WORDS MATTER.
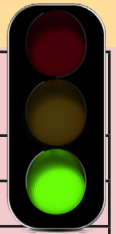# CHOOSE PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE

Words have power.

Far too often, when talking about people living with health conditions or who engage in certain activities, we put the emphasis on that condition or activity--reducing people to one thing they have or do.

By using people-first language and putting the person before the condition, we can change the narrative.

Replace these terms...	...with these
HIV positive, positives or HIVers; AIDS or HIV carrier; HIV patient, AIDS patient	person/people living with HIV
infected with HIV	diagnosed with HIV; acquired HIV
catch AIDS; contract AIDS	receive an AIDS diagnosis; develop AIDS
full-blown AIDS	AIDS; an AIDS diagnosis
die of AIDS	die of AIDS-related complications
"clean" or "dirty"	**DO NOT USE**
victim	**DO NOT USE** when referring to a person with HIV or the sex partner of a person with HIV
prostitute or prostitution	sex worker; sale of sexual services
promiscuous	having multiple partners (avoid value judgments)
unprotected sex	condomless sex with(out) PrEP
"death sentence"	HIV is a chronic, manageable health condition (as long as people are in care and treatment)
AIDS test	HIV test
intravenous (IV) drug user	person who injects drugs; person who uses drugs
sharing needles, syringes, etc.	using non-sterile injection equipment
retarded; mentally defective	person with an intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disability
the disabled; the handicapped	people with disabilities; person with a disability
the deaf; deaf and dumb	person who is deaf
suffers from hearing loss	person who is hard of hearing
afflicted by, stricken with [MS, MD, CP, etc.]	person with multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, etc.
epileptic	person with epilepsy
crippled, lame, deformed	person with a physical disability
dumb; mute	person who is unable to speak; person who uses synthetic speech
crazy; nuts	person with a psychiatric disability
bipolar	person with a bipolar diagnosis

has overcome his/her/their disability; is courageous (when it implies the person has courage because of having a disability)	person who is successful; productive
addict	person who uses drugs or person with a substance use disorder
handicapped parking or bathroom	accessible parking or bathroom

CHOOSE TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE (TGD) INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

What not to say/do	...What to say/do instead
a transgender; transgenders	transgender person; person of trans experience
transgendered	transgender person; person of trans experience
sex at birth; biological sex	assigned gender at birth
biological male; she was a boy; born male	assigned male at birth (AMAB)
biological female; he was a girl; born female	assigned female at birth (AFAB)
"he-she" or "it" when referring to TGD people	use correct pronouns. Ask, "What are your pronouns?"
ask a TGD person what their "real" name is	address a TGD person by the name they provided, or introduce yourself: "Hi, my name is XXX, what's yours?"
ask a TGD person if they have had "the" surgery or about their genitalia	**Just don't ask.**
"tranny" or transvestite	use "trans," "transgender," or others terms a TGD person uses for themselves
use gendered terms for groups such as "hey you guys" or "ladies"	use inclusive terms like "Hey fam," "friends," or "folks"
"real women," "real men"	gender is complicated; don't oppress others
ignore pronouns; joke about pronouns (your own or others'); use incorrect pronouns	use your pronouns when introducing yourself and respect others' pronouns
he/she changed gender/sex	he/she transitioned
sex change operation/surgery	gender-affirming surgery
before he/she became a boy/girl	before he/she transitioned
assume gender based on your perceptions	use non-gendered terminology
refer to TGD people with pronouns or gendered terms like "sir" or "ma'am" if you don't know what pronouns they use	ask, "How may I address you?"
disclose a TGD person's identity to others	protect a trans person's identity

What to do if you make a mistake:
- Take a deep breath; don't make it about you.
- Apologize without making it about you; simply say, "I am sorry."
- Thank them for correcting you.
- Do better moving forward. Using correct language is important.

POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK
USA

@pwnusa   @uspwn   @positivewomens-networkusa