

24 sedentary time and promote health, not ableism. However, language acts in the world and
25 on people; it perpetuates taken-for-granted beliefs and values; it creates, reveals, and
26 reproduces forms of prejudice and discrimination. Language is where people live, and
27 ableist language is not liveable for disabled people. Imagine living in terms that exclude
28 you and assume a lesser status for you. Language paints a picture of our world and the
29 people in it, acting on them. Imagine painting a picture that sends a public health message
30 that excludes an entire group of people, that acts on them by saying consciously or
31 unconsciously you are not part of our health policy. What does that also suggest to non-
32 disabled people and, given unconscious biases, how might it play out in everyday life?
33 Could it be that disabled people are (unintentionally) considered inferior and not worth
34 caring about?

35 If you doubt the capacity of language to oppress and discriminate then consider the
36 damaging impacts of racist, homophobic, ageist, or sexist language in society. It is
37 necessary for language to evolve as society does, such as moving away from racial
38 stereotypes in advertising or re-claiming former homophobic slurs such as ‘queer’ for
39 empowered self-identification. Just as language has adapted in an attempt to stop
40 perpetuating racism, homo/transphobia, and sexism, we must now also change our language
41 to stop perpetuating ableism.

42 Some readers may also or alternatively respond to the call for action to drop
43 messages like “Sit less, move more” by insisting that “*We have used these messages for*
44 *some time now and public health messages need to be consistent. We also cannot change*
45 *messages as we now have a mantra across the physical activity world we are familiar*
46 *with.*” It can be argued that the messages under the spotlight cannot be given up because

47 consistency is important in public health. Should this be the case if consistency means
48 reinforcing and naturalising ableism? If you witnessed someone using terms in messaging
49 that were once widespread in society but now are deemed sexist, racist, classist or promote
50 fatphobia would you accept a defence that the use was justified in order to keep up with
51 historically consistent messages? If the answer is ‘No’ why then would you accept terms in
52 messaging that are infused with ableism? As part of tackling health inequalities, and
53 bringing intersectionality into our work, we must include disability much more in physical
54 activity work and work against ableism.

55 As part of our call for action, we call on others to speak out and challenge ableist
56 messages like “Stand up/Sit Less and move more”. Let the messenger gently know that
57 their messages are ableist, even if unintentionally so. Describe the reasons why and offer
58 suitable alternatives. We also call on people, research groups, organisations, and public
59 health agencies to change their messages if they promote ableism. These small acts can
60 make a big difference.

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62 Disability Rights UK, Professor Brett Smith, International Society of Sport Psychology, International
63 Federation of Adapted Physical Activity, Dr Javier Monforte, Dr Charlie Foster OBE, British
64 Psychological Society Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology.

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66 **Like to sign/endore this?** If you would like organisation to be added to the signatures please
67 contact Brett Smith brett.smith@durham.ac.uk by 21st November at the latest. Thank you.