Bias-Free Language Guidelines Summary, Chapter 5, APA 7th (pp. 131-152)

The American Psychological Association emphasizes the need to talk about all people with inclusivity and respect. Writers using APA Style must strive to use language that is free of bias and avoid perpetuating prejudicial beliefs or demeaning attitudes in their writing. The guidelines for bias-free language contain both general guidelines for writing about people without bias across a range of topics and specific guidelines that address individual characteristics.

General guidelines for reducing bias include:

- Describing at the appropriate level of specificity; choosing words that are appropriate, and free of bias, and being precise.
- Being sensitive to labels to ensure we are respecting the individual and people

Topical guidelines are provided for the following characteristics:

- **Age:** Different terms are used for different age groups. Age groups of older adults may be described by adjectives.
- **Disability:** While this is a broad term, use of disability language should be in person-first and identity-first perspectives to honor all individuals as human beings. Use of a disability should be used when relevant. Avoid negative and condescending terminology
- **Gender:** Use the term *gender* vs. *sex* when referring to people as social groups as this refers to attitudes, feelings and behaviors of a given culture. Gender identity relates to a person's psychological sense of their gender. Authors are encouraged to report gender identities and to identify labels that are correct with the stated identities of the people the author is describing. Transgender is used to refer to persons whose gender identity, expression or role does not confirm to what is culturally associated with sex assigned at birth. Avoid disparaging terms related to sexual assignment. Use gender and nouns that individuals use to refer to themselves. Use specific nouns to identify people or groups. Gender and pronoun use requires specificity and care.
- **Participation in research:** Use descriptive terms when writing about people who participate in research. Clinical terms should be explained. Acknowledge people's contributions and agency.
- **Racial and ethnic identity:** Terms used has varied over time, therefore be sensitive to preferred designations. Racial and ethnic groups that are proper nouns should be capitalized. Do not use hyphens for multiword names. Specific groups (for example: people of African origin, people of Asian origin, people of European origin, Indigenous people around the World, people of Middle Eastern origin, people of Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity) require appropriate terms. Avoid nonparallel comparisons among groups. Avoid language that essentializes a race. Use terms such as "people of color" or "underrepresented groups" rather than "minorities."

- **Sexual orientation:** Be specific to the terms used. Abbreviations may also be used to refer to multiple groups. Define any terms for orientations that may be unclear. Use specific, identity-first terms to describe people's sexual orientation.
- **Socioeconomic status (SES):** Includes income, educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Provide as much detail as possible when reporting SES. Avoid pejorative, generalizing and stereotypical terms.
- **Intersectionality:** Be sensitive to intersectionality when discussing personal characteristics as many identities are possible. Be aware of intersectional identities that include a privileged context that intersects with oppression. Identify relevant characteristics and group memberships. Describe how these intersect that is relevant to the research/study.