



## You Belong Here Training Packet

### You Belong Here

Urbana Park District (UPD) is committed to creating and promoting inclusion across all public spaces, places, facilities, and programs that the district manages. Through Urbana Park District's You Belong Here Inclusion Strategy, we welcome and support recreation experiences for everyone, while encouraging an inclusive and responsive staff culture. Celebrating inclusion regardless of age, ethnicity, culture, income, ability, lifestyle, interests—everyone and anyone belongs here!

Provided in this document are resources to support supervisors to ensure that all staff have the tools they need to carry out the Urbana Park District's You Belong Here culture. Many part-time and seasonal staff are front-line employees of the district's services and it is important for them to provide quality customer service to all visitors. Supervisors should use this resource to facilitate part-time staff training.

This document is dynamic and will evolve in order to stay accurate and relevant. This resource was developed by members of the You Belong Here Matrix Team using evidence-based research and information. The information provided is applicable to all sectors of Urbana Park District. It is encouraged and important for full-time staff to build on this foundation to develop a document specific to each department's facility, services, and staff.

#### **Urbana-Champaign Community**

#### **Inclusive Language**

#### **Cultural Awareness**

#### **Accessibility**

#### **Sensory and Emotion Processing**

## Urbana-Champaign Community

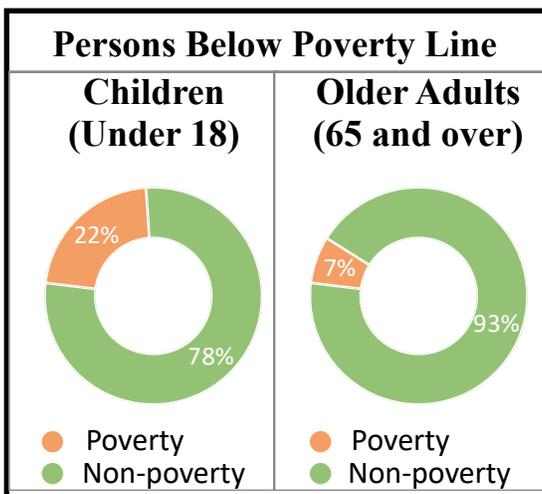
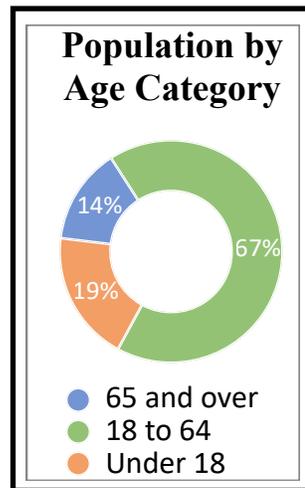
Urbana-Champaign is home to many people; some who are here for a lifetime, others for just a chapter of their lives. The University of Illinois has the highest number of international students of all public universities in the U.S., with students who come from more than 115 countries.

Urbana-Champaign's community has created a melting-pot culture where you can find an abundance of international markets and cuisine, cultural centers, and diverse houses of worship. Community Choices, New American Welcoming Center, and Cunningham Township are just some of the many agencies and organizations in place to support all Urbana residents.

The Urbana Park District plays a valuable role in the community through programs, events, parks and so much more. Below is a snapshot of Urbana's diversity and uniqueness using data from U.S. Census Bureau.

Race and Ethnicity	Percentage
White	53.7%
Black or African American	16.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%
Asian	18.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
Additional Underrepresented Groups	0.4%
Two or More Races	3.1%
Hispanic	7.1%

\*Hispanic includes respondents of any race. Other categories are non-Hispanic.



Types of Disabilities	Percentage
Independent living difficulty	3.2%
Self-care difficulty	1.0%
Ambulatory difficulty	3.6%
Cognitive difficulty	3.1%
Vision difficulty	1.3%
Hearing difficulty	1.9%

You belong here.

