

YATI Inclusive Language Guide

Introduction:

Here at Young Actors Theatre Islington (YATI), we pride ourselves on being an inclusive organisation. To summarise our mission of continual development around inclusivity, we have created the following welcome statement.

Welcome

**YATI is an inclusive organisation:
a safe space for everybody and everyone.**

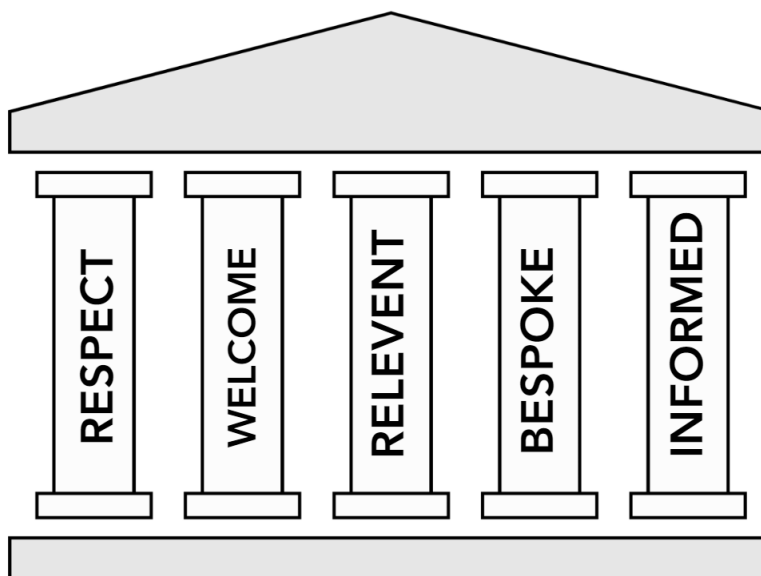
Here, we promise every child and adult alike can be themselves, create and collaborate, have their passion nurtured, & feel their voice has been heard and respected. Whatever your background or experience, as a member of our community, we pledge to help you thrive.

This statement encompasses the key objectives that we are aiming to continually develop and achieve. Part of this is the development of this inclusive language guidance to help YATI promote a sense of belonging and a level of safeguarding our members from harm. We understand that as time goes on, appropriate language changes and that there can be a lot of confusion about phrases and how they can be perceived. So, we have created this guidance sheet to be helpful and develop understanding on how language can be offensive and how collectively we can alter our practice to be more inclusive.

Due to language being forever developing, it is almost impossible to cover every area of inclusion. We strongly encourage everyone to do their own further research to supplement this document. Within this document we will be suggesting language we encourage as alternatives to outdated common phrases. Some language used may be unfamiliar to you, any key words will have definitions in the footnotes.

Pillars of Inclusive Practise:

At YATI, we believe that the best way to question if you are using the most inclusive practise possible is to follow these 5 key pillars:



RESPECT: Encourage everyone to be respectful and avoid reinforcing stereotypes¹ or patronising or trivialising groups of people. We want to avoid causing any discomfort or offence.

WELCOME: At YATI, we seek to be proactively accepting of diversity², and it should be friendly in tone, it should not exclude certain groups of people.

RELEVANT: We suggest only using information that is relevant to the situation and therefore avoids assumptions that may exclude people and reinforce dominant ideas.

BESPOKE: We should try not to group together all people with a certain category and recognise everyone as individuals and their unique lived experience.

INFORMED: To be as inclusive as possible, we should aim to not make assumptions and base everything off informed fact. For example, we should not assume that everyone has lived a similar life, and this always needs to be considered, especially regarding people who have

¹ An often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic.

² the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations



experienced trauma. With this in mind, we want to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible within YATI, and we seek to not re-traumatise people by being mindful of how we can make spaces as safe as possible i.e. try not to assume that everyone will be okay with physical touch.

Anti-racism within YATI:

There is no place for racism within YATI.

We are committed to continually working on our actions towards diversity and change at YATI and how we can make our building a safe and welcoming space for all that enter, including becoming an actively anti-racist organisation.

Who's responsible?

Within our building we believe that we all have a shared responsibility to hold people accountable for their actions, including the recognition that someone may need some extra education on a subject or theme. Language can be a powerful tool, and we want to make sure that it is being used in the appropriate way that aligns with YATI's key values.

Calling in vs Calling out:

Sometimes, people can use offensive language without realising they're being offensive due to a lack of knowledge in the area. This is where the idea of calling in or calling out comes into play.

