PREVENTION FIRST BRAND, STYLE, AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

October 2025

PREVENTION FIRST

Contents

Introduction

Maintaining a consistent style across all Prevention First formal communications cultivates identity. Each communication piece reflects a small part of the organization's public image. The public image becomes clearer when these elements are consistent and easily understandable. This guide provides you with the standards and tools to develop materials in a style that conveys professionalism, enhances clarity, and preserves a cohesive public image.

Brand Fundamentals

The section emphasizes the importance of consistency in style across all formal materials (print and digital), which helps build the organization's identity and public image. Our visual identity standards are outlined for ease of use.

Material Development

Whether developing training materials, resources, social media, or meeting materials, ensuring communications are respectful and relevant to our diverse audiences is key. This section includes development standards, inclusive language guidelines, and inclusive image guidelines. These guidelines outline the importance of avoiding stigmatizing language and include preferred terms. Guidelines are also provided for selecting images, stressing the importance of positive representation and avoiding stereotypes. Images should reflect the diversity of the audience and promote healthy behaviors.

Checklists

Two checklists are available to use. The Material Review Checklist is a tool to ensure that content and layout meet Prevention First standards and align with our brand.

The Inclusive Engagement Checklist (linked here, but not included in this document) is a practical tool to guide Prevention First staff in facilitating meetings, events, and training both internally and with external partners—in ways that are intentionally inclusive, respectful, and culturally responsive. It serves as a reminder that inclusive facilitation is not just about what we present, but how we create space for dialogue, learning, and connection.

Conclusion

This comprehensive guide aims to develop consistent and professional materials that uphold the integrity of Prevention First's brand. The emphasis on consistent branding and respectful language reflects the organization's commitment to ensuring that all materials are professional, accessible, and inclusive.

All communications should adhere to the Prevention First brand. This applies to any document or media created for an external audience or representing the organization in the public eye.

Prevention First Brand Fundamentals

Mission

We equip communities with resources and support to build pathways that prevent substance misuse and promote safety and lasting well-being for all through training, education, and partnerships.

Action Words

ADVISE
We work with organizations that actively promote healthy behaviors so they can be effective in their missions.

AMPLIFY
Through training and ongoing education, we work with individuals delivering services, so they are equipped and confident to support clients, schools, and communities best.

ADVOCATE
We actively address areas of need through public awareness campaigns, resource centers, special initiatives, conferences, and networking events.

Vision & Values

Safe, healthy, and equitable communities.

Organizational Values

LEAD WITH EMPATHY – Acknowledgement that people are human.

LIVE WITH BRAVERY – Feel the fear and do it anyway.

ADAPT ALWAYS – Thrive under changing conditions.

DREAM WITH AN INNOVATIVE SPIRIT – Encourage new ways of operating and thinking.

CREATE COLLABORATIVELY - Develop effective, sustainable solutions.

EMBRACE EVERYONE - Honor diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging.

Tagline

EVERY DECISION MATTERS.

Visual Identity

Logos

Our logo is the most common touchstone of our brand and one of our most valuable assets. It goes before us to represent our name to the world. We must treat it nicely and do our best to maintain consistent usage across all platforms.

Please give the logo space and breathing room in designs.

A few rules on treating it nicely:

- Do not modify or alter.
- Do not change the scale, skew, or rotate.
- Do not change or vary the colors.
- Do not place on busy backgrounds.
- Do not add drop shadows or embellishments.

The star can be used as a secondary, stand-alone design element in marketing or a primary design element in décor.

Logotype

PREVENTION FIRST

Wordmark

PREVENTION FIRST

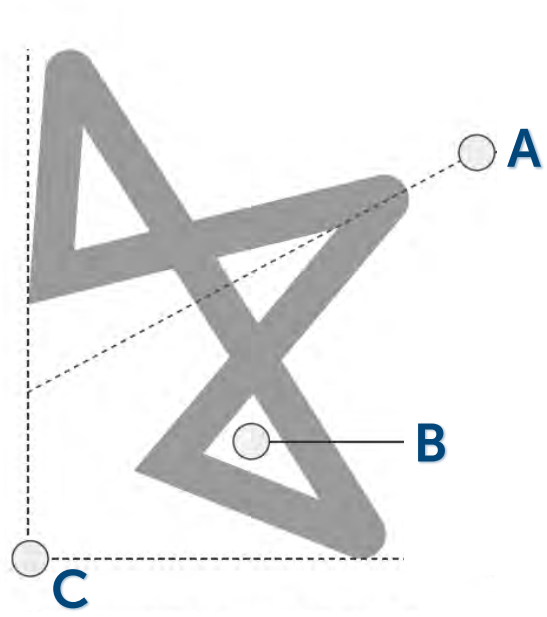
Mark

Logo Anatomy

Our brand has evolved, but the star remains central to our identity. It symbolizes the future, guidance, and hope. Additionally, the star represents the three A's core to who we are and what we do: Advise, Amplify, and Advocate.

The star should always point upward and forward, so please do not rotate the mark.

A. The logo points upwards, aspirational.
B. The modified star nods to the three A's of our mission action words: Advise, Amplify, and Advocate.
C. The mark should always be used at its perfect 90° angle. Please do not rotate.