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## Inclusive Language

Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities. Intentional language use can avoid habits that may unintentionally lead to marginalization, offense, misrepresentation, or perpetuation of stereotypes. How language is used, especially by governments and education systems, can deeply impact perceptions of race, gender, and cultures (Linguistic Society of America, 2016).

Urbana Park District employees are expected to use language that:

- includes rather than excludes
- acknowledges, accepts and celebrates differences, and
- is welcoming to everyone.

### Person-First & Ability Inclusive Language

About one in four US adults has a disability, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual. Take a “person-first” approach to focus on the person, not their condition. It’s important to note that some individuals with disabilities may prefer “identity-first” language, meaning their disability is part of their identity. When in doubt, ask! (Northwestern: The Family Institute, 2019)

Try	Instead of using
Person with a disability	Disabled person, handicapped, crippled, challenged
Person who uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair-bound
They have a cognitive delay	They are mentally retarded
They have a mental health condition	They are mentally ill
Brain injury	Brain damaged
They need/they use	They have a problem with
People without disabilities	Normal, healthy, typical
He has Down syndrome	He’s Down’s
Communicates with their eyes/device/etc	Is non-verbal
Accessible parking, restroom, boardwalk, etc.	Handicapped parking, restroom, boardwalk, etc.

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## Demographic and Race Inclusive Language

Do not specify race or demographics unless there is relevance. If so, ask how someone prefers to be identified.

Try	Instead of using
People, person of color, multiracial	Ethnic, Urban
Refugee, New American	Alien, foreigner, “those people”
Native American, Indigenous person	Indian
Adults, active adults, older adults, 50 & better	The elderly, old person
Asian (describing the customs, people, and culture of a particular area of Asia; be specific when possible)	Oriental

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## Family Inclusive Language

Family Inclusive Language specifically aims to avoid making assumptions about the identities of individuals or their relationships to one another.

Language typically used to describe families can inadvertently leave out single-parent, adoptive, queer, multiracial, blended, and multi-generational families. Family Inclusive Language is more accurate and respectful (Middleton, 2014).

Try	Instead of using
Grownup, adult, caregiver	Parents, mom, dad
Children	Son, daughter
Don't say anything... do not assume	Family resemblance
Family members	Members of a household
Sibling	Brother, sister

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## Gender Inclusive Language

Commonly used nouns and phrases often include the word “man” or reference men, which sends a message of exclusivity. These words are easy to spot and replace with more neutral language. Often, masculine nouns and pronouns are used to refer to someone whose gender is unclear or variable, or to groups that contain people who are not ALL men (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2020).

Try	Instead of using
Children, friends, kiddos	Hey guys, girls and boys..
Humankind	Mankind
Police officer, salesperson, fire fighter...	Police man, salesman, fireman...

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## Restroom Usage

Urbana Park District welcomes visitors to use the restroom that best aligns with their gender identity. Allow individuals, children included, to self-identify which restroom they feel comfortable using.

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## Language Barriers

Language barriers prevent people from sharing their ideas, thoughts, feelings, experiences, information, expectations, give feedback or communicate effectively.

Here are some solutions to reduce or eliminate language barriers:

- Be respectful. Language barriers can be frustrating.
- Use short, simple sentences; avoid using difficult words, complex sentences, and unnecessary information.
- Choose simple, clear and accurate words and phrases; avoid using vague, ambiguous, or confusing words, technical terms or slang.
- Use verbal and non-verbal messages appropriately; if possible use visual methods such as pictures, diagrams, photos, graphics, and charts to help the receiver understand what the sender is trying to convey.
- Frequently check for understanding by asking for feedback; politely ask for clarification when needed to avoid any assumptions.
- Utilize technology such as Google Translate on a smart phone or iPad (Buarqoub, 2019).

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## Cultural Awareness

The National Center for Cultural Competence defines cultural awareness as being cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among and between cultural groups.

