# Acceptable language

**APAC 2017** operates on the principle of respect for diversity. We feel that it is important for presenters to use language that is comfortable for them. However, there are some terms that are likely to cause offense and that we would like presenters to avoid using (see below).

Earlier this year the NAS conducted a survey within the UK of people connected to autism, to enquire about preferences regarding the use of language. Amongst autistic adults, the term 'autistic person/people' was the most commonly preferred term. The most preferred term overall was 'people on the autism spectrum'.

Some people refer to themselves and one another as an autist / autie / aspie. Whilst we accept that people may wish to refer to themselves in this way, it is less acceptable when used by others.

## Terms that are likely to cause offence

1. **Suffers from OR is a victim of autism:** consider using the following terms instead:
   - is autistic
   - is on the autism spectrum
   - has a diagnosis of autism / an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) / an autism spectrum condition (ASC)

*(Note: The term ASD is used by many people but some prefer the term 'autism spectrum condition' or 'on the autism spectrum' because it avoids the negative connotations of 'disability' or 'disorder'. ASD or autism spectrum disorder should not be used unless the presentation concerns the diagnosis or diagnostic criteria)*

**3. Asperger's syndrome is a rare / mild form of autism**

Asperger's is part of the autism spectrum

**4. Autism is a disease / illness:** consider using the following instead:
   - autism is a disability
   - autism is a condition

5. **mentally handicapped / backward:** these terms are often considered to be derogatory and offensive by members of the autism community and the wider disability community. Consider using the following terms instead (where it is appropriate to do so):
   - people with a learning disability
   - people with a developmental disability
   - people with an intellectual disability

6. **normally developing children / adults:** consider using the following terms instead:
   - neurotypical
   - typically developing children / adults

We would like to acknowledge *Autism Europe* for use of these guidelines.