

Embracing Inclusive Language in Veterinary Medicine

CLAIM: Embracing inclusive language is helpful for those in veterinary medicine to leverage in building stronger connections with team members, colleagues, and clients.

DEFINING KEY TERMS:

- **Accessibility** – The “ability to access” the functionality of a system or entity and gain the related benefits. The degree to which a product, service, or environment is accessible by as many people as possible.
- **Accommodation** – A change in the environment or in the way things are customarily done that creates equal opportunity, access, and participation for individuals with disabilities. (National Association of Counties)
- **Belonging** – The feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group or place.
- **Equity** – The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.
- **Inclusion** – An organizational effort and practice in which different groups or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and welcomed, and equally treated.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

- Acknowledges diversity
- Conveys respect to all people
- Is sensitive to differences
- Promotes equal opportunities

HOW TO USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

Introducing yourself using your pronouns

Utilizing gender neutral terms such as:

- “They” instead of “he” or “she”
- “Partner” or “spouse” instead of “husband” or “wife”
- “Everyone” or “team” instead of “guys” or “ladies”

Using person-first language

- ex: A person with visual impairment’ rather than ‘A visually impaired person’

Leveraging language that acknowledges the wide scope of stakeholders in the industry

- ex: ‘Client’ refers to any stakeholder invested in the care of animals that you care for or treat which include pet parents, livestock owners, prospective pet adopters, etc.

TIP - Use first-person language

Acknowledging Challenges: Instead of saying, "People often struggle with time management," say, "I find that managing my time effectively can be a challenge at times."

Proposing Solutions: Replace "The team should come up with a new strategy" with "I believe we could explore new strategies as a team."



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