



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
 - o Images should support the key points/concepts conveyed in the accompanying written text.
 - o Choose more literal images (vs abstract or metaphorical).
 - o Ensure communication products don't rely on images as the main source of guidance.
2. Who the intended audience is
 - o The audience should be able to see themselves and their environment reflected in the images.
 - o The audience should be able to relate to the image.
3. How the image will be used (social media post, web page, print material)
 - o 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
 - o 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
 - o Limit the use of traditional or cultural dress in images unless appropriate to the audience and use.
- ☐ Include appropriate settings
 - o 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*)