



# BRIEF GUIDE TO PRESENTING FROM A **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Perspective**



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# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This document is intended for use by individuals who create presentations that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

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## **ALL USERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY TIP 1.**

Tips 2 and 3 are specific recommendations for anyone giving research-focused or data-driven presentations.

### **DIVERSITY**

Presence of differences among individuals within a setting

### **EQUITY**

Fair treatment, opportunities and access for all regardless of social position or circumstances

### **INCLUSION**

Making sure all individuals feel welcome, valued and respected



## STRUCTURING YOUR NARRATIVE

**Structure your presentation and its narrative to convey a diverse, equitable and inclusive perspective.**

### WHAT IS A NARRATIVE?

A story or message that **represents values, defines problems/causes and conveys solutions.**

Narratives refer to the language you use to convey your work. They can perpetuate stigma or acknowledge the circumstances and power relations that create inequities in health outcomes.

### WHAT IS A DOMINANT NARRATIVE?

A shared societal explanation that **gives preference to the interests of dominant social groups** based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status and other social characteristics. Dominant narratives can be conveyed as cultural norms and expressions. These types of narratives often **marginalize and oppress less powerful groups.**



# EXPLORING NARRATIVE STRUCTURE



**Equity-focused narratives** provide opportunities to challenge and dismantle inaccurate and harmful perspectives. Deeply held values are based on an accumulation of stories, messages and experiences that are repeated and reproduced over time (see Figure above). These deeply held beliefs can lead to dominant narratives that perpetuate the status quo or, with awareness and intention, promote equity-focused narratives that challenge social injustices (AMA, AAMC, 2021).

## Narrative examples.

**“Conventional:** Factors such as our race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status should not play a role in our health.”

**“Conventional:** Native Americans have the highest mortality rates in the United States.”

**“Revised:** Social injustices including racism or class exploitations (e.g., social exclusion and marginalization) should be confronted directly so they do not influence health outcomes.”

**Revised:** Dispossessed by the government of their land and culture, it is not surprising that Native Americans have the highest mortality rates in the United States.

Source: [Advancing Health Equity: A Guide to Language, Narrative, and Concepts](#)

# DEVELOPING AN EQUITY-FOCUSED NARRATIVE

**Consider your setting and audience** to determine if your terminology could be associated with negative assumptions, stereotyping, stigmatization, or blame.

**Humanize participants.** Refer to them as “people” or “persons” who have a condition/circumstance (e.g., “person with diabetes”) unless a person or community prefers identity-first language (“disabled person”). You should say “people with LGBTQ+ identities” before using the shorthand “LGBTQ+ people”.

**Use specific terms to describe individuals or groups as opposed to vague, general descriptors.** See Tables 1 and 2 for recommended inclusive language.

**When describing people or groups, avoid terms with violent connotations** (e.g., “target”, “tackle issues”, “combat (disease)”). Consider terms like “engage”, “prioritize”, “tailor to” and “eliminate (disease)” to communicate about groups.

**Avoid microaggressions in written and oral language.** Microaggressions are commonplace verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward a person or group based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other social classes. For Example, “remembering to use gender plural pronouns for Ash is too hard”.



# EVALUATING YOUR NARRATIVE

**Structural competency** seeks to promote skills for understanding how social, political and economic structures (e.g., health care systems and policies) interact with culture to produce stigma and inequity. This framework can help you evaluate how well your narrative recognizes that health outcomes are the downstream effects of structural constraints.

## TO APPLY THIS FRAMEWORK, ASK YOURSELF:

- What are key social, economic and political structures that affect the behavior and health of my study population?
- How have these structures shaped my interactions with and view of my study population?
- Does my narrative convey how differential outcomes are the products of structural factors rather than social standing and circumstances?
- Would I explain this study or my results in the same way to a room full of people with minorities identities?





# USING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

**Language is constantly changing and evolving** as people recognize more acceptable ways to describe their identities and experiences. Recommendations are based on current literature and best practices.

*Table 1. Terms that Honor Person-First or Identify-First Perspectives*

Social Category	Terms to Avoid	Suggested Alternatives
Age	The elderly Elderly people Seniors Aged, demented, senile	<i>Older adult</i> <i>Persons 65 years and older</i> <i>The older population</i>
Race/Ethnicity	Racial minorities Colored people	<i>Person or community of color</i> <i>Global majority</i> (people of African, Asian, Latin America and Arab descent comprise 80% of world's population)
Sexual Orientation/ Gender Diversity	Homosexual Transgendered Language that perpetuates the gender binary (e.g., men and women, husbands and wives)	<i>Gender inclusive language</i> (e.g., people, children) <i>Use terms people identify with</i> (e.g., gay, lesbian) <i>LGBTQ+ person</i> <i>Sexual minority people</i> <i>Transgender man, woman, person</i>
Disability Status	Special needs Physically challenged Handicapped	<i>Person with a disability</i> <i>Disabled person</i> <i>Physically disabled person</i>

# USING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

**Socioeconomic status (SES)** is a broad construct that describes opportunities afforded to individuals and quality of life characteristics. SES attributes include family income, education attainment, occupation/employment and environmental context (e.g., neighborhood characteristics). Below are suggestions on how to describe SES attributes.

