

Who Am I & Why Am I Leading This Workshop?

- Hi! I'm andrea bennett.
- I currently edit for TheTyee.ca and Talonbooks.
- I'm the former editor in chief of Maisonneuve magazine.
- I am a white settler of English descent. I'm non-binary. And I'm bipolar II, with generalized anxiety disorder.
- I have the ability to be very detail oriented. But I would rather see the forest than the trees: I will take a misplaced apostrophe over an incorrect pronoun any day. Nobody gets hurt by a misplaced apostrophe.

What is a house style guide & why do we have them?

- A house style guide directs copy editing choices for magazines and publishing houses.
- Typically, magazines have one style guide.
- Publishing houses have an overarching style guide, but the copy editor will also make a “style sheet” for each individual book.
- In this case, they may go for an author’s preference. This might be something like: “andrea prefers **unspaced—em—dashes** to **spaced – en – dashes!**”
- It can also be: “The author prefers not to italicize words in Cree. The author prefers not to italicize words in Italian.”
- We have style guides in order to aim for **consistency** across articles, issues, and books.

Resources

Core texts:

- A style guide + a dictionary (In Canadian book publishing contexts, this might be the Chicago Manual of Style and the Canadian Oxford Dictionary)
- In newspaper contexts, Canadian Press Style (which specifies that it should be paired with CanOx)

Additional resources to consider including:

- **Gregory Younging's *Elements of Indigenous Style***. 2018.
- **Chelsea Vowel's *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada***. (This book isn't a style guide, but it's key for all non-Indigenous writers and editors in Canada to read.)
- **Trans Journalists Association Trans Style Guide:**
<https://transjournalists.org/style-guide/>
- **GLAAD Media Reference Guide:** <https://www.glaad.org/reference>
- **Race Forward Race Reporting Guide:**
https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/Race%20Reporting%20Guide%20by%20Race%20Forward_V1.1.pdf
- Mashal Butt, Jane Loh, Vivian Tsang & Jane Buxton. "**Media & Language: De-Stigmatizing Language Around Substance Abuse and Harm Reduction Reporting.**" BC Centre for Disease Control and UBC. 2020.
- **Autistic Hoya's Glossary of Ableist Phrases:**
<https://www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html>
- **Google's ngram viewer**
- **The Conscious Style Guide:** <https://consciousstyleguide.com/>

Additional resources to consider including (cont'd):

- Radical Copyeditor: <https://radicalcopyeditor.com/> (recommended by Iva Cheung)
- **Sex Work Style Guide:** <https://www.thewhoresofyore.com/sex-worker-voices/sex-work-style-guide-by-mistress-matisse> (recommended by Raimey Gallant)
- **Use the Right Words:** Media Reporting on Sexual Violence in Canada: (recommended by Raimey Gallant):
<http://www.femifesto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/UseTheRightWords-Single-Dec3.pdf>

Can anyone think of other resources they use or would want to use?

Your house style guide should reflect your values

- Style guides allow us to sort of impose consistency on a text.
- But we are choosing that consistency based on common usage.
- **As usage changes, so should our style guides.**
- I do not owe my allegiance to the Chicago or MLA or CP Style, and I don't owe my allegiance to a dictionary. All of those things are tools that I use.
- An author may have a good reason for choosing inconsistent usage. My job is to query and point out inconsistent usage.
- If you are not copy editing from an anti-oppressive perspective, you may inadvertently be copy-editing from an oppressive one. (The status quo can be!)

Step one is always to develop a good relationship with the author

- It doesn't matter how deftly you handle the copy-edit of someone's text if they don't get a sense that you respect them and their time.
- Share your timeline, at the outset, with your writer. Ask if they foresee any issues with it.
- Be as clear and upfront with your timelines and expectations as possible.
- **Phrase your queries as queries.**
- If I see a comma splice, or a run-on sentence, or a colloquial approach to subject/object agreement, or a non-parallel list structure, my job is not simply to "correct" it. My job is to query it: "Comma splice OK here?"
- This process should ideally feel collaborative.

LGBTQ2S+

- Trans Journalists Association Trans Style Guide:
<https://transjournalists.org/style-guide/>
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide:
<https://www.glaad.org/reference>

Things to watch out for:

- Use correct pronouns and honorifics; do not deadname or misgender someone. This includes when describing them in the past. (She/he/they; Mr / Ms / Mx)
- Coverage that emphasizes someone's identity or pronouns when it doesn't need to.
- Coverage that treats LGBTQ2S+ people as an afterthought or doesn't include us at all.
- Flag tropes: there has been a fixation on physical transition, on family response, on whether people "pass."
- Flag a narrative gaze that overemphasizes details about someone's body or relationships. In short, if something wouldn't be flagged for a cis person or straight person, and it's not germane to the story, it might not even need to be mentioned.