In the moment: Question if the person is using the language to intentionally offend people.

Yes? Call out.

No? Call in.

CALLING OUT: Actively saying that behaviour is not acceptable/holding someone accountable for their actions. This should be handled by a more senior member of the organisation i.e. a teacher or office staff member. If there has been an incident you are uncomfortable with/upset by, please email naomi@yati.org.uk

CALLING IN: Recognising that people use outdated language and they just need education on how the language has developed and can be given by those around them. This should be done in a welcoming and understanding tone reflecting the positive change this would make on the world.

Microaggressions:

Microaggressions are defined as the everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional - interactions or behaviours that communicate some sort of bias against marginalized³ groups.

As per the definition, microaggressions can happen at time unintentionally and are one of the most common culprits of a lack of comfortability within an organisation for its staff and participants. The most common medium of microaggressions being felt, is language, and so we want to take this opportunity to encourage all to be extra mindful regarding language in relation to other people.

Relevance:

A key thing we would like to remind people is that we are all individual human beings first and foremost.

This means that we should only need to refer to people's characteristics if it is relevant to the information we are communicating. An example of this is if someone's work specifically refers to being inspired or influenced by their ethnic background, sexuality etc.

If outside of this circumstance, please question if the information is relevant? Can the same message be conveyed without mentioning their personal characteristics.

Reclamation:

Reclamation is the cultural process by which a group takes back ownership of words or artifacts that were previously used in a way of disparaging to that group. This is why in some scenarios you may hear people using classically derogatory terms in reference to themselves or their close peers. This is often used as a form of protest or resistance against discrimination by members of the community the slur is directed towards. This does not mean that the language should be used by everyone and can have the opposite intended effect when used by a non-member of this group. If you hear people reclaiming these terms within YATI, we ask you to question if it is appropriate. If not? Please refer to our calling in vs calling out section and decide on the best course of action.

³ to treat someone or something as if they are not important

Language based on the Protected Characteristics:

This document was made in consultation with YATI members/staff about their lived experience and based on the protected characteristics⁴ outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Where any are not mentioned, the following principles should help with guiding best practise.

Ageism:

Ageism is the discrimination of a person based on their age. For example, assuming or segregating⁵ someone based on the assumption that because of their age they are incapable. A lot of the language that is seen as age discriminatory is due to an assumption of lower competency either due to a higher age or due to being young. This includes using belittling terms such as 'sweet for trying' as this can alienate people who may not have interacted with the arts before, especially older people.

Some examples of ageism may be if people are overlooked for opportunities because they are seen as 'too old'. This can sometimes be an unconscious bias. Unconscious biases are the associations we hold, outside our conscious awareness and control. Unconscious bias affects everyone. Keeping this in mind, we need to have a continuous awareness that we all have these prejudices⁶ and actively act against them.

Here is some language that we suggest using:

<u>Phrases we suggest using:</u>	<u>Phrase to avoid:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older People - Young People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Old person - Kid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older person - Where relevant use age specific language i.e. Under 12s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elderly - Juvenile - Naive - Senile

⁴ a right not to be treated less favorably, or subjected to an unfair disadvantage, by reason of that characteristic

⁵ to separate or set apart from others or from the main body or group

⁶ an unfair feeling of dislike for a person or group because of race, sex, religion, etc.

If you would like more information, please see the following guide on how to avoid ageism within communication: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ageing/quick-guide-to-avoid-ageism-in-communication---en.pdf?sfvrsn=a43edc4a_1&download=true

Class and Socio-economic status:

Another protected characteristic where we feel the need to recognise how harmful language can be isolating or making those from a low-income background feel unwelcome within our environment.

One of the ways in which this can happen is assumed culture. For example, we cannot assume that everyone has had the same upbringing or opportunities/experiences. One of the most common is the assumption that everyone who come into our spaces has interacted with live theatre.

As we all know, west end theatre tickets are becoming increasingly expensive and, in turn, this may inhibit young people from accessing the most common level of the arts.

