

SPORTS CHARTER FOR RACIAL EQUITY  
MEMBER RESOURCE

# YOUR QUICK GUIDE TO RACIAL DISCIMINATION TERMINOLOGY AND THE POWER OF USING THE RIGHT WORDS

Sporting **Equals**

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"Using the right words to connect with culturally and ethnically diverse communities builds mutual trust, respect, and understanding, which will strengthen your club and ultimately build better performance."

**AYAZ BHUTA MBE**  
**FORMER PARA ATHLETE**



"Embracing the Sporting Equals Terminology Resource further equips sporting bodies and organisations with the confidence to develop their knowledge and understanding of inclusivity. This empowering process will allow you to connect with diverse communities, enhance engagement, increase participation, and promote equitable opportunities for all individuals in sport and physical activity."

**BLACK LEADERS IN SPORT NETWORK**

## KEY BENEFITS

### WHEN WE GET IT RIGHT:

You'll show you have **actively thought** about including groups that may otherwise have been ignored.

You'll **build confidence** in your commitment to inclusion.

You'll have helped **remove a key barrier** to participation within your club/organisation and sport.

You'll pick the correct words to show you are **open and welcoming**.

You'll show thought has been given to those you seek to build better and **more productive relationships**.

## YOUR FOUR KEY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Be as specific as you can, and only use relevant terms.**  
You must be deliberate and specific about who you are writing about. If you know the cultural heritage of the group you are seeking to engage, specifically use those terms, as opposed to something more broad. Talk directly to those you are seeking to engage.
- 2 Be descriptive, but avoid historically offensive terms.**  
Some terms such as 'blacks' that seem 'descriptive' are often linked with racial segregation, slurs or oppression of particular groups. They must be avoided at all costs, due to the frequently violent and oppressive nature of their past use.
- 3 Avoid broad terms, particularly acronyms, when talking about specific groups.**  
Only use broad terms when including a wide range of people who share the same experience or identity of the topic you are raising. If you use a broad term in this context, you must use it in full, and do not reduce it to an acronym, which dehumanises identity and depersonalises the communication you are attempting.
- 4 Recognise the barriers you have created, not what you perceive.**  
The term 'Hard to Reach' has over time crept into our vocabulary. This is problematic because it creates a negative perception of particular groups. The term also implies that the individuals/ communities choose to not engage. It is better to find terms that reflect the barriers we have created as the problem.



**SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS BUILDS  
CONFIDENCE, RELATABILITY, AND  
TRUST WHEN WE'RE TALKING TO OR  
COMMUNICATING WITH ETHNICALLY  
DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.**

TERM OF PHRASE	OUTDATED TERM	USED IN CERTAIN CONTEXT	OFFENSIVE TERM	CORRECT ALTERNATIVE(S)
Acronyms	Y	Y	N	Be specific without making assumptions (eg Black African, People of Caribbean Heritage, Ghanaian, Pakistani, South Asian heritage).
B.A.M.E.	Y	N	N	As above.
Blacks	Y	N	Y	This is commonly used to perpetuate lazy stereotypes and should be avoided at all costs.
B.I.P.O.C.	N	Y	N	People of Colour is sometimes used rather than making an acronym of the full term. Try and be more specific without making assumptions if possible to do so.
Coloured	Y	N	Y	Use specific descriptive heritage terms that do not have problematic historical connotations.
Ethnic Minority	Y	Y	N	Be more specific as to the group or groups you are referring to.
Hard to Reach	Y	N	Y	Use an alternative that reflects the barriers you have created, not how you perceive them. Terms include 'disengaged communities', 'under-represented communities' and 'communities who face barriers to participate'.

# YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN DETAIL

## 1 BE AS SPECIFIC AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN, AND ONLY USE RELEVANT DISCRIPTORS

When using language to describe particular groups, you must be as specific as possible, whilst avoiding offensive terms. Where you can, you should drill down to the cultural identity and heritage that people identify as you can, without making assumptions. Be specific if you can, on who you are describing, without making assumptions.

For example: Ghanaian, Jamaican, Senegalese, Ethiopian etc. 'African Caribbean ', 'People of African or Caribbean heritage', as an alternative to using the term 'black people' or 'people of colour' when the group you are talking to has a more specific identity than that.