Secondary Logos

Within our secondary brands, we have two kinds of assets:

- **FIXED**: These sub-brands have fixed logo files with their logomark, wordmarks, and color palettes. Examples include the Alcohol Policy Resource Center and the Youth Prevention Resource Center.

- **FLEXIBLE**: These sub-brands utilize the Prevention First wordmark for top-level hierarchy. The tagline is the indicator of the sub-brand itself, and each sub-brand is assigned a star color. These logos give each program its identity with a unique star color and specific program name. The design is flexible to accommodate program names of varying length.

Typography

Our voice is empathetic, courageous, confident, and inclusive; our typography should always reflect that. Please take the time to make the hierarchy of communication clear and accessible to all readers.

In Microsoft, the Prevention First Theme has styles that are set to the fonts (with kerning) below. If you need to update the kerning, directions can be found at this website.

Our brand fonts are:

- **NEUTRAFACE DISPLAY TITLING**
- **Museo Sans – 700**
- PT Serif

These fonts can be downloaded from the Prevention First Brand folder.

H1 - Title

- Neutraface Display
- All Caps
- Kerned to 100
- Used for title only

EVERY DECISION MATTERS.

H2 – Sub-heading

- Museo Sans 700
- Sub-heading
- 12pt. +

Section headings

H3

- Museo Sans 700
- Sub-heading
- 12pt. +

Sub-sections

Body

- PT Serif Regular
- 11pt.+
- Single-space lines

Body of the resource.

CALL OUTS

- Museo Sans 700
- All Caps
- Kerned to 100

LEARN MORE

Color

Color is one of our primary means of visual identification. Our colors help communicate our personality to the world. We are empathetic, courageous, confident, and inclusive.

Please use the primary colors to help build strong brand recognition.

Secondary colors are meant to be supplemental and should never be the primary color in a layout. They can be used as accent colors, taking up no more than 10% of a composition. Please only use one or two secondary colors per design.

PRIMARY COLORS

Advocate Blue
#03477A
C100 M78 Y27 K11
R3 G71 B122

Amplify Gold
#C28C3C
C23 M45 Y91 K4
R194 G140 B60

Advise Blue
#161847
C100 M97 Y38 K44
R22 G24 B71

SECONDARY COLORS

Green #3A7A75 C75 M37 Y52 K13 R58 G122 B117	**Light Blue** #ABCEE1 C30 M10 Y5 K0 R171 G206 B225	**Periwinkle** #9DA2CF C38 M33 Y0 K0 R157 G162 B207
Dark Gray #6D6E71 C0 M0 Y0 K70 R109 G110 B113	**Light Gray** #F2F2F0 C4 M2 Y4 K0 R242 G242 B240	**White** #FFFFFF **Black** #000000

Iconography

For iconography, please use the provided icon set on SharePoint. The iconography can be used in any brand color if it contrasts nicely with the background (See color contrast guidelines under Accessibility).

If you can't find the icon you need in the kit, please work with Prevention First Communications to create a more suitable and consistent icon with our brand.

Icons should communicate meaning and not be used for decoration. The size of the icon depends on the page size and how it is used. On an 8.5" x 11" page, icons used for a list of tips (for example) should be .5 to .75 square. If the icon is also used as a hyperlink button, it should be 1" square.

Photography

Our photography is warm and real. It conveys that every decision matters and reflects the hope in what we do.

- **Duotone**: We use duotone imagery for prominent hero sections only. It should be used sparingly for the first touchpoint: the website's hero, the cover page of marketing material, or an advertisement.
- **Full color imagery**: We use colored imagery that reflects and resonates with our audience. The tone should always be optimistic and positive.

THOUGHTS ABOUT USING PHOTOGRAPHY

- Include professional images and balance on the page (size and placement).
- Note that photos are not necessary, but they do break up the page.
- Please do not use the images currently used as a Prevention First webpage banner.

COPYRIGHT & LICENSES

If the images you need to use are copyrighted (not in the public domain) we need permission to use them. That permission is a license to use the image under specific terms.

- Obtain copyright approval via license for all photos/images.
- When using free images from developers, use their instructions to obtain copyright permission.

Our image library is on SharePoint. Please work with the Communications Department to purchase new images.

Inclusive Image Guide

Choosing an image depends on the topic, the audience, and the context. The best choice involves many considerations. Use the Inclusive Image Guide when adding an image to your project.

Material Development

Prevention First programs develop several types of resources for different audiences. All materials that Prevention First produces should be in our brand. The only exception is when the material is for a branded public awareness or communication campaign. Please reach out to Communications with any questions.

Before distributing print or digital materials, the program manager or a member of the Communications Department should review them to ensure alignment with the Prevention First brand. This includes materials developed by Prevention First contractors.

Prevention First Name

The organization's name should always be Prevention First. Do not use "Prevention First, Inc.," "Prevention First Incorporated," "PFI," or "PF."

Templates

Most materials use an established brand template to maintain brand consistency. Some templates (letterhead and PowerPoint) are available for all staff; others have been created in Adobe applications and require collaboration with the Communications Department.