Race

- **Race Forward Race Reporting Guide:**

https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/Race%20Reporting%20Guide%20by%20Race%20Forward_V1.1.pdf

Things to look out for:

- Mentioning the race of someone who is racialized, but not the white people in a story.
- Avoiding mentioning race when it **is** germane to a story.
- Avoid stereotypes, the so-called “positive” ones and the negative ones.
- Avoid tropes .
- Avoid including BIPOC sources only when discussing issues related to race. BIPOC sources should appear in a wide range of stories. BIPOC writers should be able to write a wide range of stories.
- If someone’s race or ethnicity is important to a piece, be specific.
- Watch for coded language. For example, immigrants “flooding” the border at nonstandard crossings.
- Prioritize impact over intent; prioritize action over attitude/intention.
- Check out **Race Forward Race Reporting Guide** for information on how to report on issues that disproportionately impact different communities of colour or that impact communities of colour differently: things like criminal justice, health, housing, employment and precarious employment, immigration and status.
- Watch for passive voice.

Indigenous Peoples

- **Gregory Younging's *Elements of Indigenous Style*.**
- **Chelsea Vowel, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada*.**

Things to consider:

- Indigenous languages should take precedent.
- Indigenous place names should take precedent (including in stories that are not about “Indigenous issues”).
- “Indigenous” is an umbrella term that includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- Be specific: Haida > Indigenous (but: go with someone’s preference).
- “Ownership” of stories \neq Canadian legal system’s ideas about copyright or defamation, etc.
- Understand the perspective from which a storyteller is working. If they are working from a different paradigm, discuss how best to work together.
- As with the aforementioned: avoid stereotypes, focus on systems.
- Watch for passive voice / deletion of the state’s role.

Ableism

- **Autistic Hoya's Glossary of Ableist Phrases:**

<https://www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html>

Ableism is baked into the way we speak.

- Instead of “committed suicide,” choose “died by suicide.”
- Instead of “blind to,” choose ignorant.
- Instead of “crazy,” or “bipolar,” choose wild.
- Avoid things like “confined to a wheelchair,” or “bound to a wheelchair.” Use “use a wheelchair.”
- Avoid person-first language! Many disabled people do not like this. Use “autistic person.” Use “disabled person.” Make sure a reporter has asked how someone wants to be identified.
- When writing about accommodations that someone may need, focus on systemic or structural gaps.
- If a story is about disability, include several disabled people as sources. Including family members of someone with a disability is not the same as including a disabled person.
- Avoid tropes and stereotypes: avoid the “inspiring” disabled person. Avoid the “burden” of helping take care of a disabled person.

Substance use and addiction

- Mashal Butt, Jane Loh, Vivian Tsang & Jane Buxton. “**Media & Language: De-Stigmatizing Language Around Substance Abuse and Harm Reduction Reporting.**” BC Centre for Disease Control and UBC. 2020.

Things to think about:

- Approach addiction as a health issue.
- Consider using “toxic,” or “poisoned,” to refer to drugs when discussing overdose.
- Don’t sensationalize someone’s drug or alcohol use.
- Avoid moralistic approaches and stereotyping.
- Use “people who use drugs” rather than “addicts” or other language.
- Think about usage like “clean.”
- When writing stories about people who use drugs, always interview people who use drugs.

Sex Work

- **Sex Work Style Guide:**

<https://www.thewhoresofyore.com/sex-worker-voices/sex-work-style-guide-by-mistress-matisse> (recommended by Raimey Gallant)

Things to think about:

- Avoid problematic, stigmatizing terms like “hooker,” “prostitute,” and “pimp” (which remove agency from sex workers).
- Avoid phrases like “selling her body.”
- Instead, use “sex worker” as a broader term, and/or use specific terms that indicate the type of sex work someone is practicing.
- “Nothing about us without us”: when writing about an issue related to sex work, always interview/include sources who are sex workers (or assign the story to someone who does sex work).

Sexual violence

- **Use the Right Words:** Media Reporting on Sexual Violence in Canada: (recommended by Raimey Gallant):
<http://www.femifesto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/UseTheRightWords-Single-Dec3.pdf>

Things to think about:

- Who do we find credulous? (e.g, early Jian Ghomeshi reporting)
- Assault should be taken seriously but not sensationalized.
- Avoid overusing terms like “claims/claimed,” and “alleged.”
- When relating someone’s story, opt for more neutral speech tags: “says/said,” “tells me/told me.”
- Focus on the harm done to the survivor rather than consequences a perpetrator of assault may face.
- Avoid tropes (jilted ex-girlfriend, sleeping her way to the top)
- When speaking more generally about assault, be inclusive: women, men, and non-binary people all experience assault.
- Be careful and neutral in headline phrasing, titles, etc.

This Approach Is an Approach! Not a Set of Rules

- When a person is writing about/talking about their own experience / their own community, allow them more leeway in language usage.
- Opt for someone's preferred self-identification.
- Be aware of the difference between narrative voice and subject/interviewee voice. E.g., interviewee saying, "I want to get clean" versus narrative voice saying, "Jane wanted to get clean." / Or:

Humorous host chooses laughs over lectures

Going Native host Drew Hayden Taylor chooses laughs over lectures



Posted: 3:00 AM CDT Saturday, May. 1, 2021

- Use judgement when copy editing non-fiction vs fiction vs poetry.
- The most important thing to cultivate is an awareness/sensitivity.
- Everything changes! Your style guide, and your copy-editing approach, should and will change over time.
- Always take your cue from people working at the forefront of these issues, that have a stake in these issues.