

## 1.4 Readiness to learn Inclusive language

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What	Exploring the heteronormative nature of Language
Purpose	To help students understand that the use of language and conversation and exclude LGBT+ older people.
Target group	Teachers and trainers in vocational education and their students
Level	Level 2-3-4 in vocational education.
Execution	Extra support from the teacher might be necessary depending on the ability of the students to work independently
Sources	EU glossary ( <a href="#">link</a> ) , GIRES terminology UK ( <a href="#">link</a> ), LGBT 101 ( <a href="#">link</a> ) , GSA Dutch begrippenlijst ( <a href="#">link</a> )

### Introduction

The language we use to describe people's identity, their gender and sexuality is very important and needs to be carefully considered.

The teacher will need to explain to the class that the choice of language will frame the encounter and give clues to the value base of the person talking Language is ever evolving and unfortunately for discriminated groups, language that at one stage was neutral or positive can become negative, if constantly used in a derogatory way. Words that were negative in some circumstances can become positive as reclaimed by the groups themselves e.g. dyke Therefore, teachers and students need to constantly check out what is the most sensitive and appropriate language to use. Words may have different connotations to different generations or indeed to individuals. Practitioners and teachers should always check out with the individual what terms they wish to be used in association with them

The teacher will need to explain that the learners will need to consider language used throughout and in all the different media that they use to communicate e.g. Face to face/ questionnaire/ email. – They will need to constantly give opportunities for people to “come out” as they may not feel comfortable to do so in the first instance.– not just a one off opportunity. One of the ways we can do this is by using gender neutral and relationship neutral language. The teacher will explain that this is a skill that they will need to develop and that this is what this session is about.

Many learners may feel awkward that they do not know the right terminology and a session on introducing different terms will both introduce concepts that some of your students may be unaware of and introduce helpful language. It is also important to mention that language can change so it is important to be ready to adapt our language as new words become more suitable

The resources mentioned above could be used as either preparation for class with a short discussion in class to check that everyone has understood or could be used in class with an accompanying discussion checking out that everyone has understood. Give learners opportunities to ask questions.

### Activity 1

The following exercise could be used in class to introduce the idea that the way we use language can build relationships between professional and service users and promote trust or can shut down conversations by reinforcing heteronormative ideas. Ask the class to read the two scenarios and then to comment on which scenario seemed to build up the relationship positively and to explain why.

#### Conversation in a residential care institution - version A(wful)

- Carer Stanley: Good morning, I understand that you live alone. Did your wife die or were you never married?
- Client Bas: Uh no, I've never been married.
- Carer Stanley: So you preferred to be on your own, then? Didn't you miss having children?
- Client Bas: No.

### Conversation in a residential care institution - version B(etter)

- Carer Stanley: 'Hello, I'm Stanley. I am pleased to meet you. Is it OK if I ask you a few questions to get to know you better and to see how best I can help you?'
- Client Bas: Certainly.
- Carer . Your room looks comfortable. Are you settling alright?'
- Client Bas: yes thank-you.
- Carer: Am I right in thinking that you live alone here at the moment? I was wondering if there Is there anyone important in your life who perhaps does not live with you but that you are close to?'
- Client Bas: 'Well, Yes, there was someone very important to me, but he died five years ago'.
- Stanley: 'And did you used to live with him?'
- Bas: 'Yes, he came to live with me when his children had left home. We were very happy. I miss him. Very much now. He was everything to me. I still see his children, of course. I think of them as my own, really. Their children call me Grandfather. They come to see me when they can"'.

Bring out the importance of putting questions in a neutral way that do not assume heteronormative answers and relationships

Ask the learners to talk about how comfortable they would be to ask questions in a neutral way or to ask the person by which gender they wish to be referred, Get them to practice asking these questions with each other. Ask the class how they might follow on from information given in scenario B. (this could be pair work)

### Activity 2

Watch the following clip from a film starring Vanessa Redgrave playing an older woman whose lesbian partner dies suddenly. It is set in the 1960's. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNAK9pJbS9M>

Ask the class to watch the film clip and note down the following:

1. How would they describe the relationship between the two women?
2. What happens when the partner is rushed to hospital?
3. What support does surviving partner get at the hospital and how is their relationship respected and recognised?
4. How could the services have been improved to support the woman?
5. If they were the nurse on duty what could they say to the woman to recognise the loss and to validate their relationship
6. When a same sex partner dies/needs health services today in their country, would the response be different to the film?
7. If there has been a change, what do they think has caused the change?

### Activity 3

Follow up on activity 2. Divide the learners into groups of three to do a role play. Ask one of the learners to role play being the professional who has first become aware that the woman has just lost her female partner; one learner will play the woman, and one will act as an observer to feedback after the role play, what skills they noticed that allowed the grieving woman to feel more comfortable. The professionals' role is to acknowledge the loss and to provide an empathic service. Get them to consider what phrases sounds empathic. Get them to consider their body language and to use ideas such as Egan's (2018) SOLER – ( Sitting in an open stance, leaning very slightly forward, with friendly eye contact in a relaxed position) Ask the learners to swap roles. After a few minutes swap roles again until each person has had a go at all three roles. Ask them to talk about how it felt to be in their particular role and what they learned by doing this exercise.