

Offensive Language Awareness and Alternatives

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Offensive Word/Phrase	Have I heard this? Y/N	Have I said this? Y/N	Why should I avoid using this word?	Reflection on this explanation	Suggestions for replacement
Dwarf / Midget			Dwarfism is a medical or genetic condition. When used in a nonmedical sense, it can be considered offensive. The term midget was used in the past to describe an unusually short person. It is now considered derogatory		
Ghetto			Has a long history, but eventually came to indicate any segregated nonWhite urban neighborhood.		
Handicapped / Disabled / Crippled			These terms generalize the population. They also imply that people with disabilities are not capable.		
“That’s gay” “You’re gay”			Heterosexual / Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual / Pansexual / Queer are all forms of sexuality. Using the term “gay” to describe someone or something is derogatory to people who identify as gay.		
Lame / Retarded / Stupid / Slow			Originally referring to mental illness or developmental disability and used as an insult.		
Normal Person			Implies that “other” people (often people of color or people with disabilities, mental illness, or disease) are not whole or regular people; all humans deserve the respect of being normal		No replacement as it is never appropriate to use this phrase to describe a person
“No homo”			No homo is an extremely offensive, anti-gay expression. People often say “no homo” to emphasize their sexual orientation after saying something complimentary, affectionate, or otherwise positive to another person of the same sex that they worry could be interpreted as romantic or sexual.		No replacement as it is never appropriate to use this phrase.

