

Inclusive Language for PECSF Volunteers

The BC Public Service is committed to be an inclusive organization made up of unique and talented individuals who reflect the diversity of the citizens we serve and where we can all see ourselves reflected. We recognize that unique styles, perspectives, beliefs and creativity support a diverse, respectful, inclusive and collaborative work environment.

Through PECSF, we are striving to create an environment that is accessible and inclusive for all volunteers, donors, and supporters. *Words Matter: Guidelines on Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace* provides general principles for approaching inclusive language and represents the organization's commitment to work towards an inclusive work environment in which all employees feel welcomed. Inclusive language is language that is free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views of people or groups. It is also language that does not deliberately or inadvertently exclude people from feeling accepted.

As part of this commitment, we encourage our volunteers to consider whether their language and their messages are inclusive. Successful Ministry-led PECSF Campaigns incorporate multiple communication styles, which include personalized messages and key supporters to reach wide audiences. In using inclusive language, here are some guiding principles¹ and tips to keep in mind:

Guiding Principles:

People first.

Many general principles provided in this guide involve seeing the person as an individual first and becoming aware of diverse audiences.

- *PECSF has something for everyone! Think about the various audiences that you're trying to connect with during your organization's PECSF Campaign. Your audiences may include: Canvassers, Committee members, Coordinators, Donors, Executive Sponsors and current and prospective PECSF supporters.*

Words matter.

Not only do terms and expressions allow people or groups to feel excluded, but they can also convey or embed stereotypes, expectations or limitations.

- *PECSF is all about choice. Whether to donate, the amount to donate, and choices of charity are an employee's choice. This means that communication and outreach to employees during the PECSF Campaign should resonate with everyone, regardless of how one chooses to take part in the Campaign.*

Language changes.

All language changes to reflect the values of society. As language changes, so do the norms that deem what is socially and grammatically acceptable.

- *PECSF builds bridges. Many charitable organizations work with a diverse group of people. When interacting with charitable organizations, be conscious of using inclusive language and remember to ask if you're unsure.*

¹ Words Matter (2018). <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/working-with-others/words-matter.pdf>

Inclusive Language for PECSF Volunteers

Mindset matters.

It is important to keep a curious and empathetic mindset. Most language has evolved to reflect the values and norms of the mainstream or dominant culture, and if a person is a member of that culture, they have had the privilege to feel included the majority of the time. That is not the case for everyone.

- *PECSF volunteers, and all employees, come from different experiences and backgrounds. When working with other volunteers or promoting the program to employees, be mindful of your biases, and how you may be portraying them in your PECSF promotion.*

Inclusive terms.

Try to make your language and your message as inclusive as possible. For example, when addressing an audience, make sure your messaging relates to all your recipients and uses gender-inclusive language.

- *PECSF includes 28 regions across BC, with employees who participate all over the province. Although the large geographic area can present itself as a barrier, PECSF communications should be inclusive of everyone from all regions of the province.*

Self-reflection.

Bring self-awareness to the times when you use words and expressions in writing. Think about your intentions for using a phrase, whether it has any origins, and whether there is a more inclusive way to state what you are trying to say.

- *A large portion of volunteering with PECSF includes promotion of participating in the program. Although this often allows for creative flexibility, be aware of the messaging you are using, and if there are any words, catch-phrases, or slang that may be offensive.*

For more Information

Volunteering is passionate work. This passion is a driving force to make a difference in the communities where we live, work, and play, and it can be hard not to get too caught up in it. Be mindful of the language you are using to express your passion, ensuring it is inclusive for everyone.

For more information about using inclusive language, check out [Words Matter](#).

Thank you for being part of creating an inclusive environment when championing PECSF!

¹ Words Matter (2018). <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/working-with-others/words-matter.pdf>