

# Language Matters: Building Connections with the Words We Choose

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# Identities

Here are just a few examples of identities that are playing a role in our communication interactions and connections with others.

**Ability/disability profile**

**Age**

**Citizenship**

**Communication profile - including accent, dialect, language**

**Educational profile**

**Ethnicity**

**Gender**

**Geographic location**

**Nationality**

**Neighborhood**

**Physical appearance**

**Profession(al) profile**

**Race**

**Religion**

**Sexual orientation**

**Socioeconomic status**

**Spirituality**

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# 6 Actions You Can Do

- 1. Don't assume...ask**
- 2. Say what you actually mean**
- 3. Make a mistake and offend**
- 4. Be authentic**
- 5. Make a friend**
- 6. When all else fails, give others grace\* and give yourself a pass.**

# Questions for Consideration

## for Inclusive Language

- Who am I speaking to?
- Who am I speaking to?
- Who am I speaking about?
- What am I speaking about?
- What point am I trying to make with my communication
- What is my purpose?
- What setting am I in?
- Will my words offend? Are they based in deficiency?
- Do I know if my words will offend?
- What's my relationship with this group/person?
- What identities does this person have that may be evident but should be confirmed?
- What identities are not as evident?
- Did I miss any identities their loved ones may have?
- Or identities that they used to have?
- What assumptions have I made about their identities or their loved ones?