

Just Language



MORE THAN POLITICALLY CORRECT

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Why “Just Language”?



- *Creating Just Language*. Published by 8th Day Center for Justice, Chicago 1999.
- Using language to foster safe environment and set the pace for inclusivity
- Words can be triggers – *can't they?*

Unjust language as triggering



What words or phrases can be triggering for someone who deals with mental illness, or those close to that person?

For example: “retarded”

Why is unjust language triggering?



- Cruel and degrading words
- Pejorative associations of real phenomena
 - "The Weight of Words"
- Trivialization of serious, personal experiences

From personal triggers to just language



1. Heightened sensitivity to personal triggers
2. Sensitivity to triggers of others within sphere
3. Striving to expand just language
 - ✦ What is unjust language?
 - ✦ What are just alternatives that continue the conversation? (without stumbling over “PC”)
 - ✦ How can I promote just language?

Defining unjust language



- Sexism
- Heterosexism
- Ableism
- Racism
- Classism
- Militarism/violent language

Just or Politically Correct?



- "Larry the Cable Guy"
- Political correctness: Dilutes the meaning to avoid being offensive, but can inhibit natural dialogue
- Just language: Intentionally **adds** meaning to words, to create more powerful terms that promote both dignity and content in discussion.

Alternatives to unjust language



- Elimination of offensive wording
- Introduction of gender-neutral phraseology
- Using “Person-First Language”
- Keeping it fresh and flexible

Promoting just language



- It's a personal challenge!
- Use as a tool, not a rule.
- Encourage consideration, not substitution

Q&A/Discussion



Feel free to contact me:

- ✓ for further dialogue
- ✓ to present this information to others
- ✓ for copies of the booklet *Creating Just Language*

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