Training guides (facilitator and participant), resource guides, tip sheets and fact sheets have templates available in Instructional Design and Communications. Please collaborate with these departments before developing the resource.

Facilitator and Participant Guides
When developing training materials that include a facilitator and participant guide, collaborate with Instructional Design. There are templates for these resources available.

Resources
Templates for resource guides, tip sheets, and fact sheets are in Adobe applications. When creating these resources, please collaborate with Communications to place them in the template.

In general, plan development to include this timeframe:

- 1-2 pages – 4 business days
- 3-5 pages – 10 business days
- 6+ pages – timeline developed with Communications

Document templates for all staff are located on SharePoint (Team Prevention First>Communications> Documents>Prevention First Brand>Templates). To use the template documents, open them, click "File" "Save As," rename the document, and save it into a personal folder. Please do not type in these original templates.

Letterhead

A blank document with pre-set margins, ready to begin typing, is located on SharePoint. Please keep the page setups or margins and start typing where the cursor is in the document.

PowerPoint Presentation Template

A PowerPoint presentation template is available on SharePoint. A quick guide for editing the PowerPoint template is also available in the same folder.

Infographic

An infographic is a visual representation of any information or data. Brand guidelines still apply when developing an infographic in an outside graphic design software product (Adobe Express, Venngage, etc.). Use the infographic template provided by the Communications Department to provide consistent branding.

Program Funding Statement

- Include your program funding statement as outlined in your grant.
- For PowerPoint, this should be on the presentation's first and/or last slide.
- Multi-page resource (Front/Back) is on the last page of the document.
- Resource guide – depends on the document, typically inside the cover or back page.

Common Usage Guidelines

Below are guidelines for common numbers, symbols, and URLs. It is important to also use the Inclusive Language Guidelines when developing materials.

Numbers

- Spell out whole numbers from zero to nine. *I have two appointments next week.*
- Use figures for 10 and above. *The order for five packs of computer paper, containing 500 sheets of paper, has been placed.*
- Use figures when related to age, time, distance, percent or percentages, money, ratios, decimals, measuring, directions, etc. *A 9-year-old boy; 4 miles apart; It is 5 o'clock; 1 in 4 voters*.
- Do not use the percent symbol (%) when using percent or percentages. *0.6 percent increase*
- Do not start a sentence with a number figure unless the number is zero to nine and can be spelled out. Rework the sentence to begin with a word. *Five girls and three boys were caught drinking.*
    - ✖ *12 packages have been shipped by Prevention First*
    - ✓ *Prevention First has shipped 12 packages*

Telephone Numbers

- Listing a "1" before a telephone number, even a toll-free number, is unnecessary. *800.256.8951*
- Use a period (.) between sections of the telephone number instead of dashes (-). *217.793.7353*
- When including a person's extension, add a comma after the mainline and then "ext." *217.793.7353, ext. 100*

URLs (Uniform Resource Locators)

- Do not include "HTTP://www" when writing a URL unless a reader cannot access the website without typing it in.
- When the URL does not fit entirely on one line, break it into two or more lines without adding a hyphen or other punctuation mark.
- Avoid any other extraneous elements of URLs, such as "index.htm" or "home.html." Whenever possible, simply list the home page of the site. If readers cannot find the information by looking at the home page, hyperlink directly to a section. *For more information, see the "Youth Prevention Resource Center" section of prevention.org.*
- The URL should always be the last line of a sentence.
- To shorten a lengthy URL, contact Communications to provide a new link or QR code.

Reviewing Materials

Before distributing print or digital materials, your program manager or a member of the Communications Department should review them to ensure alignment with the Prevention First brand. This review includes materials developed by Prevention First contractors. When the review involves the Communications Department (for brand only, not content), please allow three business days for review. Use the Material Review Checklist to ensure that content and layout meet Prevention First standards and align with our brand.

Social Media

Social media platforms allow users to converse, share information, and create web content. There are many forms of social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more.

While many social media sites are available, Prevention First has established an official presence on five sites: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube. These social media accounts are all maintained by the Communications Department.

If your program is establishing a LinkedIn page, please contact Communications. We will include you as an affiliate of Prevention First.

When using your social media site (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.), here are some general guidelines to follow:

- Be sure all images include your logo or logo mark (for example, the star mark)
- Reference our Inclusive Language and Inclusive Image guidance when creating posts.
- Reach out to Communications for assistance with developing a social media package aligned with a national campaign (e.g., Drug Take Back Day, National Prevention Week, etc.).

Resource Development Standards

Resource Development Standards

The Resource Development Standards apply to all staff-developed materials, including resource guides, tip sheets, and similar documents. Webinars or training created outside the Instructional Design Team must follow the Instructional Design Standards. Staff should consult the Director of Instructional Design to obtain and ensure compliance with these standards.

Heighten the salience of goals and objectives.

- Publications include the rationale/purpose for the resource (what readers are to learn and why it's important).

Foster inclusivity.

- Include a diversity statement on all publications (public-facing materials, resource guides, fact sheets, infographics, etc.):
    - Prevention First strives to create resources that are relevant, respectful, and meaningful, and encompass diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. If this resource does not feel representative of you and the individuals and communities you serve, please let us know.

