

## AOTA COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES | ADVERTISING & SPONSORSHIPS

- **Inclusive Terminology:** AOTA represents nearly 250,000 occupational therapy practitioners in the US. This includes both occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs). AOTA also represents and supports students.
  - To support inclusivity—aligned with the core values of both AOTA and the profession—and potentially help maximize your reach and sales potential, please adhere to the following terms/usage guidelines:

Target Audience	Acceptable Term(s)/Usage
OTs, OTAs, Students	<i>“occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and students”; “occupational therapy practitioners and students”</i>
OTs and OTAs only	<i>“occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants”; “occupational therapy practitioners”;</i>
OTs only	<i>“occupational therapists”; “OTs”</i>
OTAs only	<i>“occupational therapy assistants”; “OTAs”</i>
OT students only	<i>“occupational therapy students”; “OT students”</i>

- **IMPORTANT:** Using the terms “occupational therapists” or “OTs” only is not inclusive to the OTA and student audiences. This can create negative perceptions about your brand *and* AOTA’s brand if incorrect terminology is used.
- **Bias-free Communication:** In alignment with both AOTA’s and the profession’s core values, content should be as inclusive as possible. This helps foster equity, minimize bias, and respect for diverse populations. Guiding principles for content creation include:
  - OTPs work with individuals across all practice settings. While the medical community often uses the word “patient,” *OTPs in community-based settings typically prefer the term “client”*.
  - A condition is just one part of a person. It does not define them. In most cases, use person-first language, which means the condition comes after the person (e.g., “the person with visual impairment” as opposed to “the blind person”).
  - Some individuals prefer identity-first language, which allows them to express their pride in having the condition, and seeing it as an advantage instead of a disability. This approach is particularly prevalent among people with autism or those who are deaf. When in doubt, ask.
  - Never write that someone “suffers from” a stroke, is “confined to” a wheelchair, or other descriptions suggesting a loss of autonomy because of the condition. Instead, use “recovering from a stroke,” “survived a stroke,” “uses a wheelchair,” etc.
  - Use “people living in poverty,” rather than “the poor,” and avoid using words like “insane” or “crazy,” particularly in colloquial contexts.
- **Profession-centric Content:** When creating OTP content, please include occupational therapy-specific examples and statistics wherever possible. A focus on occupation, evidence-based practice, and outcomes can help move the profession—and your business—forward!

***Please refer to your contract for additional content-specific terms and conditions.***