Here is some language we suggest when speaking about class/socio-economic status:

<u>Phrases we suggest using:</u>	<u>Phrases that are seen as offensive:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upper Class - Middle Class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rich (when discussing an identity) - Poor (when discussing an identity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low-income background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor - Povo - Broke - Charity case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working Class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common - Poor people - Rednecks - Peasant - Lower class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Housing - Council property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chav - Rough Areas

Disability Awareness:

At current, YATI follows the social model understanding of disability which states that people are disabled by barriers within society not as a consequence of their impairment/difference. This social model has been developed over the last 40 years by Disabled people and is radically different to that of the medical and charitable approach. Throughout this document, our use of the term 'disabled people' reflects the social model, as does our description of Deaf and

Disabled people and organisations. If you would like to find out more about the social model of disability you can start your search here: [Social Model of Disability: Language | Disability Rights UK](#)

At YATI we are aware that at this moment in time our building contributes to the social model's understanding of how society disables those with impairments as our building is not currently accessible. We do have a proposed capital project that we are currently fundraising for which will be a full rebuild of our home on Barnsbury Road to make YATI a fully accessible building.

'Deaf' and 'deaf' distinction:

We would like to take a moment to highlight the distinction between the capitalisation of the 'D' in deaf. As an identity, someone who refers to themselves as Deaf is using the term as a cultural identity whereas someone who uses the term 'deaf' generally has hearing loss. This is something that you may want to take into consideration when thinking about a person with hearing loss.

<u>Phrases we encourage to use</u>	<u>Phrases that are seen as offensive:</u>
- Disabled Person	- The disabled
- Non-disabled person	- Normal/Healthy - Able-bodied
- Accessible facilities - Accessible toilets - Step-free access	- Disabled toilets - Facilities for the disabled
- D/deaf - Deaf sign language user - BSL User (subject to change depending on language of origin) - Hard of Hearing	- Deafened - Deaf mute - Partially Dead
- Blind - Partially sighted	- The blind
- Wheelchair user	- Wheelchair Bound - Confined to a wheelchair
- Person with dementia	- Dementia Sufferer

- Person with Schizophrenia	- Schizo - A Schizophrenic - Mentally Ill - Insane
- Person with a learning disability	- Mentally disabled - Challenged - 'Special' - 'Special Needs'
- Neurodiverse Person	- High-functioning /Low -functioning (unless a neurodiverse person is using it about themselves)
- Person with Dwarfism	- Dwarfs - Midgets

The following language is now seen as derogatory, so we suggest refraining from using the following:

- Crazy, psycho, mad, mental
- Handicapped, cripple, invalid
- Retarded, backwards
- Spastic
- Moron

LBGTQIA+

The term above is an umbrella acronym for both sexual orientation⁷ and gender identity⁸. It should not be used interchangeably but in reference to anything other than heteronormative⁹ (the assumption that all people should be heterosexual and cisgendered).

- Please recognise that LBGTQIA+ is distinct from gender or gender identity and avoid confusing them
- 'Straight' or heterosexual is not the opposite to LBGTQIA+ (a transgender person can be straight)

⁷ the emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction that a person feels toward another person. There are several types of sexual orientation

⁸ is one's own internal sense of self and their gender

⁹ denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation.

- We suggest using the term 'sexual orientation' rather than 'sexual preference' as like previously mentioned, it has connotations of choice and many LGBTQIA+ feel that their orientation is not a choice but how they are predisposed.

When we talk about sexuality, we should try to not generalise people into a shared identity based solely on this factor as someone's sexuality does not define them. This is where the key pillar of relevance comes into play.

For example, we suggest:

<u>Phrases we encourage:</u>	<u>Phrases can be seen as offensive:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesbian People - Gay People - Bisexual People - Part of the LGBTQIA+ community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesbians - Gays - Bisexuals - 'The Gays'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heterosexual People - Straight People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heterosexuals - Straights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual Orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual preference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Straight Cisgendered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Normal'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ally 	

There are many derogatory terms surrounding sexuality; this type of language has no place within YATI and its community when used in a negative manner and therefore we have decided to not give it the space to hold power within this document.

Race and Ethnicity:

RACE: The term 'race' today is primarily understood as identities sharing outward physical characteristics and some commonalities of ancestry or historical experiences. For example, skin colour or hair texture.

ETHNICITY: This is something you acquire based on where your family is from and the group in which you may share cultural, traditional and familial bonds and/or experiences with. More frequently this is linked to cultural expression.

To put this into context, 2 people may say their race is black, but their ethnicities could be Black African and Black Caribbean. This is known as racial similarity but ethnic dissimilarity. This is also an example of why we should always allow people to self-identify and where possible, we encourage all to actively make space for this.

