

Gender Sensitive Communication Guidelines for Teagasc

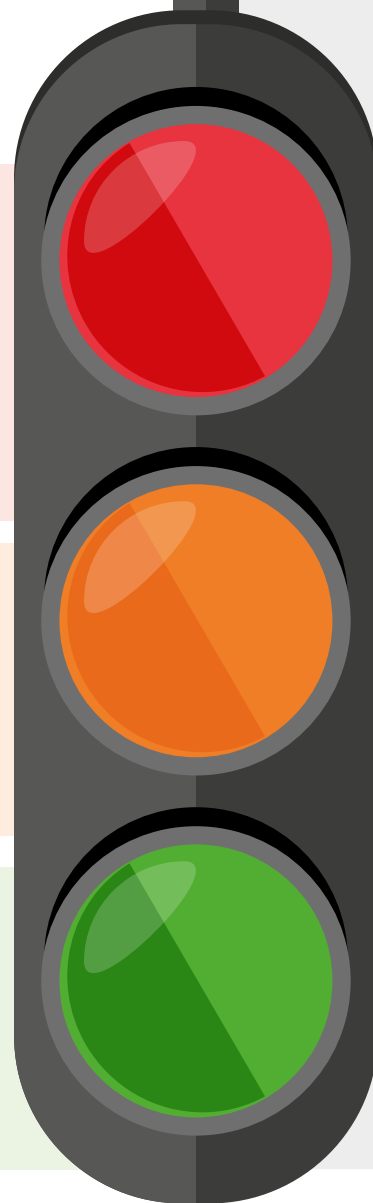
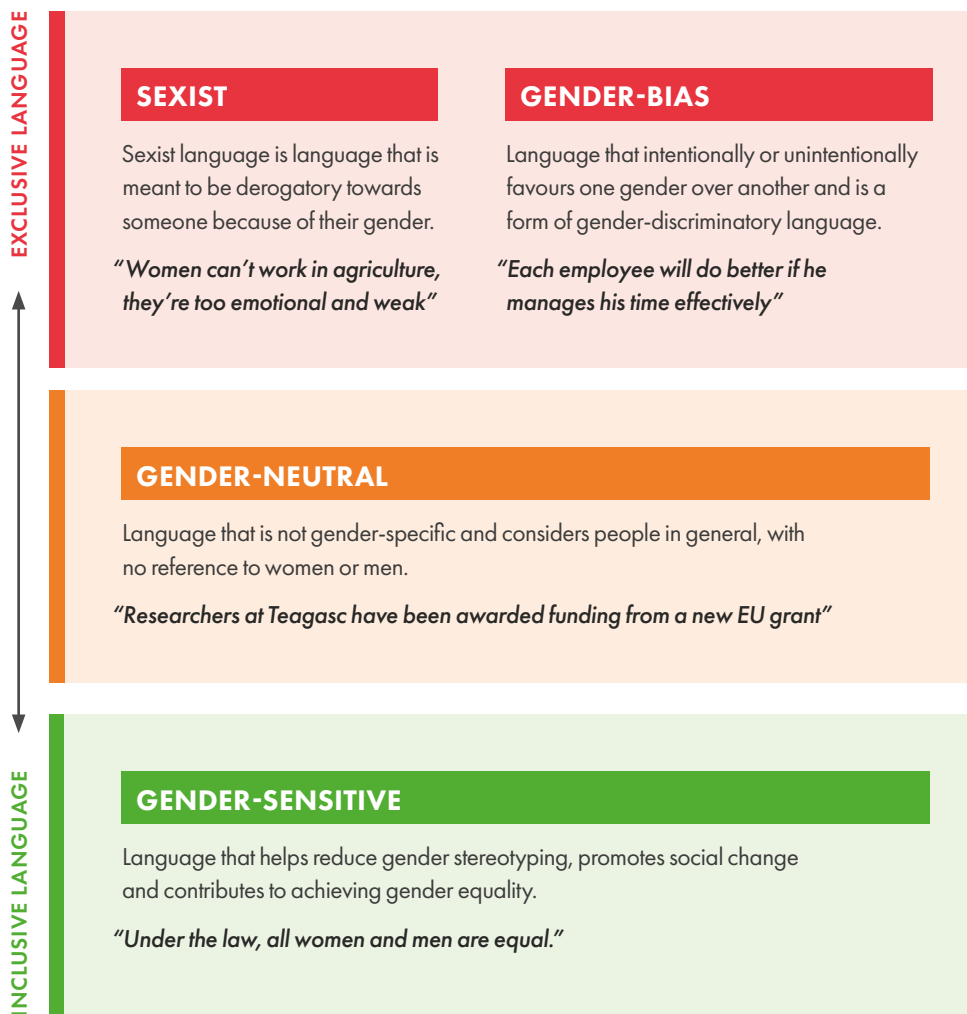


What is gender-sensitive communication?

Gender-sensitive communication is gender equality expressed through language. This means women and men - and those who do not conform to the binary gender system - are addressed through language as persons of **equal value, dignity, integrity and respect**. The following guidelines will contribute to promoting gender equality within Teagasc and make sure our communications align with our gender equality values.

Gender-sensitive language

One way we can create a more gender-inclusive culture at Teagasc is by using gender-sensitive language in our communication. Here are some terms you need to know to make your language more gender-inclusive¹:



Gender-neutral vs. Gender-sensitive language

In practice, it can be hard to judge where your language falls on the inclusive/exclusive scale, so you may feel that it is safest to avoid any mention of gender altogether. Although gender-neutral language can be appropriate in certain situations, especially if you are trying to be inclusive to those who are non-binary, it comes with downsides.