Connect learning to experiences that are meaningful and valuable by optimizing relevance, value, and authenticity.

- The resource design is well-organized, coherent, and engaging. Content is accurate, up-to-date, and appropriate for the audience.
- Multiple viewpoints and perspectives on topics are included and represented accurately. The content and sources present different points of view on the same event or experience, especially those from historically marginalized people/communities.
- Examples, scenarios, case studies, etc., reflect diverse identities and cultures, as well as diverse perspectives and experiences relevant to the intended audience.
    - Diverse characters are represented via appearance, name, clothing, traditions, abilities, and other characteristics (diverse races, ethnicities, gender identities, dis/abilities, regions, family structures, etc.)
    - People of diverse races, classes, genders, abilities, and sexual orientations are represented in a positive and empowering manner by highlighting their strengths, assets, talents, and knowledge rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.
    - Characters of diverse backgrounds are not represented stereotypically, or as problematic, abnormal, just sidekicks, or "less than."
- Learners are invited to reflect on the information provided. A reflection statement is included on all applicable materials:

  Take some time to reflect on how this information relates to your experiences as an individual and the communities you work in.

Use inclusive language that invites in and empowers all.

- All terms included in the Inclusive Language Guide are correctly used and applied throughout the materials.
- The tone is warm and encouraging toward learners to foster a sense of belonging.

Use diverse, inclusive visuals that reflect learners to boost engagement and motivation.

- All guidelines included in the "Inclusive Image Guidance" are followed.

Ensure accessibility and opportunities for full participation.

- Publications are accessible, easy to obtain, and available electronically.

All publications should align with Prevention First's brand.

- Publications strictly use brand fonts, colors, photography, and icons as described in the Prevention First Brand Guidelines.

Publications should be reviewed from a culturally relevant, strength-based, and race-conscious perspective.

- All materials are reviewed using the Material Review Checklist before publication to identify language that perpetuates harmful stereotypes, jargon that is difficult to decipher, and policies that may widen the equity gap (before publication).

Inclusive Image Guide

Inclusive Image Guide

Choosing an image always depends on the topic, the audience, and the context. The best choice involves many considerations. The guidelines below should be used when adding an image to your project.

General Tips:

- Use images that depict positive, health-promoting behaviors.
- Avoid using images that could perpetuate negative stereotypes, including inequities in status or caricatures. Instead, choose images that show people wearing modern, typical, and common clothing in ordinary settings.
- Prioritize photos over illustrations to depict humans in human life situations.
- Follow photography guidelines.

When deciding the type of image to include, first consider:

1. What the image should say/what message you want to convey
    - Images should support the key points/concepts conveyed in the accompanying written text.
    - Choose more literal images (vs abstract or metaphorical).
    - Ensure communication products don't rely on images as the main source of guidance.

2. Who the intended audience is
    - The audience should be able to see themselves and their environment reflected in the images.
    - The audience should be able to relate to the image.

3. How the image will be used (social media post, web page, print material)
    - Choose an image appropriate for the medium and edit as needed.

When selecting specific images, follow this guidance:

- ☐ Include diverse representation within your intended audience
    - Include diversity in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity, culture, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, body size, and other factors.

- ☐ Include appropriate use of cultural dress, activities, or objects
    - Limit the use of traditional or cultural dress in images unless appropriate to the audience and use.

- ☐ Include appropriate settings
    - Include relevant home, work, or community locations. Be sure to balance images of urban, suburban, and rural settings relevant to the intended audience.

- ☐ Include positive portrayals and healthy behaviors
  - Be aware of existing power or status inequities and counter those with positive portrayals.

- ☐ Include diverse beauty standards
  - Choose images that support broad standards of beauty.

- ☐ Avoid stereotypical power or status inequities, as well as unintentional blaming
  - Avoid negative stereotypes, including inappropriate humor, and avoid caricatures.
  - Avoid images that imply people are responsible for their own disparities.

- ☐ Avoid stigmatizing and sensitive imagery for substance use disorders
  - Show images of people holding hands, group therapy, support groups, and people helping to support a peer; molecular symbols of the SUD type, definitions from the dictionary, and typography; stethoscopes, medical icons, external and internal photos of a hospital without patients present, prescription pads, and doctors without patients in frame with racial diversity.
  - Avoid showing distressed or unhappy individuals, overly dramatized photos, people using or prepping substances, and images of drugs, alcohol, pills, and paraphernalia (e.g., needles, syringes, spoons, or lighters).
  - Ensure diversity is depicted in both patient and healthcare provider roles.
  - If including images of substances is necessary, give participants the option to view photos of potentially triggering images (e.g., create a semi-transparent overlay and allow the user to select the image to view it).
- ☐ Avoid stigmatizing imagery of law enforcement and the judicial system
  - Show images with police cars, sirens, police stations, police officers without other individuals in the image, police officers helping in the community in pro-social activities, empty courtrooms, a gavel, or the scales of justice when depicting concepts related to law enforcement and the court system.
  - Avoid images of people being arrested or in handcuffs, jail cells, people behind bars, individuals in prison, and images of white law enforcement officers with those being arrested represented by African American or Hispanic/Latino individuals.
- ☐ Avoid a staged or artificial feeling
  - Choose more natural groupings and settings to avoid appearing to "try too hard" to show diversity.

