

Talking about abortion.

A practical guide to language that destigmatises abortion.

Abortion terminology

Use clear, respectful and clinically accurate language that normalises abortion as routine healthcare. Avoid emotive, moral or stigmatising language that may reinforce misconceptions or exceptionalise abortion.

WE USE	INSTEAD OF
Abortion/Abortion care	Elective abortion
Specify gestation	Late-term abortion
Embryo (weeks 1-8)	Baby – unless mirroring of client language
Fetus (weeks 9 onwards)	Baby – unless mirroring of client language
Signs of life	Born alive

FURTHER STIGMITISING LANGUAGE

Failed abortion

Social abortion

Maternal request

Crisis pregnancy

Unplanned pregnancy

Gender-inclusive language

Not everyone who can become pregnant identifies as a woman. Use language that reflects inclusion, clinical accuracy and respect for gender diversity.

WE USE	INSTEAD OF
Women and pregnant people/pregnant people	Women (as default)
People who can become pregnant	Biological women
People with a uterus	Females
Person involved in the pregnancy	Father (by default)