

Coded Language

Coded Words	Deeper Meaning	Alternatives
Urban/Inner City	Code for people of color, usually Black people.	State explicitly who you're talking about (e.g. People of color, low-income people, etc.)
Ethnic	Others and exoticizes people of color; A way of upholding systems of oppression; Anyone or anything that is different from white, mainstream culture. Implies that white is the standard. In reality, all people have an ethnicity (which is not the same as race or nationality).	State explicitly what/who you're talking about (e.g. People of color; Instead of saying, "ethnic food," be specific: "Thai food, French food").
Gays / The Gays	Not a monolithic group, Not inclusive of the entire LGBTQ community; "The gays" is othering and dehumanizing.	Be explicit about who you're talking about (e.g. Bisexual women, transgender men, etc.); Never use "The" before any group of people.

<p>At-Risk/Risky Behavior</p>	<p>Person/group is naturally prone to negative behaviors and outcomes. Something is inherently flawed/dangerous about this person or group of people.</p>	<p>Causes of risky behavior/environments</p>
<p>Illegal/Illegal Alien</p>	<p>No human is illegal, or an alien. Period. Term used to incite fear of immigrants and refugees. People of color are not welcome here. Dehumanizing and criminalizing.</p>	<p>Undocumented immigrants</p>
<p>Targeted Populations</p>	<p>Violent and militaristic</p>	<p>Priority Communities</p>
<p>Diversity</p>	<p>Often a code word for people of color; When we don't want to talk about race. Diversity means variety.</p>	<p>Be explicit about who you're talking about. If your company wants to hire, retain, and promote more people of color, say that, and also think about why, and how new hires will feel welcome.</p>