

OUR SHARED LANGUAGE

This document enables our community's shared language as part of our anti-racism action. It is subject to review every two years or as necessary, whichever comes first.

Our shared language has been developed as an outcome of sessions with [The Black Curriculum](#) and internal conversations that have been taking place over the past 2 years.

For our community to be united regarding the language we use to use to talk about people who experience minoritisation means that uncertainty about language will never again prevent our community from being actively anti-oppression.

If any of the language in this document is unfamiliar to you, we recommend doing some research. [The Black Curriculum](#) and [The Runnymede Trust](#) are a great place to start. We are committed to ongoing conversations with our community about our language and are happy to discuss further with anyone keen to. Some of the language or topics referenced in this document may be upsetting or triggering. Please take care while engaging with this, and share feedback with us if you're comfortable to.



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Anti-racism work is not about thinking, talking & THEN acting.

It is about creating the infrastructure, processes & culture to continually critically reflect, engage in dialogue & act responsively.

This work is not linear.

1:20 PM · Mar 25, 2022 · Twitter Web App

PRINCIPLES:

- We ask people how they would like to be referred to.
- In general, we prioritise the person first, then their experience. E.g. 'child with Adverse Childhood Experiences', 'experience of racism/financial hardship.'
- We do not use language that suggests a lack, or may compound stereotypes. e.g. 'disadvantaged,' 'hard to reach,' 'in need,' 'beneficiaries.'

OUR LANGUAGE: We use...

- **The Global Majority** to empower our children and remind our community of this fact. E.g. '73% of children at The Kids Network are from the Global Majority.'
- **Racial and ethnic minorities** if it's necessary to draw attention to the fact that in the UK, people racialised as not white are minoritised and to communicate the distinction between race and ethnicity as identity markers.

- **Mixed heritage** to acknowledge culture that comes with ethnicity to contribute to identity.
- **SWANA** - South West Asian North African - as we acknowledge the colonialist history of the previous term used. E.g. 'She is SWANA.'
- **White privilege** to refer to the systemic advantage those socially racialised as white experience due to the colour of their skin.
- **White passing** to refer to those socially racialised as white.
- **Colourism** to refer to the form of discrimination those with a darker skin tone experience, typically within the same racial or ethnic group.
- **Misogynoir** to refer to the form of discrimination Black women experience.
- **Gender-neutral language** (e.g. 'team', 'folks', 'people', 'humans' instead of 'guys' or 'boys and girls') to be inclusive of non-binary people.
- **In relation to gender identity**, we ask individuals including children first how they identify and for their pronouns.
- **Disabled people** (identity-first language) or **people with disabilities** (person-first language) to refer to people whose needs are not met by society's unwillingness to make reasonable adjustments for their impairments. To refer to a group of people with this experience, we may use '**people with health conditions or impairments**' as some may not identify with 'disabled.'
- **Neurodiversity** which is a collective term that describes everyone and the infinite variations of neurocognitive functioning.
- **Neurodivergent** to refer to those who process, see the world or have various conditions that are not valued as typical.
- **Mental health condition/problem** to refer to what 1 in 6 people in the UK experience.

Experiences of oppression and experiences of poverty intersect. To talk about this, we use...

- **Person with experience of X** to refer to people who have experienced systemic minoritisation because it places the person first and removes any concept of them being at fault, rather than their position being the system's responsibility.
 - We use '**minoritised**/'**underserved**' if word limit demands.
 - We use '**vulnerable**' in the same way: 'person who is vulnerable to X'. We do not use 'vulnerable' just as an adjective e.g. 'vulnerable children.'
- We use '**poverty**' when speaking about our communities' experiences in the format above only, and in funding bids.
- We work '**in the community**' and '**at grassroots level**.'
- We refer to '**caregivers**' because family units are diverse.
- Our key service users are '**children**' rather than 'young people' because they are specifically a pre-teen group. They are not beneficiaries because they shape their own journey rather than passively benefitting.

Many of the children we are lucky to serve have to experience other people's biases and stereotyping.

We see, connect with and learn about **the individual**, leading with the knowledge that **behaviour is communication** and the display of big feelings is **communicating an unmet need**.

WORDS WE DO NOT USE

- Beneficiaries
- Disadvantaged
- Underprivileged
- Rough
- Challenging
- Naughty
- Bad
- Hard to reach
- Poor
- 'On the ground'
- Troubled
- 'suffers from...'
- Mental/mad/crazy
- Invalid

We welcome questions, challenge and feedback on our anti-oppression action. Please [complete this form](#), get in touch with your contact at The Kids Network or with info@thekidsnetwork.org.uk.