

# Inclusive Language

## Discussion Materials

PLEASE NOTE: The following pages include examples of language that some might find offensive.



## **WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?**

Inclusive language is a practice that aims to mitigate offense by avoiding words and phrases that express or imply ideas that are sexist, racist, or otherwise biased, prejudiced, or denigrating to any group of people (and sometimes animals as well.)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusive\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusive_language)

# QUIZ #1

**WHICH SENTENCE CONTAINS A WORD OR PHRASE THAT COULD BE POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE?**

1. "Upstairs you will find the Master Bedroom."

2. "Let's grandfather that in."

3. "Okay, guys - let's get started."

4. All the above.

# QUIZ #1

## WHICH SENTENCE CONTAINS A WORD OR PHRASE THAT COULD BE POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE?

1. "Upstairs you will find the Master Bedroom."

*Realtors have begun moving away from this phrase as it can be perceived as sexist or racist. Consider saying "primary bedroom" instead.*

2. "Let's grandfather that in."

*The term "grandfather clause" originated in the American South in the 1890s to defy the 15th Amendment and prevent black Americans from voting. Consider using "legacy."<sup>2</sup>*

3. "Okay, guys - let's get started."

*Using "guys" to address a group consisting of multiple genders can be perceived as gendered language. Consider saying "everybody," or "you all."<sup>3</sup>*

4. All the above.

1-<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/realestate/master-bedroom-change.html>

2,3-<https://medium.com/diversity-together/70-inclusive-language-principles-that-will-make-you-a-more-successful-recruiter-part-1-79b7342a0923>

# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE PRINCIPLES

## Put people first

- We are more than our descriptors, so put people first to keep the individual as the essential element; e.g., try "a woman on our sales team," not "a saleswoman."

## Use universal phrases

- "Hit one out of the park," may not be as universally understood as, "Do a great job."

## Be mindful of mental illness and other challenges

- Phrases like "that's insane" diminish the personal impact of mental illness.

## Use gender neutral language

- Words like "manpower" can be insensitive to the contribution of other genders.

## Have a growth mindset

- Cultivate an open mind to being exposed to new things and learning about others.

## Ask if you aren't sure

- It never hurts to ask!

## QUIZ #2

**WHICH SENTENCE CONTAINS A WORD OR PHRASE THAT COULD BE POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE?**

1. "Let's get down to the nitty-gritty."
2. "Are you going to the Brown Bag at noon?"
3. "Hip-Hip, Hooray!"
4. All the above.

# QUIZ #2

## WHICH SENTENCE CONTAINS A WORD OR PHRASE THAT COULD BE POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE?

1. "Let's get down to the nitty-gritty."

*The phrase "nitty-gritty" originated in the 18th Century to refer to the hold of a slave ship. Consider saying "details" instead.<sup>1</sup>*

2. "Are you going to the Brown Bag at noon?"

*Use "Lunch and Learn" instead of "Brown Bag" for informal talks and training to avoid associations with the Brown Paper Bag Test.<sup>2</sup>*

3. "Hip-Hip, Hooray!"

*Origins of this phrase are in some dispute, but some claim that it has anti-Semitic origins. Consider just saying, "Hooray!"<sup>3</sup>*

4. All the above.

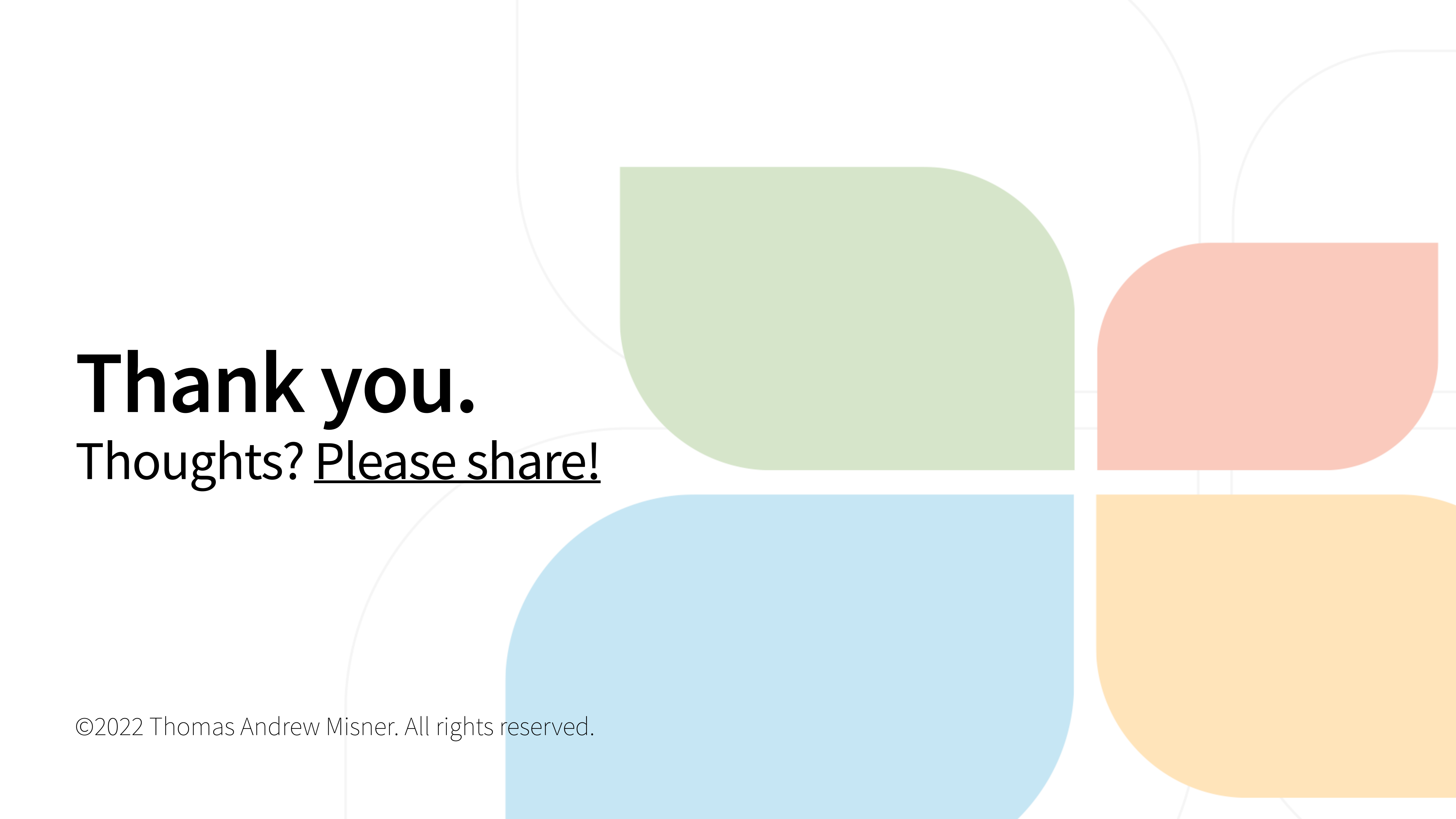
<sup>1,3</sup>–<https://aninjusticemag.com/7-racist-slurs-which-you-should-drop-from-your-vocabulary-885c56ba97ae>

<sup>2</sup>–[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown\\_Paper\\_Bag\\_Test](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Paper_Bag_Test)



Can you think of any words or phrases  
that should be phased out?





**Thank you.**  
Thoughts? Please share!