



Inclusive Practices for Coaches

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<https://www.usaswimming.org/news-landing-page/2020/01/15/inclusive-practices-for-coaches>

As coaches, you likely encounter athletes from varying backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences. In order to truly connect with your athletes so that they can perform at their best, it is crucial to have strong communication skills. Whether that communication is through the language you use, messaging about the team and its core values, or published policies and procedures used to build your team culture, it's critical to building an environment your athletes will thrive in. In order to create inclusive messaging and policies, we need to first understand what inclusive language is.

Inclusive language is language that aims to avoid the use of certain expressions or words that might exclude particular groups of people. Language is not always intended to be exclusive but may unintentionally appear that way. By using inclusive language, we can prevent unnecessary exclusion and foster an environment for open communication with all people. For examples of inclusive alternatives, please see the graph below.

Replacing Common Phrases with More Inclusive Terminology	
Excluding in Nature	Inclusive Alternates

Hey guys !	Friends, folks, everyone, colleagues, team, you all
That's crazy !	Depending on the context: Awesome, wild, amazing, stern, ridiculous, bizarre, overwhelming
That's so lame .	Bad, awful, annoying, uncool, gross
The master schedule...	Final, primary, updated, control
The minority ...	Underrepresented, marginalized
He or she will be selected as team captain.	Depending on context: They, you
They are a disabled athlete .	They are an athlete with a disability. That athlete is differently abled.
Chairman	Chairperson

Inclusive messaging is an important piece for recruiting new athletes to your team and retaining existing members. Having imagery around your pool deck, website, pamphlets, brochures or media posts that showcases the diversity within your surrounding community sends a message that your team welcomes athletes from different backgrounds. Inclusive messaging can also come in the form of signs or symbols. Having an LGBTQ+ Safe Zone sticker outside your office door or on your clipboard for your athletes to see sends a message that you are welcoming of folks identifying within the LGBTQ+ community.

Lastly, let's discuss inclusive policies. These are policies that contain rules and guidelines that support the integration of all athletes, including those with disabilities. An inclusive policy may be one that is geared towards eliminating discrimination or facilitating diversity, for example, a transgender policy that recognizes state and local laws but still allows for the maximum participation of that transgender athlete. When creating inclusive policies, it is important to remember your usage of inclusive language, for example pronouns like 'he', 'she' or 'they'. For model policy templates, please visit usaswimming.org/protect under Club Tool Kit.