



JUST ASK: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR MIDWIVES AND BIRTH WORKERS



WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Inclusive language is a way of acknowledging and respecting the diversity of peoples' bodies, genders and relationships. As midwives and birth workers, using inclusive language supports people to feel safe within the health system, and acknowledges who they are. Using inclusive language doesn't take away from women and women's experiences, it includes women and embraces LGBTQ+ rainbow families experiences.

'Inclusive language is so important for LGBTQ+ people, particularly during pregnancy and birth. We often feel invisible or overlooked and that's not good for parents or babies. Getting language right can make such a difference for a family expecting a baby and can set them up with a positive start to their parenting journey'

[RAINBOW FAMILIES PARENT]



COMMONLY USED TERMS

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE INCLUSIVE

Dad/Father/Husband

Some people who choose to have babies aren't in heterosexual relationships. Lesbian couples, single people, people in polyamorous relationships all have babies, the list goes on. More inclusive terms include partner, mother, non-birthing mother, parent. Don't assume, just ask.

Mother/Mum

Not all people who give birth will identify as a mother. Most will, but those who don't may prefer to be called Parent/ Birth parent/Father/ Pregnant person. Trans and non-binary people give birth too. Don't assume, just ask.

Body talk

Body talk comes up all the time in midwifery – when educating parents, during labour and birth, supporting parents and babies postnatally. Some people may use different terms for their anatomy. A good strategy is to follow people's lead when they talk about their own body. For example some people may prefer the term *chest-feeding* over *breastfeeding*. Don't assume, just ask if you're unsure.

She/Her

Not everyone who is pregnant identifies as a woman or uses she/her pronouns. Don't assume, just ask.

This resource was produced as a collaboration between Midwives Connecting Community, and Rainbow Families. For more information, contact midwivescc@gmail.com



This poster was produced on the unceded lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We pay our respects to Gadigal elders past and present.



SCAN to find out more



WHY DO WE USE PRONOUNS?

Using pronouns makes people feel safe and is a part of providing women and person centred care. We use pronouns so we don't have to repeat a person's name over and over again in a sentence. For example, this sounds very clunky:

Sam is twenty three weeks pregnant and Sam is coming in for Sam's antenatal appointment.

Pronouns are the words we can use to talk about a person when we're not using their name. Common examples: *he/him, she/her, they/them*

WHAT ARE YOUR PRONOUNS?

CAN YOU ALWAYS TELL SOMEONE'S PRONOUNS BASED ON THEIR APPEARANCE?

Don't assume – just ask. Asking what someone's pronouns are might feel weird at first, but you get used to it. A good way to start is to offer your own.

"It's nice to meet you. I'm Sam, and I use she/her pronouns, what pronouns do you use?"

WHAT IF I MESS UP SOMEONE'S PRONOUNS?

No one gets it right 100% of the time. Briefly apologise, correct yourself, and move on. The important thing is to keep trying.

NOT SURE HOW TO ASK?

Try this:

"What do you want to call yourself when baby is born?"

"How do you talk about your body?"