



APPENDIX B:  
OTM LANGUAGE

For more information please contact:

**Canadian Association for the Advancement  
of Women and Sport and Physical Activity**

Phone: 613.562.5667 ▪ Fax: 613.562.5668  
Email: [caaws@caaws.ca](mailto:caaws@caaws.ca) ▪ Website: [www.caaws.ca](http://www.caaws.ca)

## EQUALITY AND EQUITY

*Equity does not necessarily mean that all persons must be treated exactly the same. Where discrimination exists, people may need to be **treated differently** in order to be **treated fairly**.*

The **OTM** initiative and Handbook use the following definitions:

**Equality** is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision making so that males and females have the *same* (therefore females and males would each receive 50% of the resources, facilities, and each have access to the same programs, so if there was a male hockey league, there would also be a female league).

**Gender Equity** is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making *fairly* to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone has access to a full range of opportunities to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits that come from participating in sport and recreation. It does not necessarily mean making the same programs and facilities available to both males and females. Gender equity requires that girls and women be provided with a full range of activity and program choices that meet *their* needs. Therefore, some activities may be the same as those offered to boys and men, some may be altered, and some may be altogether different.

**RESEARCH NOTE:** The principle of *Equal Treatment* tends to ignore the fact that people differ in their capacities, interests, resources and previous experiences. (CAHPERD, 1992)

**Gender Equity** also involves addressing organizational practices and policies that may hinder the participation of girls and women. For example, this requires service providers to examine:

- Facility bookings – to ensure that both females and males have access to prime time slots and prime facilities;
- Resource allocation – to determine which activities are receiving the program budget;
- Participation rates – to identify whether co-ed programs are truly co-ed;
- Activity programming – to assess the types of activities offered for males and females; and
- Promotional materials – to ensure girls and women are not being excluded or stereotyped (in pictures or language).

## OTHER IMPORTANT TERMS

Positive measures that target specific groups (e.g. initiatives like **OTM**) are important because they take into account years of socialization and historical traditions that have created imbalances, subsequently marginalizing sectors of the population because these conditions are accepted as the norm.

**RESEARCH NOTE:** Many fitness, recreation and sport organizations across Canada do not allocate their resources, programs and decision-making fairly to both females and males without bias. As a result, the demographic profile of the people who use the organization's facilities does not match the demographic profile of the community. (Pathway to Gender Equity, 1999)

**Sex** is the biological character of individuals. It is either their femaleness or their maleness.

**Gender** is the social construction of sex roles. People are taught behaviour appropriate to their gender through interactions with family, friends, peers, the school system, the political and economic systems. Stereotypes are often based on narrow definitions of gender roles that fail to acknowledge the similarities between males and females, while overemphasizing difference.

A **Stereotype** is the broad, often inaccurate characteristics of a cultural, ethnic or racial group used to describe an individual thought to be a member of that group. *Example: All boys enjoy hockey. All girls enjoy dance.*

**Prejudice** is the use of pre-judgment. It occurs when people make judgments before meeting individuals or groups and then adhere to those judgments, no matter how inaccurate they are. *Example: Women are weaker than men. Girls do not like sports.*

**Systemic Discrimination** is the exclusion of members of certain groups through the application of policies or practices based on criteria that are not job or performance related, or required for the safety of other individuals. Systemic discrimination is discrimination so ingrained in a given system that it becomes the norm – that members of that system say, “That’s just the way things are done here”. Systemic discrimination is very hard for people to identify when they are part of the system. *Example: Failing to provide childcare during activity programming.*

**Reverse Discrimination** is the belief that through the application of policies or practices focused on females, males are excluded unfairly.

However, discrimination does not have a forward or a reverse. Discrimination is the unequal allocation of resources. And it hurts the people that get less. (Marion Lay, CAAWS)

**Special Measures** refer to a particular initiative taken by an organization to redress any imbalances stemming from past discrimination and in response to identified areas of need.

## ***Equity in the Workplace***

In order to create an equitable recreation system, it is necessary not only to examine participant opportunities, but also your organization's practices and policies. This is important to decrease the barriers to girls' and women's continued participation in the sport and recreation system, and to provide role models.