- ☐ Include depictions of people with disabilities as part of the general public
  - Make sure people with disabilities are depicted in images portraying the general population, not only when communicating about disabilities.
  - Include accurate depictions of people with a disability and their assistive technology. Don't forget that not all disabilities are visible, and there are many types of disabilities and assistive technologies.

Sources: CDC Inclusive Images; PTTC Non-Discriminatory Substance Use Prevention Visual Imagery *(Links not available)*

Inclusive Language Guide

Inclusive Language Guide

Inclusive language fosters a respectful and welcoming environment by acknowledging and respecting diverse identities. As language constantly evolves, it's essential to recognize the power of words and prioritize people. This guide provides the best practices and tips for incorporating inclusive language into our work and daily lives.

Guidelines

1. **Practice Empathy, Humility, and an Open Mindset**
   Consider the perspective and feelings of others when choosing your words. Choose language that is kind, respectful, and inclusive. Mistakes can and will happen.

2. **Continuously Educate Yourself**
   Language related to diversity evolves. To promote inclusivity, staying informed about these changes and regularly updating your language to use respectful, modern terms while avoiding outdated or offensive ones is essential.

3. **Be Specific and Accurate**
   When describing someone's background or identity, be specific and use accurate terms preferred by the individual or group. Researching and using appropriate, current language shows respect and helps accurately represent diverse experiences, contributing to a more inclusive environment.

4. **Promote Inclusivity and Accessibility**
   Inclusive language involves using words and phrases that make everyone feel welcome and valued, regardless of their background, identity, or abilities. It requires being mindful of diversity and avoiding language that could be exclusionary or offensive, ensuring accessibility for all.

5. **Engage in Self-Reflection**
   Reflect on the origins and impact of words and phrases, considering whether more inclusive options exist. Many terms are used without thought, but analyzing their origins can reveal potential harm to others, helping foster more thoughtful and inclusive communication.

6. **Value Cultural Humility**
   Cultural humility is based on a "lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing the power imbalances in the physician-patient dynamic, and developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations." (Advancing Health Equity, CDC). It's important to exercise discretion during the writing process based on the context and the audience. While the goal is to use respectful, culturally sensitive terminology, preserving the integrity of original sources when referencing them is equally essential. Changing terms in quotes, surveys, guidance documents, reference materials, or cultural references may misrepresent or lose original meaning and context. Carefully consider when it is appropriate to adapt language and when it is essential to maintain the original terminology. Provide clarification or framing, if necessary, to maintain accuracy and inclusiveness.

Key Principles and Associated Terms

Key principles	Instead of this …	State this …
Use appropriate, non-stigmatizing substance-related terminology. When discussing addiction or substance use disorders, it's essential to use language that is respectful, accurate, and free from judgment. Using person-first language and avoiding terms that label or blame helps reduce stigma and promotes dignity. Compassionate, substance-related terminology supports more inclusive and effective prevention and treatment efforts. For more information, review the Addiction Language Guide from Shatterproof.	• Abuse, Drug problem, Habit/ Drug habit, Dependence	• Substance use disorder - when referring to DSM conditions • Addiction - for a lay-friendly general term to describe substance use disorder • Misuse - when referencing the specific use of substances or classes of substances that require a distinction between misuse and use (for example, prescription drug misuse or alcohol misuse among adults); misuse should not be used when referencing underage use of alcohol or illicit drugs • Use – when referencing underage use of a substance or illicit drugs (for example, underage alcohol use, underage marijuana use, illicit drug use, heroin use, methamphetamine use) • Used other than prescribed (for prescription medications) • Harmful, hazardous, problematic, or risky use

Key principles	Instead of this …	State this …
Avoid the use of adjectives such as vulnerable, marginalized, and high-risk. These terms can be stigmatizing. These vague terms imply that the condition is inherent to the group rather than the actual causal factors. Use terms and language explaining why and/ or how some groups are more affected. Also, try to use language that explains the effect (i.e., words such as impact and burden are vague and should be explained).	• Vulnerable groups • Marginalized communities • Hard-to-reach communities • Underserved communities • Underprivileged communities • Disadvantaged groups • High-risk groups • At-risk groups • High-burden groups • Disparities • Underrepresented minority • Vulnerable (or disadvantaged)	• Groups that have been economically/ socially marginalized • Groups that have been historically marginalized or made vulnerable; historically marginalized • Groups that are struggling against economic marginalization • Communities that are underserved by/with limited access to (specific service/resource) • Under-resourced communities • Groups experiencing disadvantage because of (reason) • Groups placed at increased risk/put at increased risk of (outcome) • Groups with a higher risk of (outcome) • For scientific publications: Disproportionately affected groups - Groups experiencing disproportionate prevalence/rates of (condition) • Historically and intentionally excluded • Disinvested • Inequities • Historically marginalized, minoritized, or excluded • Oppressed (or made vulnerable or disenfranchised)

