

# Total Produce

Let's Grow Together

stronger

How to Talk About...

Mental Health, Disability and Neurodiversity

## 'How do I talk about.....' Guide Mental Health, Disability and Neurodiversity

As we continue our work on enhancing our inclusive culture and overall working environment that enables our people to come to work, feeling comfortable and confident to be their true selves, we recognise that we all need support and guidance across all areas of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) to ensure we all feel included and valued irrespective and, indeed because of, our differences.

Within Total Produce UK and Ireland when we talk about D&I, we include Mental Health. Earlier in the year Total Produce UK and Ireland supported World Wellbeing Week and encouraged all employees to take part in various events in order to raise awareness and understanding with regard to employee mental health and wellbeing. Both countries also launched their new Mental Health and Wellbeing policy.

We all know the words we use can have a powerful impact on our conversations with our colleagues and better understanding of the terminology and its usage will help us all to respect each other regardless of our make up. Sunday 10 October 2021 is World Mental Health Day and we have developed a 'How do I talk about Guide' for Mental Health, we have also included Disability and Neurodiversity. The guide is to support us all when working with and having conversations with colleagues regarding these particular areas.

Please take the time to raise your awareness by reading the guide and periodically reviewing it to refresh your memory. In the spirit of learning, please share your comments and any suggested additions to the guide so that we can continue to develop our language and approach in this area.

To share your views please talk to a member of the Group HR or H&S team in either country or email [wellbeing@totalproduce.com](mailto:wellbeing@totalproduce.com).

Thank you for taking the time to enhance your overall D&I knowledge and in particular your understanding in relation to Mental Health, Disability and Neurodiversity. If you need any support or guidance please talk to your manager, the Group HR or H&S team.

Kind regards  
The Wellbeing Team  
**Total Produce UK and Ireland**

## How do I talk about..... Mental Health, Disability and Neurodiversity

### Remember:

- We all have unique strengths, skills and abilities
- We are all different to each other
- It is important to listen to each other and to build empathy for experiences we do not understand
- Don't judge others, learn from them
- Avoid justifying other people's behaviours
- Avoid trying to convince people about your personal views
- Try your best to use the appropriate terminology
- Think before you speak, how will your questions/conversation make the person feel
- Ask yourself why you are asking the question/what you will do with the information
- Be prepared to answer the same questions you ask others
- Call out discriminatory behaviour and constructively challenge conscious and unconscious bias

**Always be appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to how people feel. We want all employees to feel included and valued irrespective and, indeed because, of their differences.**

TERMINOLOGY	INFORMATION	EXAMPLES	USAGE/AVOIDANCE
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>	<p>Everyone has mental health, just like we all have physical health; it isn't like an on/off switch.</p> <p>There are different degrees of health. People range from great or good health to so-so health to poor health to illness or disability. This applies to physical and mental health.</p>	<p>When we talk about mental health, we're talking about our mental well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotions</li> <li>• Thoughts</li> <li>• Feelings</li> <li>• Ability to solve problems and overcome difficulties</li> <li>• Social connections</li> <li>• Understanding the world around us</li> </ul>	<p>Respect the difference between:</p> <p>An emotion (sad/happy) And Mental ill health (depression, dementia)</p>
<b>MENTAL ILL HEALTH</b>	<p>Mental ill health is an illness that affects the way people think, feel, behave, or interact with others.</p> <p>There are many different mental health illnesses, and they have different symptoms that impact people's lives in different ways.</p> <p>A mental health condition is considered a disability if it has a long-term effect on normal day-to-day activity. This is defined under the Equality Act 2010. A condition is "long term" if it lasts, or is likely to last, 12 months.</p>	<p>Examples of mental ill health (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Bipolar disorder</li> <li>• Obsessive compulsive disorder</li> <li>• Psychosis</li> </ul>	<p><b>Avoid</b> phrases like 'suffer from', which denotes pity and can mischaracterise how someone is managing their illness.</p> <p><b>Avoid</b> the phrase 'battling with', fighting language creates a perception of "winners" versus "losers" and oversimplifies a person's experience. Is someone not "fighting hard enough" if they don't get well?</p> <p><b>Avoid saying:</b> "She's psychotic" "She suffers from "psychosis" "She's battling "psychosis"</p> <p><b>Instead, say:</b> "She has psychosis".</p> <p><b>Avoid</b> generalisations like "He is mentally ill." Mental illness is OK to use as a general term, but specific conditions should be used, when possible, for example, "He has bipolar disorder".</p> <p><b>Avoid</b> the term 'the mentally ill'. <b>Avoid</b> using the word 'commit' when referring to suicide – 'commit' can carry a criminal or negative moral meaning.</p>