### EXAMPLE USE

You are running a survey that explores experiences of culturally and ethnically diverse communities in your sport and wish to send it to specific community groups you work with. As part of work you need to send it to a group which provides community activities for Indian migrants. Although you may use the broader language in the survey, in your communication directly to the community group, you should specifically note the importance of understanding the views and challenges for the local Indian community in participating in your sport.

### Using Specific Ethnic Descriptive Terms

In a number of specific contexts, it may be appropriate to use a descriptor that is related to ethnicity, as opposed to cultural identity.

Examples are the use of terms such as 'black' or 'white'. These are acceptable in certain contexts, but only when the specific example relates to the racialised experience or context for that group. It should not be used when specifically referring to a group with a more specific cultural identity.

For example, if exploring the specific racialised experiences of black people in your sport, or in working with a group who have identified as 'black' or 'black led', with a broad representation of different cultural identities within that, it is entirely appropriate to use that term.

It is important that you do not use culturally inappropriate or offensive descriptive terms (see later rule).

### Using Broad Terms That Group People Together

Although you should be as specific as possible, there are times when you need to be fairly broad. This is ok to do, only where it is clear that you are talking to a broad range of people that share a particular characteristic, and it is impractical to list all of the different groups and cultural identities you intend to work with.

You can use terms such as 'people and communities who experience racism', if specifically discussing their experiences, and 'culturally and ethnically diverse communities' or 'people of colour' if referring to a broader group of communities that are not White or White British in identity.

## YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN DETAIL

### 2 BE DESCRIPTIVE, BUT AVOID OFFENSIVE TERMS.

There are certain words and phrases that are offensive due to their historical context and connotations. Some are commonly understood as 'deeply offensive' such as the use of the P and N words. Others are offensive but often misused as the context is less understood.

Some examples include; 'Blacks' rather than 'Black', which is often used as a loaded phrase to stereotype negatively.

'Coloured' due to its links and connotations to racial segregation in the UK and US

And 'Mixed Race', due to the link to the social construct of 'race' rather than heritage (dual or mixed heritage is much more culturally appropriate).

There are far too many terms to list here that fall into this category. What is important is that you understand the key ones listed above, and that you do some basic research before using a descriptive term in a context to ensure that it is appropriate, and doesn't carry any historical connotations that would make it offensive.

### 3 AVOID BROAD TERMS, PARTICULARLY ACRONYMS, WHEN TALKING ABOUT SPECIFIC GROUPS.

If you are to use broad terms, you must ensure you do so in full.

There are a number of Acronyms that have crept into EDI vocabulary such as;

BAME or BME (short for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic or Black and Minority Ethnic)

BIPOC (short for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour)

PoC (People of Colour)

Although acronyms are commonly used in many industries, the use of them to group people is not appropriate. But more broadly, the use of an acronym depersonalises, and in some cases dehumanises your communication.

BAME is in itself problematic beyond that, as it assumes groups are always in the minority, when in some global settings they are not.

When using a more broad term, we use ethnically diverse communities. As it describes in full with no abbreviations. You can also use terms such as racialised communities, or communities that experience racism.



## YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN DETAIL

### 4 RECOGNISE THE BARRIERS YOU HAVE CREATED, NOT WHAT YOU PERCEIVE.

The term 'Hard to Reach' has over time crept into our vocabulary. This is problematic because it creates a negative perception of the little expertise or empathy an organisation may have to ethnically diverse communities. The term also implies that the individuals/communities choose to not engage.

It is much better to use a term which recognises the barriers to participation are created by others, not the communities themselves.

Better terms to use therefore are as follows;  
'Disengaged communities'  
'Communities that face barriers to participation'  
'Marginalised communities'

## YOUR CHARTER CHALLENGE

We want our Charter members to **share and showcase** so we can all **learn together**. As part of your commitment we ask your organisation to take a challenge based on each resource.

1. Choose a **recent** piece of your **marketing/communications**, that based on his terminology resource, you feel may **benefit** from updating.
2. Now **improve it** using the terminology guidance from this Charter resource.
3. **Send** the old version and the new version to: [charter@sportingequals.co.uk](mailto:charter@sportingequals.co.uk)

## KEEPING UP TO DATE

If you are reading this guide via a PDF document, printed source or similar, be aware that some of the guidance may be out of date. Terms and phrases are fluid and progress and change over time.

We update this guide regularly and no less than once per year. This version was **created on 6th December 2024**.

If you're reading this **more than 12 months after the date above**, please contact us at [charter@sportingequals.org](mailto:charter@sportingequals.org)