Key principles	Instead of this ...	State this ...
Capitalize racial and ethnic identifiers. Capitalizing racial and ethnic identifiers is a critical practice that reflects respect, recognition, and affirmation of individuals' identities. This guideline promotes clarity and equality in language use and underscores the significance of cultural identities.	• black • white • latino/latina • latinx	• Black • White • Latino/Latina • Asian American • Latinx
Use terminology that the members of the community use to describe themselves. Use the language, labels, and identifiers that individuals or groups choose to describe their identity, culture, or experiences. This promotes respect, dignity, and inclusivity. For instance, some people in recovery may prefer to be called "addict," and it's important to honor their choice.	• Indians	• Native peoples • Indigenous peoples • American Indian • Alaska Native
Use person-first language and avoid unintentional blaming. Avoid dehumanizing language by using language that describes people first by using "people" or "person" first when characterizing individuals or groups or describing people with specific conditions. (i.e., personal/group characteristics are secondary and not primary). Be as specific as possible about the group you are referring to. Also consider the context and the audience to determine if language use could lead to negative assumptions, stereotyping, stigmatization, or blame.	• Minority/minorities • Ethnic groups • Racial groups	• People historically marginalized (or minoritized) • BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) • People from (specific racial and ethnic minority group) • People from (specific sexual/gender /linguistic/religious group)
	• The obese or the morbidly obese	• People with obesity; people with severe obesity
	• COVID-19 cases	• Patients or persons with COVID-19
	• The Homeless	• People who are experiencing homelessness

Key principles	Instead of this …	State this …
	• Cases or subjects (when referring to affected persons)	• People experiencing (disease, health outcome or life circumstance) • Patients
	• Disabled person, handicapped	• People with/living with (specific mobility/ cognitive/vision/ hearing disabilities • People who are experiencing (specific condition or disability type)
	• Victims	• Survivors
	• Inmate, ex-con, felon	• Person with a history of incarceration • Returning citizen
	• Illegal Immigrant	• Undocumented immigrant
	• Slave, master/slave	• Enslaved
	• Workers who do not use PPE	• Workers under-resourced with (specific service/resource)
	• People who do not seek healthcare	• People with limited access to (specific service/resource) •
Avoid terms with violent connotations (such as target, tackle, combat, etc.) when referring to people, groups, or communities. Language shapes perceptions and attitudes, and using violent or aggressive terms can perpetuate stigma and foster a sense of hostility toward individuals or communities. Use language that promotes respectful and compassionate communication and avoid these terms when communicating about public health activities.	• Target population • Tackle issues within the community • Aimed at communities • Combat (disease); war against (disease)	• Intended audience, population of focus • Consider the needs of/tailor to the needs of the community • In collaboration with the community • Eliminate (issue/disease)

Key principles	Instead of this …	State this …
Use asset-based or positively positioned language, not deficit-based language. Deficit-based language focuses on problems, barriers, and challenges experienced by an individual or community. This can lead the audience to assume that the individual or community is the problem rather than the external forces of oppression. In contrast, asset-based language focuses on an individual's strengths and achievements while acknowledging the challenges.	• The communities we serve are strong and powerful. • These students have limited English proficiency. • They are suffering from or with substance use disorder	• The communities we partner with are strong and powerful. • My students are bilingual and emerging English learners. • They are working to recover from substance use disorder or are living with substance use disorder
Avoid labels that may or may not align with how a person identifies. Using labels to describe individuals or groups can be sensitive and complex. It's essential to recognize that not everyone identifies with the same terms, and assumptions can lead to misrepresentation and feelings of exclusion. To avoid label, use language that respects and acknowledges people's identities and experiences and allow everyone to see themselves reflected in a term.	• Sex • He/she • Policeman, fireman, chairman, etc. • You guys • Mother/father	• Sex assigned at birth • They/them • Police officer, firefighter, chair/chairperson, etc. • Everyone, folks, folx • Parent/guardian/other caregivers
Avoid stereotypes and microaggressions. Be cautious in making sweeping statements or assumptions about any social group. It is critical to continue to learn language or perspectives that might offend people, cause harm, or be microaggressions toward equity-deserving groups.	• Handicap parking • On the spectrum, mental disability • What are your preferred pronouns • My concern fell on deaf ears • Turn a blind eye • The latest craze • I'm OCD when it comes to office organization	• Accessible parking • Neurodiverse/non-neurotypical/cognitively diverse • What are your pronouns? • My concerns were not addressed • Ignore • The latest fad • I'm precise when it comes to office organization

Key principles	Instead of this …	State this …
Stereotypes can include: • Age • Body Size and Weight • Disability • Neurodiversity • Race, Ethnicity, and Culture • Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity • Socioeconomic Status **Microaggressions can include**: • Culturally appropriate language • Pejorative language • Violent language • Derogatory terms that stem from the context of mental health, such as schizo, paranoid, psycho, etc.		
Avoid cultural appropriation of language. Cultural appropriation of language occurs when words, phrases, or expressions from a specific culture are used without permission, understanding of their significance, or proper respect. This can be harmful, perpetuating stereotypes, diminishing the cultural context, and offending the community it originates from. To avoid this, it's important to acknowledge the roots of the language used, especially when adopting terms tied to cultural identity or tradition. Moreover, context and cultural relevance should guide when it's appropriate to incorporate such language, ensuring its respectful and authentic use.	• Tribe • Spirit animal • Blacklist/Whitelist • Powwow • White paper, whitelist, white label, blacklist, blackball, blackmail • Black American English/African American Vernacular English terms such as "lit," "thug," "Ghetto," "woke," "bae," "on fleek"	• Community or group • Mentor or role model • Blocklist/Allowlist • Meeting or gathering • Avoid white/black adjectives (e.g., white/blacklist can easily be changed to allow/deny list) • Use standard equivalents

Adapted from: "Health Equity Guiding Principles for Unbiased, Inclusive Communication" (CDC).