### Strategies for Cultural Sensitivity

- Get to know participants and campers.
- Include a variety of cultural reference points that are outside of your own lived experience.
- Be aware of the language that may potentially lead to exclusion.
- Be aware of and responsive to the portrayal of certain groups in content and materials.
- Encourage curiosity.
- Be open to reactions and give serious consideration to viewpoints of participants.
- Be aware of different discourses that are spoken in the homes of individuals; adoption of speaking Standard Formal English may challenge aspects of their identity (Briggs).

Be mindful of non-visible cultural differences such as:

- Perceptions of time, timeliness, on-time
- Definitions of professional vs. non-professional
- The role of food, hospitality, breaking bread
- Fluidity or rigidity of gender roles, gender separation
- Permissive or directed parenting styles
- Marked differences in body language, and/or levels of physical contact, such as the significance or lack of eye contact
- Customs around audience behavior, length of performance, or whether it is appropriate to change seats during a show, or eat food
- Flat vs steep hierarchy
  - A flat hierarchy indicates that power is shared and widely dispersed and that society members do not accept situations where power is distributed unequally
  - A steep hierarchy indicates that a society accepts an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power, and that people understand “their place” in the system (Hofstede)

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## Names

Learning to pronounce a participant's name correctly is not just a common courtesy. It is also an important effort in creating an inclusive environment- one that emphasizes psychological safety and belonging.

Here are some strategies:

- Read a roster to yourself (out loud) before meeting your participants. Note potential difficulties.
- If there are recurring participants, take attendance on the first day in a consistent way with each participant, even the ones with seemingly easy names. Use a standard question such as, "What do you like to be called?"
- Write phonetic spellings down when you need to. When you get to a name that might be difficult, ask the individual to say it.
- Don't joke. Don't rush. If you need to ask the individual for more help, do it in private.
- If you make a mistake, apologize but don't make an excuse.

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## Personal Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that refers to either the people talking (I or you) or someone or something that is being talked about (she, it, them, and this). Gender pronouns (he/she/they/ze etc.) specifically refer to people that you are talking about. Often, when speaking about someone in the third person, these pronouns have a gender implied -- such as "he" to refer to a man/boy or "she" to refer to a woman/girl. These associations are not always accurate or helpful.

Sometimes people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on the person's appearance, name, or pitch of voice. These assumptions aren't always correct, and the act of making an assumption (even if correct) sends a potentially harmful message -- that people have to look or sound a certain way to demonstrate the gender that they are or are not (mypronouns.org).

Here are some other tips to consider when using gender pronouns:

- **Gender-Neutral Language-** Use them/they pronouns when talking about an individual to avoid assumptions. See the Gender Inclusive Language section on Page 5.
- **Model-** If you are comfortable, state your personal pronouns while introducing yourself, on your email signature, or Zoom account to create a safe space for others to share.
- **Practice-** Using gender pronouns frequently can help make it part of your normal day-to-day interactions. Consider using pronouns during introductions or ice-breaker activities.
- **Apologize-** Mistakes happen. If you make a mistake when using gender pronouns, simply apologize and correct yourself.
- There are dozens of pronouns and terms people use to describe themselves. The best piece of advice is to ask and simply call people what they want to be called. (NRPA, 2019)

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## Accessibility

Accessibility, in this context, is defined as equal access to programs and physical environments. Urbana Park District has a cooperative agreement with Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation to ensure that Urbana-Champaign residents with specific needs have equal access and opportunities in recreation. CUSR supports inclusive recreational experiences in park district programs. When registering for a program, participants can request program accommodations. Individuals utilizing inclusion services participate in all types of park district programs and events. These individuals should be treated the same as all other participants unless you are advised otherwise by CUSR inclusion staff.

Always be cognizant of program and event locations. Be certain that participants are able to travel to and from the program/event site. If outdoors, stay near paved surfaces and avoid rough terrain. In an indoor setting, ensure that the program location in that facility is easily accessible for everyone

*For Example:*

- Locate a public event/program near a bus stop and/or within walking distance of desired participants.
- Pick-up locations for day camps are accessible to caregivers of all ages and abilities.