**Suggestion:** Refer to *Appendix A – It's the Law* for information on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Sport Canada's* policy on Women in Sport.

**Equal Opportunity** occurs when people are treated as individuals and provided with access to opportunity on the basis of their skills, talents and qualifications, and are neither disadvantaged nor denied access because of their sex, ethnicity, or disability.

**Employment Equity** is a comprehensive planning process and program adopted by an employer to identify and eliminate discrimination in employment procedures and policies; to remedy the effects of past discrimination through the provision of equitable employment services, pay and opportunity; and to ensure appropriate representation of designated groups throughout an employer's workforce. (Adapted from the Tait McKenzie Institute, 1992)

**Service Equity** refers to the right of every individual to equal opportunity, equal access, equal participation in all that society has to offer regardless of age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, income, gender or religious differences. (Hastings Institute, 1994)

These guidelines acknowledge the physical, emotional, and intellectual equality of women and men.

## ***Language***

When speaking on behalf of your organization or producing promotional resources, consider the following inclusive language guidelines. Words that exclude some people are unfair and usually inaccurate. **Inclusiveness** exists in an organizational system when decision-making includes perspectives from diverse points of views, from inside and outside the organization, where appropriate. (Hastings Institute, 1994, with reference to Byron Kunisawa and Websters New Collegiate)

### **The power of language . . .**

**RESEARCH NOTE:** For girls, [language] has the potential to position them in a particular relation to physical activity in ways that may discourage their participation and disempower them. (Wright & King, 1990)

**NOTE FROM RESEARCH:** Language which excludes, subordinates or demeans people because of gender has a negative impact on self-esteem, growth and aspirations. Such language limits the roles we seek to perform and diminishes our ability to realize our potential as individuals. (CAHPERD, 1993)

When producing or approving print materials, interacting with colleagues and staff, or speaking to community members and participants, consider the following:

- **Parallel Words:** Used when referring to females and males.  
**Yes:** women and men, girls and boys, Mr. Smith or Ms. Smith (or Mrs./Miss. if requested)  
**No:** men's and ladies', boys and gals, Mr. Smith and Mrs. John Smith, Mr. Smith and Jody Smith  
  
**Neutral Words:** Use whenever possible.  
**Yes:** they, instructor, coach, leader, partner, chair, chairperson, everyone  
**No:** he (to include both sexes), wives, husbands, chairman, chairwoman, guys (to include both sexes)
- **Neutral Phrases:** Use whenever possible.  
**Yes:** player to player defense, you throw correctly/incorrectly, fair play, athlete  
**No:** man to man defense, you throw like a girl/boy, sportsmanship, sportsman
- **Modifiers:** Use unbiased adjectives and adverbs when describing people  
**Yes:** talented player, energetic aerobic instructor, thoughtful coach, athlete  
**No:** handsome, well-built, cute, shapely, sexy, bouncy, jockette
- **Balance:** Use both women and men as examples and remember to include both sexes in non-traditional roles.  
**Yes:** women as race-starters, presidents, hockey players, umpires – men as aerobics instructors, dancers, care-givers

### ***Visual Materials***

When producing or approving visual materials for your organization, be aware of:

- **Equality:** Portray both sexes equally as participants (at various intensities and skill levels; in traditional and non-traditional activities); and leaders (instructors, coaches, directors, administrators, volunteers) at all levels.
- **Frequency:** Show both sexes with equal frequency and in ways that depict them as equals.
- **Focus:** Both sexes should be featured as the focus of attention equally often.

- **Sexuality:** Portray both sexes with dignity and modesty in all matters, especially with regard to clothing, body position, and camera angles.
- **Other Variables:** Portray different types of women and men – visible minorities, athletes with physical challenges, Aboriginal, different ages, different body types.

(Reprinted from Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport)

**Suggestion:** Contact CAAWS for active female images and clipart for your organization's promotional material. (Refer to *Appendix G – Organizations, Resources & References*)