



## **Plain Language Guide for Authors**

All authors submitting to the Miskwaabiimag 2-Spirits Health Journal are strongly encouraged to read this guide to ensure that their submission uses straightforward, accessible, and bias-free language. If ever unsure of the language used within your work, please reach out to the Journal's editorial staff at [journaleditor@2spirits.org](mailto:journaleditor@2spirits.org) to receive feedback.

### **Why use plain language?**

The primary goal of writing is to convey information effectively. Plain language ensures that information is clear and that complex concepts are accessible to readers with a range of literacy and educational levels. It helps avoid misinterpretation, as unclear word choice or writing style can lead to confusion. Additionally, it makes written content easier to understand while honouring diverse knowledge systems.

Plain language does not dull or oversimplify written content; rather, it enhances clarity, thoughtfulness, and effectiveness. When the reader understands what is written, it encourages critical thinking and engagement. By writing in plain language, authors can help to remove barriers to health information, which is a crucial step in achieving health equity.

### **The key principles of plain language**

Below are a few key principles and related advice for writers of all skill levels.

## **Speak to your audience**

- Write for 2-Spirit, Indigiqueer and Trans (2SIQT) community members, healthcare providers and allies
- Consider the cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds of your intended audience
- Use inclusive, gender-affirming and culturally respectful language
- Write how you would naturally speak, without trying to sound overly intellectual
- Do not write in such a way that pathologizes, shames, or belittles others
- If writing a theoretical work, ensure that there is a practical description to help readers understand why the theory, findings, or program is relevant

## **Be clear and concise**

- Prioritize direct, short sentences (ideally 15-20 words maximum)
- Avoid jargon or technical terms; if they are necessary, explain them using everyday language
- Use the active voice
- Make your writing personal
- Write acronyms in full on first use, followed by the acronym in parentheses; avoid excessive use of acronyms, and include a key word glossary table at the beginning of the document if many are used
- Start with the most crucial information
- Use headings and subheadings to break up text and to support the logical flow of the work
- Consider using graphics, tables, and lists to relay key ideas or steps; each paragraph should express a singular thought unless it connects related points