



Inclusive Language Guide

There are many ways volunteers can create safer and more welcoming environments for 2SLGBTQ+ people. Language matters in sport. The words we use can help people feel respected, safe, and included — or excluded and unwelcome. Volunteers, coaches, officials, and club leaders all play an important role in creating inclusive sporting environments. Below are some examples of inclusive practices you can adopt.

- Use the name a person asks you to use: Some trans or non-binary people may have changed or affirmed their name. Using the correct name shows respect and helps people feel safe and valued. If unsure, politely ask: “What name would you like me to use?”
- Use the correct pronouns: Pronouns matter because they reflect a person’s identity. If you are unsure, you can ask respectfully: “What pronouns do you use?” You can also model inclusion by introducing yourself with your own pronouns.
- If you make a mistake, apologise briefly and move on: Everyone makes mistakes. A simple correction and moving forward respectfully is usually the best approach.
- Avoid assumptions about relationships or families: Families and relationships come in many forms. Avoid assuming someone has a husband, wife, or traditional family structure. Instead, use neutral language like partner, parent, or family.
- Use inclusive language when speaking to groups: Small changes can make a big difference. Instead of saying “ladies and gentlemen” or “boys and girls,” try using “everyone,” “team,” “players,” or “folks.”



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- **Respect privacy:** A person's gender identity, sexuality, body, or transition history is personal information. Volunteers should never ask intrusive questions about someone's body, relationships, or medical history.
- **Challenge disrespectful language and jokes:** Homophobic, transphobic, or discriminatory language can make people feel unsafe and excluded from sport. Addressing harmful behaviour helps create a culture of respect for everyone.
- **Focus on belonging and respect:** Most people participate in sport for the same reasons — enjoyment, friendship, connection, competition, health, and wellbeing. Inclusive language helps everyone feel they belong.

Helpful Examples

- Instead of: "Do you have a husband/wife?", Try: "Do you have a partner?"
- Instead of: "Hey guys", Try: "Hi everyone" or "Team"
- Instead of assuming pronouns, Try: "What pronouns do you use?"

Remember: You do not need to be an expert in 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion to be respectful. Being open, willing to learn, and treating people with dignity goes a long way in creating safe and welcoming sporting environments for everybody.