

# BITCH

Targets and dehumanizes women, even if used towards men – including gay/queer men. Devalues women and femininity. Reinforces sexism.

# GHETTO

Describes something or someone as cheap, worn out, poor, dangerous, etc. Reference to housing communities that are impoverished and disproportionately impact people of color. Associates people of color with these negative characteristics.

# ILLEGAL ALIEN

Reduces undocumented immigrants to something less than human. Fixates on legal status instead of people as individuals. Asserts that some people belong here more than others do. Ignores political, social, and economic factors that negatively impact people of color.

# NO HOMO

Stresses the speaker's heterosexuality, masculinity, and/or other traits to avoid being perceived as gay/queer. Goes to great lengths to avoid association with anything queer. Reinforces that to be queer is bad.

# RETARDED & LAME

Targets mental, emotional and physical disabilities as objects for ridicule. Used as synonyms for "worthless," "bad," "unintelligent," "incapable," etc.

# THAT'S SO GAY

Stigmatizes gay and queer people. Uses their identities to describe something as undesirable and bad. Replaces negative adjectives with words related to queer/LGBT identity.

# WHORE/HO & SLUT

Dismisses anyone seen as being "too" sexual – particularly sex workers, women, queer people, and people of color. Perpetuates negativity toward sex itself. Regulates who is allowed to have it.

## Words that HURT and WHY

These words create an environment that perpetuates violence and discrimination against women, people of color, queer and trans people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized communities.

People can reclaim these words for themselves as a form of empowerment. This is a personal decision. Don't reclaim words on behalf of others.

Sometimes we say words without realizing the impact they may have on others. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Take the time to educate yourself about language and histories of oppression.

For more information contact the  
UC Davis LGBT Resource Center  
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