People by law have the right to request modification. The Urbana Park District strives to facilitate programs and events for people of all abilities. Staff must be mindful and accommodating to participants' specific needs. If requested, communicate with the individual about what specific modifications they need.

Common accommodations may include, but are not limited to large printed materials, timely translation services, wheelchair access, hearing and visual accommodations, sensory sensitivities adjustment, and providing adapted instruction to participants with limited mobility.

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## Sensory and Emotion Processing

**Sensory processing** refers to the mechanism of how we feel. It is how we use what we sense to understand the world around us, and it underpins every aspect of human functioning. Everyone processes sensation, and symptoms of sensory processing disorders and challenges vary greatly depending on the individual. Program and event environments through the Urbana Park District are multidimensional. The Urbana Park District staff strives to accommodate participants with any of the following sensory sensitivities.

- **Sound-** Sudden or loud noises can be upsetting.
  - Individuals with autism may respond by covering their ears or making repetitive noises to cover the sound.
  - Some programs and events may have music too loud for some people.
- **Touch-** Individuals can be highly sensitive to any touch or certain textures.
  - Larger, shoulder-to-shoulder crowds can create anxiety.
  - Individuals may find it easier to focus if given something to fidget with.
- **Smell-** Individuals with smell sensitivities can be acutely aware of strong odors in their environment.
  - Be aware of air fresheners, perfumes, or the smell of cleaning products.
- **Taste-** Some individuals may be averse to certain foods or follow a specific diet
  - Offer a variety of options for camp snacks or events food options.
- **Sight-** The lack of or abundance of certain lighting in a space can be difficult.
  - Fluorescent lighting can be especially harsh.

**Emotional Processing** is how individuals cope with stressful events. Everyone experiences anger, fear, sadness, anxiety and depression, but those experiences are temporary for the majority of people. Emotional processing happens when an individual experiences an emotionally distressing event and is (or isn't) able to cope with those experiences over time. (Emotional Processing: Definition & Theory)

If someone is having difficulty processing their emotions, remember: remain calm, be respectful and listen. Know when you need assistance - Reach out to a supervisor or coworker if you notice the situation escalating.

### Tips for Supporting Positive Behavior & Recognizing Efforts

- Verbal praise- Telling someone specifically what behavior you like sparks interest and motivation.
- Physical praise- High five, fist bump, smile, thumbs-up, dance party, etc.
- Reward incentives- Gold star, choice of next activity, stickers, etc.

## Key Terms and Acronyms

<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>CUSR</b>	Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	An acronym used for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. The plus sign is used to include individuals who are not listed (pansexual, agender, bigender, two-spirit, etc.) While there are other forms of this term in use, this document uses LGBTQ+ without intending to exclude any individuals.
<b>UPD</b>	Urbana Park District
<b>UPDAC</b>	Urbana Park District Advisory Committee
<b>YBH</b>	You Belong Here
<b>Culture</b>	The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of heritage, religious, or social group
<b>Cultural Awareness</b>	Being cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among and between cultural groups.
<b>Disability</b>	A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual
<b>Diversity</b>	The condition of having or being composed of differing elements; the inclusion of of people of different races, cultures, etc. in a group or organization
<b>Emotional Processing</b>	The ability to process stressful life events and move past them.
<b>Equity</b>	The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.
<b>Gender Identity</b>	One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
<b>Gender Neutral</b>	Not referring to either sex, but to people in general

<b>Inclusion</b>	Bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources
<b>Non-Binary</b>	An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside of these categories.
<b>Race</b>	Any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of shared ancestry.
<b>Sensory Processing</b>	Refers to the mechanism of how we feel. It is how we use what we sense to make sense of the world around us, and it underpins every aspect of human functioning.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	A person's sexual identity or self-identification as bisexual, straight, gay, pansexual, etc.
<b>Transgender</b>	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Resources

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