If referencing race/ethnicity is necessary, here is some language we suggest:

<u>Phrases we suggest using:</u>	<u>Phrases that are seen as offensive:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global Majority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnic Minority

- People of the global majority	
- Black people - Person/people of colour	- The blacks - 'Coloured' - Coolie - Monkey
- A person who is Pakistani	- Paki
- Roma/Romani	- Gypsy/Gypo
- Inuit	- Eskimo
- Native American	- Redskins
- Mixed Heritage	- Half/Quater Cast

Other language that is offensive is creating jokes that reinforce stereotypes of specific groups. This is just as serious as outwardly using slurs/derogatory language and should be always avoided.

Sex, Gender and Gender Identity:

We aim to make YATI a welcome space for people of all genders/gender identities. Within our building, we have made all our bathrooms gender neutral and allow the space for all to express themselves freely without fear of persecution. We also believe it is beneficial to make the distinction between sex and gender clear. Sex is a term based on biological factors and is usually what you are assigned at birth. Gender refers to the sense of self and the identity that most resonates within individuals.

Here is an example of language we suggest using:

<u>Phrases to encourage to use:</u>	<u>Phrases that are seen as an offence:</u>
- Welcome everyone	- Welcome ladies and gentlemen - Welcome boys and girls - Hi Guys
- All genders	- Both genders - Opposites sexes
- Transgender people/person	- A transgender - Tranny - Transvestite
- People who have been socialised / raised as girls/boys - AFAB/AMAB (Assigned female/male at birth) - Male Identifying - Female Identifying	- Female-bodied/male-bodied - Born female/male - Boys - Girls

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner(S) - Spouse(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boyfriend/girlfriend - Wife/husband
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleaners - Firefighters - Performers - Actors (general term) - Police Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleaning lady - Fireman/firewoman - Actress/Actors (when used in a gendered way) - Policeman/policewoman

Pronouns:

Pronouns are words we use in replace of a noun or noun phrase. The most common pronouns are he/she and they. In the english language, they/them pronouns have been used to refer to a group of people, for those who use non-gendered pronouns or if you do not know the person of who you are referring. This means that to use they/them pronouns in the singular is grammatically correct.

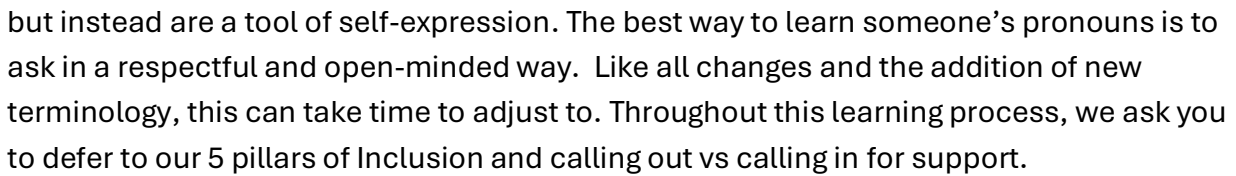
We recognise that not all people use the pronouns that correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth, this is why we recommend you take the following steps to allow people the freedom to express themselves:

- Attempt to not make assumptions based on appearance
- When asking people to introduce themselves feel free to ask their pronouns
- If in doubt of someone's pronouns, don't make assumptions, try using their name instead.
- Where possible, avoid the term 'preferred pronouns' as this has connotation of gender being a 'choice' whereas some people who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth recognise that it was not a choice but who they really are.

NeoPronouns:

As pronouns become more widely spoken about and comfortability around the use of non-gendered pronouns increases, we have seen a rise in neopronouns being used.

Neopronouns are a category of newer (neo) pronouns that are used in place of 'he,' 'she,' or 'they.' They can be used by people who don't feel that other pronouns reflect their experience and can help express a person's gender identity in a way that feels right for them. Common neopronouns are Ze/Zir/Zirs, Xe/Xem/Xyrs, Dey/Dem/Dyrs or Fae/Faer/Faerself. These are used in the same way as he/she/they however they require more careful thought before usage. Neopronouns aren't confined to the examples above



We also recognise that gender and gender identity is a spectrum and that pronouns may change. This is completely normal and is why we encourage regular check ins and encourage asking regular to make note of any changes so we can support our young people to feel completely themselves.

We understand that this is a large document with a lot of overwhelming and potentially new information. People make mistakes and can be undereducated in this area, so we want to support our community by being as inclusive as possible. We want to reaffirm that this document has been developed to promote inclusion and diversity, and to create a safe space for everyone within our community. As previously stated, we recognise that language, its use, and its perception/acceptance in society, is ever evolving, and to reflect that, this guidance will evolve and be updated accordingly. Thank you for taking the time to read this and for helping YATI become a more inclusive space for everyone.

January 2026