

On-the-Go Checklist

Framing and Language

Ideas for choosing language that promotes inclusivity and reduces prejudice and discrimination.

We encourage all people in Aotearoa to explore the story behind the headlines and delve into the different journeys we all go through in life.

Language

- ☐ **Use Person-First Language:** Avoid labelling someone by their diagnosis. If relevant, say they are 'living with', 'experiencing', or 'have a diagnosis of' a condition
- ☐ **Describe Distress Respectfully:** Say someone is 'in distress' or 'showing signs of distress'. Avoid words like 'crazed' or 'deranged'
- ☐ **Use Diagnoses Appropriately:** Only use diagnostic terms for actual diagnoses. Use other adjectives for unrelated topics
- ☐ **Acknowledge Māori and Diverse Experiences:** Respect different worldviews on mental distress, especially in te ao Māori. Be mindful that some people face multiple layers of discrimination
- ☐ **Use Accurate Terminology:** Name services and professionals correctly. This helps avoid stigma and encourages help-seeking
- ☐ **Report Responsibly on Violence:** Be careful linking mental illness with violence. Doing so can increase public fear and stigma
- ☐ **Be Safe and Respectful About Inpatient Services:** People in mental health wards are patients, and are free to leave at any time. Avoid language like 'escaped'

Framing Mental Distress

Best practices can help tāngata whaiora in recovery to seek help and reinforces that mental distress is not forever.

- ☐ **Share Stories of Hope and Recovery:** Highlight recovery journeys and wellbeing
- ☐ **Highlight People, Not Diagnoses:** Focus on the person and their attributes, rather than their diagnosis or symptoms. Consider that experiences of mental distress can build resilience, empathy and strength
- ☐ **Address Stigma and Discrimination:** Include solutions for reducing stigma and discrimination toward tāngata whaiora
- ☐ **Use Appropriate Language and Framing:** Choose a heading that reflects respectful language
- ☐ **Amplify Lived Experience:** Include the views, opinions and experiences of tāngata whaiora
- ☐ **Be Culturally Inclusive:** Include cultural perspectives on mental distress where relevant
- ☐ **Think Critically About Relevance:** Only mention diagnoses when necessary to avoid harmful links to crime

