Inclusive language
Tip Sheet

Gender-inclusive language is respectful communication that acknowledges diversity in all its forms and brings everyone into the conversation. Creating a gender-inclusive work environment is important for creating a culture where everyone is seen, heard, and valued.

North Cowichan is committed to using inclusive language in all forms of communication. This includes, but is not limited to, talking in meetings, any online communication such as email, displays, posters, and reports.

All communication at North Cowichan needs to respect and honour the personal identity of citizens, staff, elected officials, and visitors.

See the table below for tips on how to make North Cowichan a gender-inclusive work environment.

Category	From	To	Reasoning
Binary language	"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen." "Hey guys."	"Good morning team." "Hey folks."	Moving away from binary language ensures inclusivity of all genders. Not everyone identifies as male or female.
Gender stereotypes *the use of 'he' is appropriate here because this addresses stereotypes, not pronoun use.	"Policeman, Fireman, Chairman, Foreman." "That's surprising he got that job, it's more of a woman's line of work." "Where's the Bossman around here?"	"Police Officer, Firefighter, Chair (or Chairperson), Foreperson." "That's great he* got the job. I'm sure he will do an amazing job." "Can I speak to the person in-charge please?"	When we use gender stereotypes, we reinforce beliefs about all genders and can exclude individuals from the conversation. We can change this by removing gender from situations and being aware of the language we're using.
Gender inclusivity	"Ms, Mr, Mrs"	"Hi (insert first name)." "Mx"	Avoid assumptions about a person's identity or title. Mx is a gender-neutral title of courtesy.
Pronoun Use	"She is doing a good job, that new co-op student." "The Planning Manager emailed his thoughts." "What are your pronouns?"	"Tammy, the new co-op student is doing a great job." "The Planning Manager emailed their thoughts." "My pronouns are (e.g., he/him) what are yours?"	Avoid using "he" or "she" when referring to a generalized individual. Replace with the person's name or use "they," "them," or "their." Another option is to introduce yourself with your pronouns and ask for them for theirs.