*Table 2. Socioeconomic Status (SES) Attributes*

SES Category	Terms to Avoid	Suggested Alternatives
Legal Status	The undocumented Illegal aliens Illegal immigrants	<i>Individuals who are undocumented</i> <i>Undocumented people or children</i> <i>DACA students</i>
Income	The poor Poor people Low-class people	<i>People whose incomes are below the poverty threshold</i> <i>People whose self-reported income were in the lowest income bracket</i>
Housing Status	The homeless The projects, ghetto Inner city	<i>People experiencing homelessness</i> <i>People who are homeless</i> <i>Low-income housing, low-income areas of the city</i>
Government Assistance	Welfare mothers Welfare reliant	<i>People who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits</i> <i>People who are unable to work because of disability</i>
Educational Attainment	High-school dropouts	<i>People with less than a high-school education</i>

For more recommendations on inclusive language, see page 13.

# HIGHLIGHTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) IN YOUR WORK

Show how your scholarly work (e.g., research methods, teaching strategies, mentoring approach) promote diverse representation, equitable participation and inclusiveness.

Academic processes (e.g., research, teaching, mentoring) occur within larger systems and institutions that may perpetuate social and health inequities. For this reason, research practices and policies can significantly influence the degree to which historically marginalized individuals are included in the scientific process.

**Science advances** when the voices of all individuals affected by a specific issue or circumstance are heard and valued, especially individuals from underrepresented groups.



# DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

**Diverse representation** is the extent to which different identities and perspectives are reflected in a research study.

**Ways to demonstrate diversity when presenting your methods:**

**Describe recruitment methods used to attract individuals with different identities and backgrounds.**

**Demonstrate diversity of sample by presenting detailed information about sample characteristics.**

You should consider presenting a granular view of your study sample's characteristics. At minimum, describe major demographic characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status. Other demographic or topic-specific characteristics (e.g., relationship status, disease prevalence) should be noted as relevant. See Oneye et al. (2017) for an example.

**Provide detailed information and definitions on demographic variables.**

You should note when groups within a demographic category (e.g., race/ethnicity) are combined or kept separate.



# EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

**Equitable participation** describes structuring research procedures so that everyone, especially individuals from underrepresented groups, can make meaningful contributions. It also means taking precautions to prioritize the perspectives of underrepresented individuals to increase the generalizability of research findings.

## Ways to demonstrate equity when presenting your methods:

**Acknowledge when inclusion and exclusion criteria may impact participation by certain social groups.**

This may be relevant if one or more social groups are overrepresented or underrepresented in your sample.

**Discuss how geographic locations of participants and the study (e.g., rural setting, online survey, hospital, community clinic) influence accessibility.**

**Provide detailed information and definitions on demographic variables.**

You should note when groups within a demographic category (e.g., race/ethnicity) are combined or kept separate.

# INCLUSIVENESS

**Inclusiveness** describes ensuring that people with different identities feel valued and welcomed.

## **Ways to demonstrate inclusivity when presenting your methods:**

### **Describe efforts to make participants feel comfortable with sharing their lived experiences and opinions.**

Examples include allowing participants to share information anonymously or privately if the research study takes place in a public or group setting.

### **Use accurate terminology when presenting participants' sex assigned at birth, gender identity and sexual orientation.**

These are distinct constructs that should not be used interchangeably.

For individuals within the Department of Veterans Affairs, please see the following link for additional resources: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhava-lgbt-resources/>

### **List specific training completed by you and your research staff to increase comfort and ability to interact with individuals with different identities.**

### **Describe the parties or communities involved to enhance relevance of your research to the study population.**

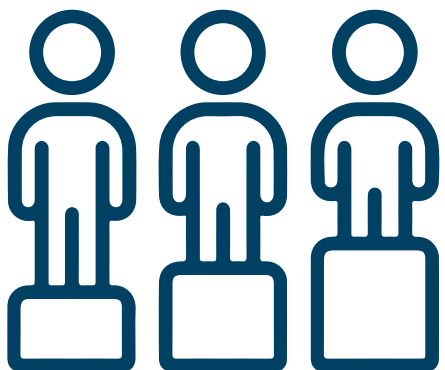
Parties involved are people interested in a subject or affected by its outcome (e.g., members of a study population, family, friends, healthcare leaders). For example, you should describe whether you solicited feedback on patient-facing materials from patients.

# ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

**Conclude with a discussion on how your results can advance equity.**

Knowing how research findings impact diverse populations helps to advance science. Importantly, **this information can inform changes to social structures** (such as public policies and clinical practices) that contribute to social inequities.

While lack of representation in research can limit generalizability of findings, it also **provides an opportunity to acknowledge gaps in equity that deserve further attention.**



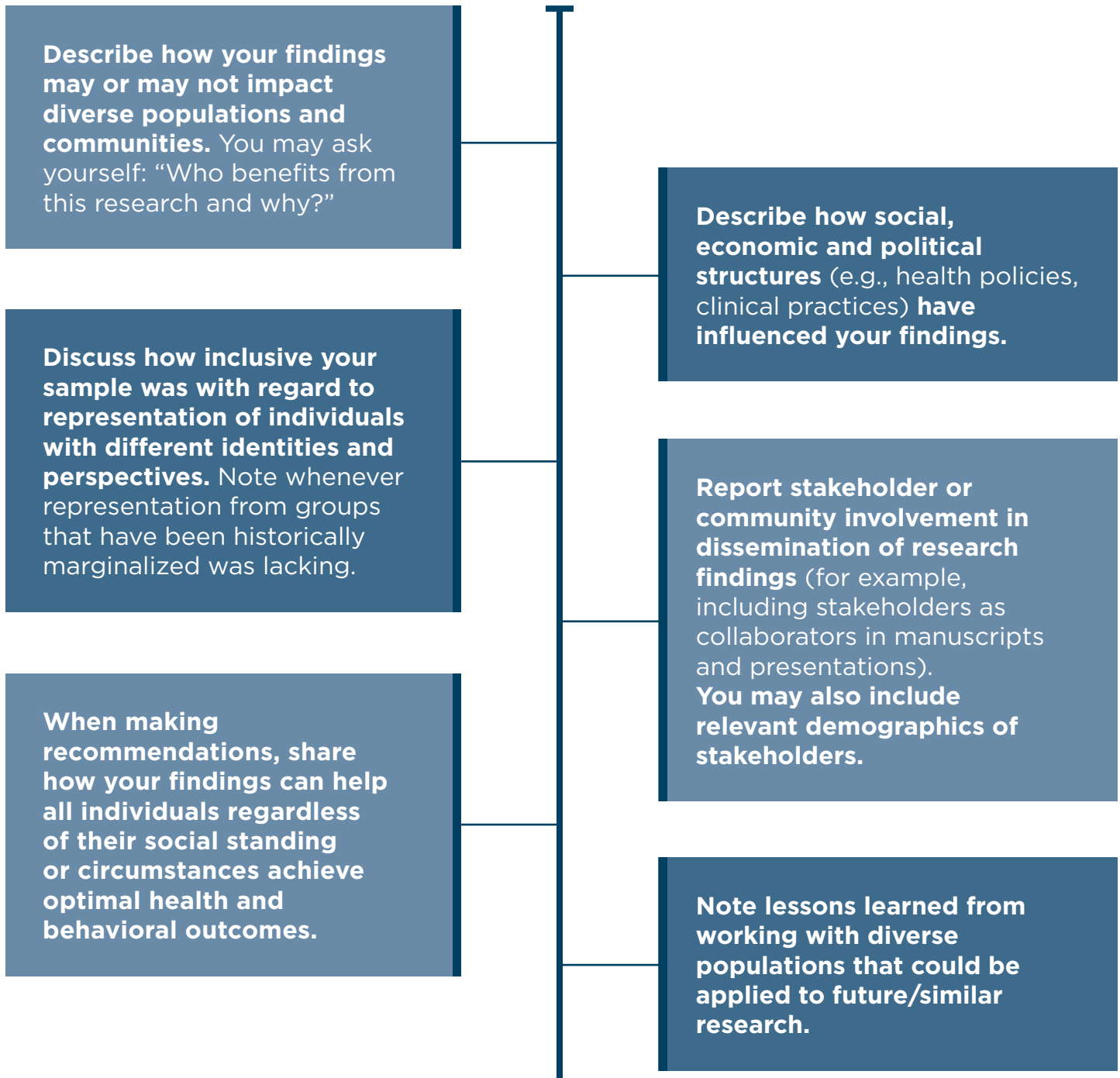
**Equity** means providing needed resources and support to individuals based on their unique circumstances to reach an equal outcome.

**Equality** means providing the same opportunities, support and resources to each individual or groups.



# ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Ways to describe research findings and their implications from a diversity, equity and inclusive perspective include:





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