/Ethnicity

“The author’s last name sounds Spanish. I didn’t read the manuscript because I am sure it’s full of bad English”

Gender Identity

“The author’s status as a trans person has distorted his view of sex beyond the biological reality”

Occupation

“The person works at an NGO, you shouldn’t believe anything they say.”

Institutional bias

“This is obviously written by a group from a low standard institution based on the quality of work.”

Who are the inclusive language guidelines for?

Scientific Program Committee (SPC)

Review and implement the Guideline into the review process.

Inform/
Educate

Implement/
Educate

Authors

"We have **referred to** the Inclusive Language Guidelines and **applied** the relevant principles into our writing."

Reviewers

"I have **referred to** the Inclusive Language Guidelines and **examined** the manuscript according to the principles",

"Inclusive language suggestions: "

Educational Resources



Develop &
Provide

AMIA DEI Communications Subcommittee

Inclusive Language Principles

- **Acknowledge** that there may not be one term that all people from a specific group agree on.
- **Inquire and honor** preferred terms.
- **Highlight** the importance of context.



Plurality

**Four
Principles**

Plurality

- Acknowledge that there may not be one term that all people from a specific group agree on
- Inquire and honor the research participants' preferred terms
- Highlight the importance of context and personal preferences for language use

Plurality: Questions to Ask Yourself

- Did I ask participants what words they use to describe their gender, sexual, race, ethnic, etc. identities?
- Have I taken steps to create a safe and inclusive environment for individuals to share their perspectives and preferences, and have I documented and incorporated those insights into my work?

Inclusive Language principles

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- **Highlight** the importance of context.



Plurality

- **Acknowledge** the importance of specificity and relevance of the language
- **Avoid** generalizations and ambiguity
- **Provide** relevant descriptions

Precision



Four Principles

Precision

- Acknowledge the importance of specificity and relevance of the language to define terms and describe insights in scientific communications.
- Avoid generalizations and ambiguity by utilizing precise terms relevant to the context and the findings.
- Provide relevant descriptions when using alternative terms to ensure the original intent.

Precision: Questions to Ask Yourself

- How were the variables we use in our study (race, ethnicity gender, health status, social determinants, etc.) decided, defined, and collected? What or who are we missing?
- Have I utilized accurate and specific data or evidence to support my claims or conclusions, rather than relying on vague or anecdotal information?

Inclusive Language Principles

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Four Principles



Transparency

- **Acknowledge** biases and limitations of the research.
- **Provide** sufficient details and avoid misleading descriptions and ambiguity.
- **Promote** open discussions in research

Transparency

- Acknowledge biases and limitations of the research and responsibly interpret the findings and implications.
- Provide sufficient details on data collection, measurements, and methodology and avoid misleading descriptions and ambiguity.
- Promote open discussions in research

Transparency: Questions to Ask Yourself

- Have I clearly outlined the methodology and statistical analysis techniques used in my research, allowing others to replicate or validate the findings (e.g., methods)?
- Have I clearly acknowledged and addressed any potential biases or limitations in my research design, data collection, or analysis (e.g., methods, discussion)?
- Did I write about the assumptions we made about the variables in our data (e.g., methods section)?
- Can I find, cite, and discuss examples in the literature of how results like mine could be used to make biased, unfair, or harmful decisions (e.g., discussion)?

Inclusive Language Principles

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Destigmatization



- **Acknowledge** language evolves over time
- **Use** non-judgmental language to minimize the risk of discrimination and stigmatization.

Destigmatization

- Acknowledge language evolves over time and the common stereotypic descriptions may induce implicit biases that lead to stigma and negative public health outcomes
- Use non-judgmental language to minimize the risk of discrimination and stigmatization of the impacted population groups.