Terms

Inclusive language is constantly evolving. We must define a few overarching terms to focus on key terms and principles. Important conversations can derail when people use the same term in different ways or interchangeably. Common language and definitions create a narrative that makes communicating our commitment to racial equity more defined.

Stereotype: A conventional, intuitive, and oversimplified opinion, idea, or belief about a person's community or identity. Stereotypes can perpetuate erroneous and hurtful views of people and communities.

Microaggression: "The brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientations, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group." (Source: Western)

Equity: "Equity" refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality. Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and adjust to imbalances. The ongoing process requires us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures. (Source: naceweb.org)

Social Justice: Justice rooted in the idea that all people have access to equal rights, opportunities, and treatment. Examples of social justice are equal pay for equal work, advocating for policies to address racial disparities in healthcare, and fairness in housing and employment.

Social Injustice: Unequal treatment or systemic barriers that result in certain groups being disadvantaged and unable to access opportunities and experience equal rights. Social injustice is often rooted in discrimination and makes it difficult for people to achieve their full potential. Examples of social injustice are the lack of quality education in underprivileged communities, gender inequality, and LGBTQ+ discrimination.

Social Problem: A broader term encompassing any undesirable social condition widely recognized as needing attention and potential solutions. Poverty, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, and climate change are examples of social problems. While a social problem can include social injustices, social injustice is a specific type of social problem focusing on unfair power dynamics and unequal treatment. As mentioned above, a lack of affordable housing is a social problem; redlining practices and lending restrictions are widely considered examples of social injustices.

Race-Conscious: An awareness of how race and racial dynamics influence individuals' lived experiences, societal structures, and interactions. It involves recognizing historical and systemic inequalities that impact different racial groups and considering these factors to foster inclusivity and equity. Race-consciousness seeks to understand and address racial disparities without assuming a "colorblind" perspective, which can overlook the unique challenges faced by marginalized communities.

Inclusive Language Checklist

Creating inclusive written materials ensures that all individuals feel represented and respected. Use the following checklist when creating resources or written content:

☐	Stigmatizing adjectives such as vulnerable, marginalized, and high-risk when are not used when referring to people.
☐	All racial and ethnic identifiers (e.g., Black, White, Latino, etc.) are capitalized.
☐	Groups are referred to with the terminology the members of the community would use to describe themselves (e.g., Native peoples, American Indian, etc.).
☐	Person-first language is used to describe characteristics, behaviors or conditions that people experience (e.g., people with…, people experiencing…, people from…, etc.).
☐	Terms with violent connotations such as target, tackle, and combat are not used in reference to people, groups, and communities.
☐	Asset-based language is consistently used to reflect people's strengths versus deficits.
☐	Inclusive terms are used to describe personal qualities or characteristics so that individuals are not labeled or excluded.
☐	Language does not reflect stereotypes or microaggressions.
☐	Words, phrases, or expressions from a specific culture are not used/appropriate without permission, understanding of their significance, or proper respect.

Tools to Check Inclusivity

- Microsoft Word Inclusivity
- Whole Whale

Resources to Learn More

- https://www.csueastbay.edu/universitycommunications/inclusive-language-guide.html
- https://guides.18f.gov/content-guide/our-style/inclusive-language/
- https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/ama-aamc-equity-guide.pdf
- https://www.nih.gov/nih-style-guide/race-national-origin
- https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guide.pdf
- https://adaa.org/sites/default/files/ADAA%20Inclusive%20Language%20Guidelines%20May%202022.pdf
- https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/reports/Inclusive-Language-Guide.pdf
- https://www.uab.edu/shp/home/images/Documents/dei/Inclusive-Language-Guide.pdf
- https://thediversitymovement.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WW-SayThis-whitepaper_201116-F.pdf

Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility ensures that all users, including those with disabilities, can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with our digital content. The Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act (IITAA) requires Illinois agencies and universities to ensure that their websites, information systems, and information technologies are accessible to people with disabilities. Illinois' Accessibility Standards match the United States' Federal Section 508 Standards and the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA. Prevention First is committed to creating accessible digital materials that comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Accessibility Best Practices

Documents

1. **Structure and Navigation**
    - Use heading styles (H1, H2, etc.) in a logical hierarchy
    - Create and use styles for consistent formatting
    - Include a table of contents for longer documents
    - Use built-in formatting tools for lists, columns, and tables
2. **Text and Fonts**
    - When using sans-serif fonts (like Museo), text should be 12pt or larger
    - Ensure high contrast between text and background
    - Don't rely solely on color to convey information
    - Avoid all caps, italics, or underlining for body text
3. **Images and Media**
    - Include alternative text (alt text) for all images
    - Use simple tables with headers and avoid merged cells
    - Avoid using text boxes or floating objects
    - Don't use flashing content
4. **Links and Navigation**
    - Use descriptive link text instead of "click here" or URLs
    - Ensure links are visually distinct
    - Check the document reading order with a screen reader

