Avoiding Biased Language in APA Style

See pages 70-77 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) for more information on reducing bias in your writing style.

A. Gender
   a. Avoid the generic “he” to refer to both men and women. Use “he or she” sparingly because of its awkwardness when used repeatedly.

   AVOID: When a student responds to an e-mail, he should make sure to write clearly.
   USE: *The individual*
   When a student responds to an e-mail, *the individual* should make sure to write clearly.
   USE: Plural forms such as *they* and *their*
   When *students* respond to e-mails, *they* should make sure to write clearly.
   OR: Drop pronouns entirely
   When students respond to e-mails, writing clearly is important.

B. Sexual Orientation:
   a. Use *lesbian*, *gay man*, *bisexual man*, and *bisexual woman* instead of *homosexual* to allow for increased specificity.

C. Racial and Ethnic Identity
   a. Capitalize terms such as *Black* and *White*.
   b. Do not hyphenate terms such as *African American* or *Asian American*.
   c. Use terms that indicate specific country of origin whenever possible instead of more generalizing terms. For example, use *Cuban* or *Chinese* instead of *Hispanic* or *Asian*.
   d. Use terms like *American Indian*, *Native American*, or *Native North American*. When possible, use the specific names of the tribes.

D. Disabilities
   a. Use people-first language:
      o Instead of a *disabled person*, say *a person with a disability*.
      o Instead of calling someone *autistic*, say *a person with autism*.
   b. Avoid the following: *crippled, retarded, invalid, special, handi-capable*.

E. Age
   a. Use *girl* or *boy* when referring to children under the age of 12.
   b. Use *young woman, young man, female adolescent*, or *male adolescent* when referring to people between 13-17 years of age.
   c. Use *women* or *men* when referring to individuals over the age of 18.
   d. Use *older adults* instead of the *elderly* or *senior*.

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