TERMINOLOGY	INFORMATION	AVOID	USAGE
<p><b>DISABLED PERSON/PEOPLE</b></p>	<p>The disability rights movement has redefined “disabled people” to mean</p> <p><b>‘People with impairments who are disabled by socially constructed barriers.’</b></p> <p>The term is seen as an effort to include people with all impairments in one minority group, which is troubled by society and has united to challenge the barriers society has put in place for it.</p>	<p>A disabled person is not a ‘person with a disability’ as the person does not own the disability in the way that you might be ‘a person with brown hair’.</p> <p><b>Avoid using:</b>  ‘Person with a disability’  ‘The disabled’  ‘The handicapped’  ‘Suffering from .....’  ‘Crippled’  ‘Wheelchair bound’  ‘Victim of .....’  ‘Physical/mental disabilities’  ‘Able bodied’</p>	<p>Examples of Acceptable Usage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amy is a disabled person</li> <li>• Rochene’s hearing impairment</li> <li>• Marcus is blind</li> <li>• Harvinder is autistic</li> <li>• The neurodivergent community</li> </ul> <p>When really necessary, you can refer to different impairments/disabilities, such as physical, mental, or sensory or learning, or neurological difference, often referred to as neurodivergence.</p> <p>When speaking about people without impairments, <b>Avoid</b> using the term ‘able bodied’</p> <p><b>Instead:</b>  Refer to <b>‘non-disabled people’</b></p>
TERMINOLOGY	INFORMATION	EXAMPLES	USAGE
<p><b>DISABILITY</b></p>	<p>The social effects of having an impairment. A person who uses a wheelchair, for example, may have no problem at home where they are set up with ramps, lowered cooking surfaces, an adjustable bed and so forth.</p> <p>It is only when they are faced with difficult to get to spaces (having to access a shop with stairs and no ramps or reach high shelves they can’t reach) in the outside world that they may consider themselves to have a disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings without ramps</li> <li>• Poor health provision</li> <li>• Bullying, name-calling</li> <li>• Segregated education</li> <li>• Workplaces without lifts</li> </ul>	<p>Understanding the critical difference between Disability and Impairment allows us to talk separately and clearly about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a named individual = the person, e.g. Fred</li> <li>• impairment = their functioning, e.g. cerebral palsy</li> <li>• disability = society’s barriers</li> </ul> <p>e.g. Fred Brown (the person) is a man with cerebral palsy (the impairment).</p> <p>When the barriers and discrimination (the disabilities) that restrict Fred have been removed from society,</p>

TERMINOLOGY	INFORMATION	EXAMPLES	USAGE
<b>IMPAIRMENT</b>	Describes a person's medical condition or diagnosis or description of their functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polio</li> <li>• Quadriplegia</li> <li>• Cerebral palsy</li> <li>• Blindness</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Deafness</li> </ul>	<p>Fred will no longer be disabled, but he will still have cerebral palsy and be called Fred.</p> <p>Always put the person first, not the disability <b>Avoid</b> stating "The Blind person" <b>Instead say:</b> <b>"Lesley is partially sighted"</b></p> <p><b>Avoid</b> asking 'What is your disability' <b>Instead say:</b> <b>'Please let me know how I can meet your needs'</b></p>
<b>NEURODIVERSITY</b>	<p>While neurodiversity began as a way to describe people on the Autistic spectrum, the definition has since broadened to include other conditions.</p> <p>While some people believe that neurodivergence is a natural development of the human brain and therefore not a disability, others have reclaimed the title of disability as it acknowledges the social effects of their difference, and by recognising their disability, more can be done to remove barriers and make reasonable modifications, particularly in their working lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autism</li> <li>• Dyslexia</li> <li>• ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Order)</li> <li>• Dyscalculia</li> <li>• DSD (Dyspraxia)</li> <li>• Dysgraphia</li> <li>• Tourette Syndrome</li> <li>• and other neurological differences</li> </ul>	<p>Neurodivergent is someone who's brain functions, learns and processes information differently than what the majority expect.</p> <p>A group can be neurodiverse an individual is better described as neurodivergent.</p> <p>Neurotypical is someone who's brain operates in the same way as the majority of society.</p> <p>People who are not 'neurodivergent' can be described as 'neurotypical' rather than 'normal', which suggests that neurodivergent individuals are not normal.</p>

In the spirit of learning, please share your views and any suggested additions to this guide with a member of the Group HR or H&S team in either country or email [wellbeing@totalproduce.com](mailto:wellbeing@totalproduce.com).

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