Web Content

1. **Structure**
    - Use proper HTML tags for headings, paragraphs, lists, etc.
    - Implement landmarks and ARIA roles when appropriate
    - Ensure a logical tab order for keyboard navigation
    - Make all interactive elements accessible by keyboard

2. **Images and Media**
    - Provide alt text for images
    - Include captions and transcripts for videos
    - Don't auto-play media content
    - Ensure that media controls are accessible
3. **Forms**
    - Label all form fields appropriately
    - Group related form elements
    - Provide clear error messages and instructions
    - Allow sufficient time to complete forms
4. **Design and Layout**
    - Design with a responsive layout in mind
    - Maintain a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for text
    - Make clickable areas large enough (minimum 44 x 44 pixels)
    - Ensure functionality works on different devices and orientations

PDF Accessibility

1. **Creating Accessible PDFs**
    - Start with an accessible source document
    - Use the PDF creator's accessibility tools
    - Tag all content properly
    - Set the document language
2. **Checking Accessibility**
    - Run the accessibility checker in Adobe Acrobat
    - Test with a screen reader
    - Verify reading order
    - Check that all form fields are properly labeled

Testing for Accessibility

Always test digital content for accessibility using:

- Automated accessibility checker tools
- Keyboard-only navigation
- Screen readers (like NVDA, JAWS, or VoiceOver)
- High contrast and zoom settings
- Multiple browsers and devices

For assistance with making digital content accessible, contact the Communications Department.

Material Review Checklist

Please use this checklist to ensure that content and layout meet Prevention First standards and align with our brand. Program managers or Communication Department staff must review materials using this checklist before publication or dissemination.

- ☐ Proofread for content, spelling, grammar, etc., completed by the program manager or designee.
    - o Language used followed the Inclusive Language Guidelines
    - o Resource Development Standards were followed.
    - o Copy editing tools were used (Grammarly, Chicago Manual of Style)
    - o If applicable, the resource was edited by an outside copy editor. (See program director if unknown)
- ☐ Material is in an established brand template, using template components (headers/footers).
- ☐ Consistent typography (font and size).
    - The size of the title and subheading is consistent with and appropriate for the document size (e.g., all program infographics have the same title size, and all tip sheets have the same size). Color is a primary brand color.
    - Body text is typically 11pt. or 12pt./dark grey or black.
    - All hyperlink text is underlined.
    - No single words as the last line of a paragraph or single lines of text at the beginning or end of a column or page.
- ☐ Images included (if necessary)
    - The image selection followed the Inclusive Image Guidelines
    - Follows brand guidelines.
    - The image is of the original scale.
    - Copyright secured.
- ☐ Use brand colors as identified in the Brand Guidelines Document
    - Primary brand colors are used.
    - Secondary colors are only used as accent colors, taking up no more than 10% of the composition.
    - Only one or two secondary colors per design were used.
    - Color contrast meets state requirements. Consider using a contrast checker tool such as WebAIM.

☐ Icons used are from the approved set of Prevention First icons.

- The size of the icon depends on the page size and how it is used. For letter or legal size, icons used for a list of tips (for example) should be .5 to .75 square. The icon should be 1" square if the hyperlink button is used.

☐ Resources/Sources are provided, as necessary (preferably within the last ten years)

- Prevention First adheres to the editorial rules outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style. (Contact the Communications Dept. for assistance as needed.)

☐ The funding statement is included (as necessary)

- Size: 8 pt.-10 pt. (can be smaller than the body of the document, but not so small that it is difficult to see)
- Left justified (up to three lines) or centered on page (up to two lines)

☐ Prevention First logo on the cover/first page.

- Size: Appropriate for the document size; consistent on all documents of similar nature; never smaller than 2.5 in. wide x 0.31 in. height
- Location: top or bottom, never in the middle or sides
- Stands alone; not part of a sentence/statement.

☐ The secondary logo (if applicable) should be on the cover/first page.

- Size: Appropriate for the document; consistent across all documents of a similar nature
- Location: Top or bottom; can be opposite of Prevention First logo (e.g., secondary logo at the top left of the page, Prevention First logo at the bottom right of the page)
- It stands alone; not part of a sentence/statement.

☐ Contact information provided, as appropriate.

- Hyperlink when digital
- Format: first.last@prevention.org and 123.456.7890

☐ Social Media Review

- Be sure all images include your logo or logo mark (for example, the star mark)
- Reference our Inclusive Language and Inclusive Image guidance when creating posts.
- Reach out to Communications for assistance with developing a social media package aligned with a national campaign (e.g., Drug Take Back Day, National Prevention Week, etc.).

☐ Translation into Spanish (materials or social media)

- Please allow time to translate the content into Spanish if the resource is intended for a general audience. Provide the final (no more edits) English version (in Word) to Communications for translation. Once complete, Communications will apply the same template as the English version for final approval.