Gender neutral language can:

Take the male perspective as its basis, this can hide important differences in the roles, situations and needs of women and men.

Fail to take into account the diverse roles and needs of women and men in gender-neutral projects, programmes and policies

Maintain the status quo and fail to help transform the unequal structure of gender relations.



When to use gender sensitive language

If you're unsure about whether to use gender-neutral or gender-sensitive language, consider these points:

Will mentioning gender shed light on the main points of the issue being discussed?

If so, use gender-sensitive language. If not, use gender-neutral language.

Are people being referred to in general or a specific group?

If mentioning people in general, use gender-neutral language. If it is a specific group you want to discuss e.g. women in agriculture, use gender-sensitive.

Is there an explicit aim to be inclusive of those of a non-binary gender?

If so, gender-neutral language (3rd person plural: they/them) can be used.

If you're unsure of how it sounds, **reverse the gender**: Would reversing the gender of who you are addressing make what you're saying sound strange or odd? If yes, then try to rephrase it so that it would be appropriate for both men and women.

Why is gender-sensitive communication important?

Our choice of words can often unconsciously reflect our culture, beliefs and values as an organisation. These values in turn define and shape our work culture and reflect on us as an organisation. Although women have, and do, actively contribute to Teagasc in many ways, our language often unintentionally means their efforts are ignored or minimised. Shifting to gender-inclusive language respects and acknowledges the gender identities of **all** people and removes any assumptions.

Using gender-sensitive language can?:



Make it easier to see important differences between the needs of women and men



Challenge unconscious assumptions people have about gender roles in society



Lay the foundation for greater gender equality throughout society



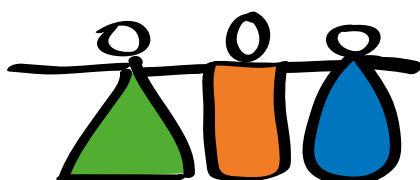
Raise awareness of how language affects our behaviour



Make people more comfortable with expressing themselves and behaving in ways that were once not considered 'typical' of their gender

Key principles for gender-sensitive language

Before writing any communication, take a moment to consider the following six principles³:



Tips to help build gender sensitive communications at Teagasc

The following checklist provides you with a guide and practical tips to follow when developing any form of communication. Following these guidelines will contribute to promoting gender awareness, minimising bias and promoting equality in our communications⁴.

✓ DO

Be mindful when using generic terms to describe people, jobs and things.

Use chair not chairman, personal assistant instead of secretary etc.

Use an inclusive approach with pronouns.

Unless you know the person's gender use they/them.

Promote gender equality through titles and forms of address.

Use the person's full-name, rather than 'Mrs' or 'Miss' unless you know they prefer this. Alternatively you can use 'Dr' or 'Prof.'

Include quotes from both women and men as experts and authorities.

This challenges stereotypes that only men can be experts and breaks down barriers to women in positions of authority.

✗ DON'T

Add information about gender in a description of an individual when it isn't necessary or relevant.

Referring to someone as a 'female scientist' rather than 'scientist'. This implies that male scientists are the norm and reinforces stereotypes.

Describe people of different genders with different adjectives.

For example referring to women as 'bossy' or 'highly-strung' whilst describing men as 'decisive' or 'assertive'.

Assume women are the only ones subject to gender discrimination.

Write about women and men in a way that reinforces the status quo.

✓ For audio-visual representations:

Put images of men and women in non-traditional roles.

Show images of women as farmers and men as care-givers.

Consider posture, expression, gestures and position to convey balance, equal status and authority.

Avoid poses where men are standing over women or addressing a room of only women.

Focus on the roles of the people in the images rather than appearances.

If writing about the agri-food industry, don't use generic stock images of models. Make sure the image is appropriate for the context.

Ensure equal numbers of women and men in image selection.

Common words and phrases to avoid in communications⁵

Use language that respects people of all genders and which fosters a culture of inclusivity and acceptance. To help you, here are some common words or phrases to avoid and some suggestions for replacing them.

INSTEAD OF...	WHY NOT TRY...
Mrs / Miss / Mr. / He / She	Unless you know the person prefers to be addressed by this title use: They / Them / Ms / Mr / Prof / Dr
Girls / Gals / Guys / Lads	Everyone / Folks / Gang / Guests / Friends
Chairman / Chairwoman	Chair / Chairperson
Female scientist / Female Farmer / Male nurse	Scientist / Farmer / Nurse
Dear Sir/Madam	To whom it may concern / Dear manager / Dear (insert full name)
Each employee will perform better if he tracks his time allocation by a task	Employees will do better if they track time allocation by a task
Right man for the job	Right person for the job
Research scientists often prioritise their work over their wives and children	Research scientists often prioritise their work over their families



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www.gendersmart.eu

¹ The European Institute for Gender Equality: Toolkit on Gender-sensitive communication (2018)

² The European Institute for Gender Equality: Toolkit on Gender-sensitive communication (2018)

³ Principles of Gender-Sensitive Communication, UNDP Gender Equality Seal initiative (2018)

⁴ Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language, UNESCO (1999)

⁵ For more practical tools to help with Gender-sensitive language go to: EIGE Europe: Checklists and summary table (2018)