

# BRIEF STYLE AND TONE GUIDE

Let's Talk About

• Opportunity Youth •



01.

# Introduction





Language and the way we communicate a message have enormous power to shape perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in society. In social matters, this power becomes even more relevant, as it can strengthen or weaken inclusion, empathy, and the participation of those involved. For this reason, having a style and tone guide becomes a fundamental tool to ensure that our communications are consistent, responsible, and respectful of diversity.

At GOYN, we believe that when teams have clear guidelines for discussing social realities, it makes it easier to address complex and sensitive topics. With this brief guide, we aim to provide direction on the appropriate use of language, prevent certain stereotypes, and avoid the reproduction of exclusionary narratives. Likewise, we seek to establish simple shared guidelines that promote message consistency, strengthening the credibility of those communicating.

This guide is also part of a collection of narrative research and a methodological guide, which we hope the entire ecosystem will find valuable when approaching communication from a narrative transformation perspective. This approach invites us to review and reshape dominant narratives that discriminate against or make city opportunity youth invisible. Through this perspective, we seek to create new stories and representations that dignify, recognize, and empower people and communities. In this way, we not only regulate how we communicate but also take an initial step toward deep cultural change reflected in daily practice.

We invite the entire ecosystem to adopt these guidelines in their communications, and more importantly, to continue contributing new ways of understanding youth-related challenges while providing feedback on this effort.



### Youth-Centered Approach

This approach focuses on recognizing young people as a diverse group with their own needs, capacities, and rights. It involves valuing them as active agents of change, avoiding stereotypes or paternalistic views, and highlighting their participation in decision-making. In this way, it promotes their autonomy and makes visible the plurality of their experiences based on their social, economic, and cultural contexts.





### **Generational Approach**

Its objective is to promote relationships of respect and collaboration among different generations, avoiding confrontation or negative comparisons. It acknowledges that each group experiences different historical moments and contexts and that the exchange of knowledge and experiences.



### **Differential Approach**

This approach acknowledges that young people are not a homogeneous group; rather, their diversity intersects with factors such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, disability status, or migration situation. It seeks to highlight and address the specific inequalities they face, promoting the use of inclusive language and the construction of narratives free from discrimination or stereotypes.

02.

# 30 STYLE AND TONE GUIDELINES





Remember that it is not mandatory to follow 100% of these guidelines. However, they serve as a good indicator of whether your communication is inclusive. Keep in mind that there are specific recommendations that may be crucial depending on the context in which you are communicating. Only you can determine those needs, so feel free to modify or add guidelines as necessary.



## YOUTH-CENTERED APPROACH

### 01. Does the message recognize young people as agents of change rather than just beneficiaries?

Yes ☐

No ☐

It is important to value them as active individuals driving social transformations rather than merely seeing them as recipients of aid. Recognizing their leadership enhances their motivation and commitment while strengthening their role in solving collective problems. This fosters a fairer and more participatory vision of youth.

### 02. Is the infantilization or underestimation of young people's abilities avoided?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Treating youth as naïve or inexperienced limits their potential and perpetuates paternalistic views. By avoiding infantilization, we empower their independence and encourage horizontal dialogue. This is key to their personal and social development. Likewise, it contributes to a society that respects and values all stages of life.

### 03. Is the diversity of youth experiences based on their social, economic, and cultural contexts highlighted?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not all young people share the same realities; their experiences are shaped by factors such as place of residence, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. Acknowledging this diversity enriches discussions and policies aimed at youth. It also promotes inclusion and prevents unfair generalizations, giving value to their multiple voices.

### 04. Is the language used approachable without resorting to stereotypes or forced slang?

Yes ☐

No ☐

It is essential to use a tone that resonates with young people while avoiding trivialization or caricaturing their way of speaking. Accessible and respectful language facilitates understanding and fosters a sense of belonging. At the same time, it prevents stigmas and clichés that could be offensive. This helps build a relationship of trust with the youth audience.



**05. Are real examples of youth-led actions that create a positive impact included?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Showcasing projects, initiatives, or specific achievements by young people is essential to inspire others to follow their example. Additionally, it highlights the transformative power of youth in areas such as volunteering, entrepreneurship, and advocacy. These positive stories challenge stereotypes and reinforce belief in their potential, fostering collective inspiration.

