

Children by Choice's

Language Guide

A resource for more inclusive and destigmatised abortion care
for providers and supporters

Glossary of Terms*

In this Language Guide, you will find key recommended terms which Children by Choice believes reflect best practice.

Children by Choice recognises that language is key to progressing the destigmatisation of abortion and ensuring inclusive and trauma informed care. This is not an exhaustive list of terms, however it reflects our current learnings within this space.

It is not anticipated or intended that counsellors or health practitioners change the way they practice, which generally involves mirroring language used by clients themselves.

**Remember that language is constantly changing.*

CHILDREN BY CHOICE
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

How to describe clients

Not recommended	Recommended	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women • Woman • Females 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and pregnant people • Women and people who can become pregnant • Pregnant person/people 	<p>Not all people who are or can become pregnant identify as women. The recommended phrases seek to recognise that women and people of different gender identities can be pregnant and therefore may be seeking assistance from our counselling service or be impacted by our service delivery.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, non-binary people and trans men. 	<p>Sometimes it may appropriate to be explicit about all the different people who may need to consider their pregnancy options and/or access abortion.</p> <p>This is gender-inclusive rather than gender-neutral language.</p>

A note on gender neutral/inclusive language:

Using gender-neutral language is a way of ensuring inclusive practice within women centric spaces.

Gender-neutral language refers to language that does not identify gender, for example, using the term 'pregnant people'. This language is useful when talking in general terms, and to avoid making assumptions about who can and cannot get pregnant or may need access to abortion.

Gender-inclusive language is about using gendered language in an intentional way, being accurately representative of the people you are talking about, for example, our services are available for 'women, non-binary people and trans men'. This is useful when you want language to be explicit and clear about who can or may need to access services. The use of gender-inclusive language is most appropriate when a service has the relevant processes and practices in place that ensure it is actively gender inclusive. Until that is the case, it may be more appropriate to use gender-neutral language.



How to describe the types of abortions offered in Australia

Not recommended	Recommended	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical abortion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early medical abortion • EMA 	<p>This is a clinical term used in medical spaces to refer to abortion via the use of mifepristone and misoprostol under 9 weeks gestation.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication abortion • Abortion with pills 	<p>This language more plainly describes the method of abortion. We use this language to ensure our messaging is accessible to stakeholders and clients who are not in the medical sector.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late term abortion • Late(r) abortion(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exact gestation in weeks, where possible • Abortion(s) at over 13 weeks gestation • Abortions at over XX weeks gestation (depending on context) 	<p>The term 'late' can imply fault and may unnecessarily stigmatise or cause a feeling of judgment among abortion seekers and providers. We use the medically accurate term where possible, i.e. For abortions done using certain procedures, 'abortions over 16 weeks gestation' may be the most appropriate phrase.</p> <p>We also avoid 'trimester' language where possible. They are broad periods of time with multiple procedures possible at different points in each of the 1st and 2nd trimesters.</p>

How to describe pregnancy options

Not recommended	Recommended	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unplanned pregnancy options • Pregnancy counselling • Baby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy options • Pregnancy options counselling • Pregnancy decision-making support • Pregnancy/Fetus 	<p>The term ‘unplanned pregnancy’ assumes the context of conception and can be stigmatising and unnecessarily imply blame or irresponsibility. Pregnancy options is neutral and our current preferred term, even though it often requires some context/explaining.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption, alternative and kinship care 	<p>Adoption rates in QLD (and around Australia) are very low. Alternative and kinship care arrangements should also be signalled as a pregnancy option.</p>

Other key terms

Not recommended	Recommended	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive Coercion • RC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive Coercion and Abuse • RCA 	<p>In line with work being done in our research collaborations and the industry at large, we are moving to using RCA to acknowledge the severity and spectrum of coercion and abuse that this term covers. Please note, the term Reproductive Coercion (and abuse) is not commonly used, and is often not well understood, by people outside of our industry and academia.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induced abortion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion • Have an abortion • End(ing) a pregnancy • Not continue/ing a pregnancy 	<p>While not uncommon in medicine, the term ‘induced abortion’ is not widely used nor understood by many of our stakeholders and clients. For the purposes of language accessibility of language to diverse groups, simple is best where possible.</p> <p>While it may be appropriate to use ‘termination of pregnancy’ (TOP) or ‘terminate a pregnancy’ in some circumstances, some consumers don’t like the term ‘terminate’ as it can seem harsh and allude to ‘terminator’ or ‘assassinate’.[1]</p> <p>[1] IPPF 2018</p>

Other key terms

Not recommended	Recommended	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner• Spouse• Husband	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Man involved in pregnancy	<p>It is important to note that using client led language is really important and that not everyone that has a penis identifies as a male.</p> <p>This is important as it reduces potentially harmful assumptions about the way in which the pregnancy came about, particularly if it was due to sexual assault</p>

Contact Information

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ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE ABORIGINAL LAND

Children by Choice acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout Queensland and their continued connection to land, water, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.