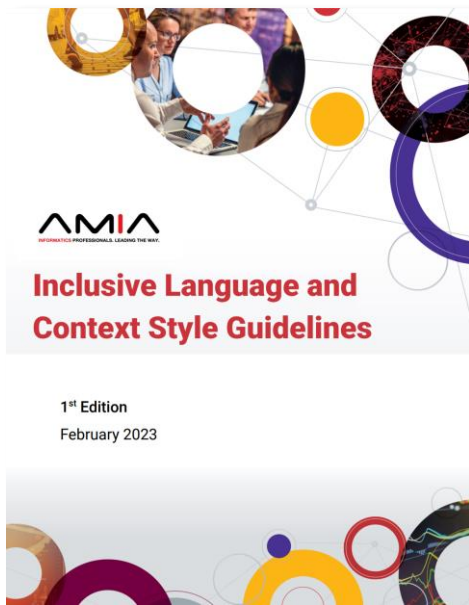
Destigmatization: Questions to Ask Yourself

- What assumptions are we making about historical upstream or socio-ecological factors, racialization or discrimination risk regarding questions that we are exploring?
- Are there theories related to marginalization that we can apply to research questions for a better understanding of our data inputs and meaning?

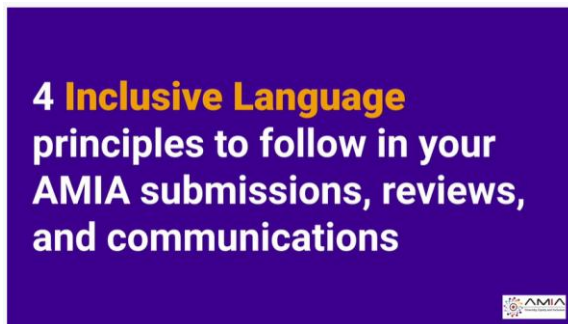
AMIA Inclusive Language Official Resources

<https://amia.org/InclusiveLanguage>

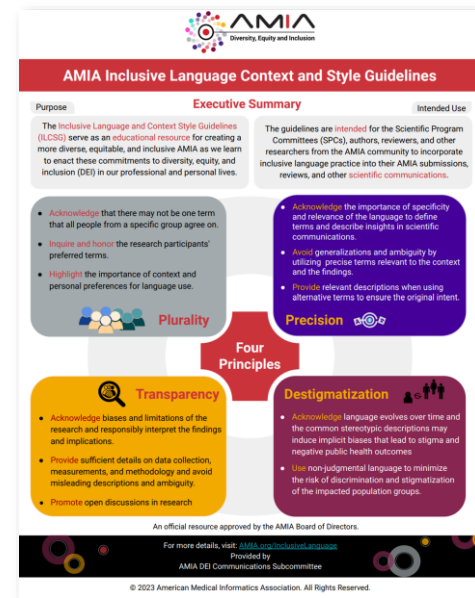
AMIA Board of Directors approved
[ILCSG Official Document](#)



[ILCSG Short Video](#)

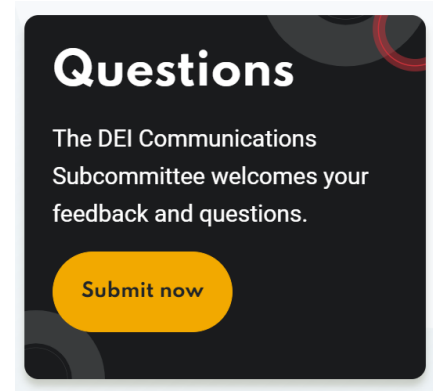


[ILCSG One page summary](#)



Collecting Feedback

- Feedback form on the AMIA website
- AMIA DEI Survey
- Scientific Program Committee Feedback



AMIA Community Feedback on ILCSG

Most submissions don't have any language that would either comply or **not comply** with these guidelines. ...

The guidelines did **not** seem to **apply** -- at least in my understanding of them -- to certain submissions. For example, a description of a change in an electronic medical record. ...

More **examples**?

More **examples**...

Provide a short **list** of what to watch for.

Give specific **examples**.

Takeaways

- If you're being intentional and thoughtful and doing your best, that's great!
- Have awareness and keep learning...
- Keep striving for a more inclusive AMIA.

How can I contribute?

Call for participation

Join the Communications Subcommittee and the Education, Governance, and Policy Subcommittee

Reach out to:

Shefali Haldar
(shhaldar14@gmail.com) or
Benjamin Collins
(benjaminxcollins@gmail.com)

Have expertise in disability research, immigration, etc.?

Contribute to the next version of ILCSG

Keep sending us your valuable feedback



<https://amia.org/InclusiveLanguage>



Questions & Feedback?

AMIA DEI Committee
Communications Subcommittee