**06. Is the autonomy of young people when presenting their stories or testimonies respected?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

When sharing youth testimonies, it is crucial to give them space to express themselves freely and respect their perspectives. This reinforces their identity and dignity while avoiding message manipulation. Ensuring autonomy in narrating their experiences helps counter paternalistic narratives, allowing their voices to be presented authentically.

**07. Does the content encourage youth participation in decision-making?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

It is vital to recognize that political, social, and cultural decisions also concern young people. Involving them in deliberation spaces leads to more comprehensive and representative solutions. Additionally, it fosters youth leadership development and a sense of civic responsibility. This, in turn, helps build a more inclusive and democratic society.

**08. Are narratives that challenge negative stereotypes about youth shown?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Highlighting examples of commitment, perseverance, and resilience helps break the notion that “all young people are apathetic or irresponsible,” among other misconceptions. These positive narratives reinforce social trust in what we aim to communicate. Additionally, they provide role models for future generations.

**09. Does the message emphasize the creativity and resilience (or other qualities) of young people?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Innovation and adaptability are characteristics of many young individuals who find original solutions to various challenges. Emphasizing these abilities strengthens collective self-esteem and the sense of possibility. Recognizing their ingenuity promotes the use of their talents for social development.

**10. Are stories of young people from different regions and backgrounds represented?**

Yes ☐

No ☐



There is significant regional and cultural diversity in how young people experience life. Showcasing testimonies from urban, rural, or remote areas enriches the overall understanding of youth in all its complexity. Additionally, it prevents the centralization of certain experiences over others. By including diverse perspectives, a more inclusive and representative narrative is created.



## GENERATIONAL APPROACH

11.

**Does the language promote intergenerational dialogue rather than conflict?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Framing young and older generations as being in constant conflict reinforces divides and stereotypes. An approach that encourages collaboration and mutual learning strengthens social bonds. This allows for the sharing of knowledge and experiences, generating richer and more inclusive solutions. Moreover, it fosters respect and empathy across different age groups.

12.

**Is negatively comparing young people to previous generations avoided?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Phrases like “people used to work harder” or “young people today don’t appreciate anything” hinder mutual understanding. Each generation faces unique challenges and expresses itself in different ways. Avoiding derogatory comparisons fosters respect for social transformations and encourages more constructive and less polarized dialogue.

13.

**Is the value of intergenerational collaboration highlighted?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

The synergy between experience and fresh perspectives leads to stronger outcomes in collective projects. By combining accumulated wisdom with new ideas, innovative paths open up. Highlighting these benefits fosters coexistence and knowledge exchange. In this way, more supportive networks are strengthened to address common challenges.

14.

**Does the message acknowledge the specific challenges faced by this generation, such as the climate crisis and access to opportunities?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Today’s youth is growing up in a context shaped by global challenges, including climate change and economic uncertainty. Recognizing these challenges underscores the importance of their active participation in finding solutions. Additionally, it highlights the urgency of supporting their education and leadership development. This facilitates the pursuit of joint action strategies.

15.

**Is ridiculing youth expressions (fashion, technology, digital activism) avoided?**

Yes ☐

No ☐





Youth languages and styles are constantly evolving and should not be a subject of mockery or dismissal. Validating these expressions fosters understanding and inter-generational empathy. Mocking their forms of participation or interests isolates young people and limits dialogue. It is essential to recognize their creativity and adaptability.

**16. Does the content include references to cultural and social milestones relevant to today's youth?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Incorporating events, social movements, or cultural icons that resonate with young people creates meaningful connections. This allows them to feel included in the conversation and see their context valued. Additionally, it facilitates understanding their interests and concerns. In this way, messages become more relevant and impactful.

**17. Is the impact of young people in social movements and global causes acknowledged?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Youth participation in movements such as feminism, environmental activism, and human rights advocacy has been crucial in driving change. Making this contribution visible legitimizes their efforts and encourages their continuation. Moreover, it inspires more young people to join collective initiatives. Recognizing their transformative power helps strengthen intergenerational bonds.

**18. Does the message encourage older generations to listen to and learn from young people?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Overcoming adult-centrism requires older individuals to be open to embracing youth ideas and perspectives. Encouraging this openness fosters innovation and adaptation to new realities. Additionally, it strengthens mutual respect and reinforces the idea that everyone has something valuable to contribute. This exchange enriches society as a whole.

**19. Are platforms and formats preferred by young people (social media, short videos, podcasts) being used to communicate?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Adapting content to digital media and youth-friendly formats increases message effectiveness. Social media and audiovisual platforms are daily interaction spaces for many young people. This facilitates dissemination and immediate feedback. Moreover, it demonstrates respect for their preferences and communication habits.

**20. Do the language and visuals reflect this generation's digital reality?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Young people live in a hyper-connected environment, with access to technology from an early age. Accurately portraying their relationship with technology avoids clichés and oversimplified perceptions. This way, their digital contributions are recognized, and their everyday reality is reflected. Content that aligns with their context generates greater credibility and connection.



## DIFFERENTIAL APPROACH

**21. Are inclusive and respectful terms used when referring to women, LGBTQ+ individuals, migrants, and people with disabilities?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Language is one of the main tools for building more equitable realities. Using appropriate, non-discriminatory terms demonstrates sensitivity and respect for all identities. Additionally, it prevents the perpetuation of biases and promotes a culture of mutual recognition. This lays the foundation for fairer and more inclusive relationships.

**22. Are experiences of young people of diverse genders and sexual orientations made visible without reinforcing stereotypes?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

LGBTIQ+ youth face multiple challenges, including discrimination and lack of representation. Portraying their experiences with care and authenticity helps dismantle stigmas. It also reinforces the right to diversity and the free expression of identity, creating a more inclusive and relatable discourse.

**23. Does the message include perspectives of migrant youth and recognize their contributions?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Young migrants often bring enriching perspectives and knowledge to their host communities. Recognizing their potential and adaptability helps eliminate biases and promotes integration. Additionally, it highlights the need for policies and practices that ensure their rights. Making them visible fosters cultural diversity and social cohesion.

**24. Does the message avoid ableist language when referring to people with disabilities?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Expressions that frame disability as a deficiency or limitation prevent seeing the person as a whole. An inclusive approach prioritizes autonomy and dignity, acknowledging different abilities and needs. Avoiding derogatory or patronizing terms contributes to respecting their rights. This promotes a culture of equal opportunities.



**25. Does the content reflect the intersectionality of identities (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.)?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Each young person experiences a unique combination of factors that shape their reality. Highlighting these intersections allows for a better understanding of their challenges and strengths. This enables the creation of more effective and empathetic strategies and messages. Intersectionality helps reveal the diversity and richness of youth experiences.

**26. Are images used to represent diverse youth identities rather than reinforce stereotypes?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Images play a key role in shaping perceptions of reality. Using varied and authentic representations helps avoid perpetuating clichés about appearance, gender, or social status. By showcasing youth diversity, inclusion and a sense of belonging are fostered. This promotes respect and acceptance for all individuals.

**27. Does the message highlight the talents and abilities of young people in vulnerable contexts without portraying them solely as victims?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

While some youth may face challenging circumstances, it is essential to emphasize their talents and efforts rather than only depicting them as victims. Recognizing their achievements strengthens their self-esteem and social standing. Additionally, it reinforces the idea that, with the right support, they can play leading roles. This promotes respect for their resilience.

**28. Are young people from diverse populations consulted to validate messages and representations?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Co-creating with the youth involved ensures that content is authentic and relevant. Directly asking them about their reality helps avoid the reproduction of stereotypes or biases. It also fosters a sense of belonging and collective empowerment. This participatory approach lays a strong foundation for inclusion and social justice.

**29. Is making young people from minority or vulnerable populations invisible avoided?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Some youth may be marginalized or excluded from dominant narratives due to ethnic, geographic, economic, or sexual orientation-related factors. Making them visible ensures they are included in the conversation and promotes equal opportuni-



ties and representation. Highlighting their voices enriches the overall understanding of youth experiences. This fosters social cohesion and diversity.

**30. Does the content celebrate diversity as an enriching value rather than presenting it as a challenge?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Diversity is a source of learning, innovation, and collective growth. Instead of viewing differences as obstacles, it is more constructive to highlight them as strengths that bring new perspectives. Celebrating plurality reinforces mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. This helps build a more open, equitable, and resilient society.



• **We're counting on you!** •

These 30 recommendations aim to foster responsible and respectful communication about youth, recognizing their leadership potential and diversity. We invite you to mark [Yes] or [No] for each item and reflect on opportunities for improvement to promote an inclusive, intergenerational discourse that is sensitive to the realities of all youth.

**More information**

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