



THE
INDEPENDENCE
CENTER

BRAND
STYLE
GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

OUR MISSION

Working with people with disabilities, their families, and the community, we create independence so that all may thrive.

OUR VISION

The Independence Center is the local home of civil rights for people with disabilities. Our organization provides information, resources, and support to help people with disabilities live, learn, work, play, and participate in civic life as equals. Our mission is driven by our five core values, outlined below, which guide how our staff interacts with each other and those we serve. Our staff embodies a wide range of visible and hidden disabilities, modeling empowerment for those we serve. We work with individuals and the community to identify and remove barriers that prevent or hinder people with disabilities from living in the community and participating in community life.

OUR VALUES

The IC's five Core Values – Adaptability, Collaboration, Inclusiveness, Integrity, and Person-First – define how we want to behave with each other and on the job. They provide a measuring device against which we evaluate all our actions and incorporate them into our daily work life, including how we present the organization through our branding.



OUR PERSONALITY

The IC has a unique personality that should be reflected in our communications.

WE ARE:

Warm
Welcoming/Accepting
Helpful/Understanding
Compassionate
Professional
Funny/Lighthearted
Passionate

WE AREN'T:

Exclusive
Pretentious
Patronizing
Judgmental
Stuffy
Silly/Goofy
Overbearing

OUR TONE/VOICE

Our communications should always be approachable and friendly, never stilted or overly corporate. Content should be conversational – write like people talk! Use contractions, stick to active voice, and keep sentences simple. Humor is encouraged when appropriate but should never wander into the silly, absurd, or “baby talk.” Don't be afraid to break a few grammatical rules if it makes it easier or more engaging to read.



EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

GENERAL STYLE GUIDES AND MANUALS

To ensure our communications are consistent, we defer to the following style manuals for guidance on style, grammar, usage and formatting:

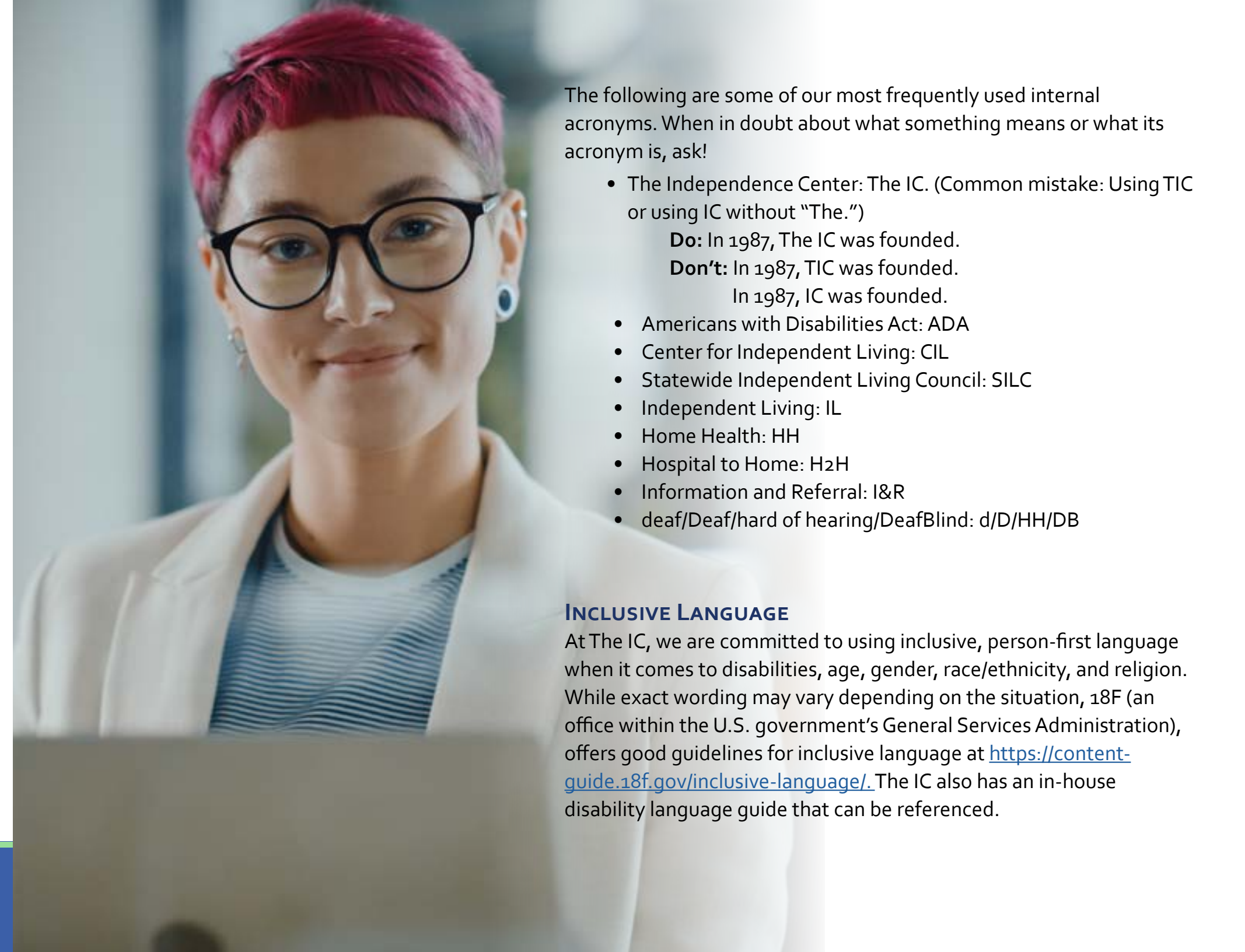
- AP Style Guide
- The Gregg Reference Manual

However, there are some exceptions and additions, many of which are noted below.

THE IC'S STYLE

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

At The IC, we have a number of divisions, departments, programs, and other words and phrases that are commonly referred to by their acronyms. When writing, always spell out the acronym and follow that by the acronym in parentheses. For example: The Independence Center (The IC) will be presenting an open house on the Veteran in Charge (VIC) program. The acronym may be used for all references that follow.



The following are some of our most frequently used internal acronyms. When in doubt about what something means or what its acronym is, ask!

- The Independence Center: The IC. (Common mistake: Using TIC or using IC without "The.")
 - Do:** In 1987, The IC was founded.
 - Don't:** In 1987, TIC was founded.
In 1987, IC was founded.
- Americans with Disabilities Act: ADA
- Center for Independent Living: CIL
- Statewide Independent Living Council: SILC
- Independent Living: IL
- Home Health: HH
- Hospital to Home: H2H
- Information and Referral: I&R
- deaf/Deaf/hard of hearing/DeafBlind: d/D/HH/DB

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

At The IC, we are committed to using inclusive, person-first language when it comes to disabilities, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and religion. While exact wording may vary depending on the situation, 18F (an office within the U.S. government's General Services Administration), offers good guidelines for inclusive language at <https://content-guide.18f.gov/inclusive-language/>. The IC also has an in-house disability language guide that can be referenced.



ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility isn't just about ramps and curb cuts. It's about making information and resources available to a wide and diverse audience. When crafting communications, ask yourself whether the message is still clear to those outside of the organization, or if someone is unable to see or hear it.

Other things to keep in mind:

- Use easy-to-understand language.
- Use alt-text.
- Use closed captioning.

GRAMMAR, SPELLING, MECHANICS, AND EXCEPTIONS

Oxford comma – We love the Oxford comma and always use it as long as it doesn't cause confusion.

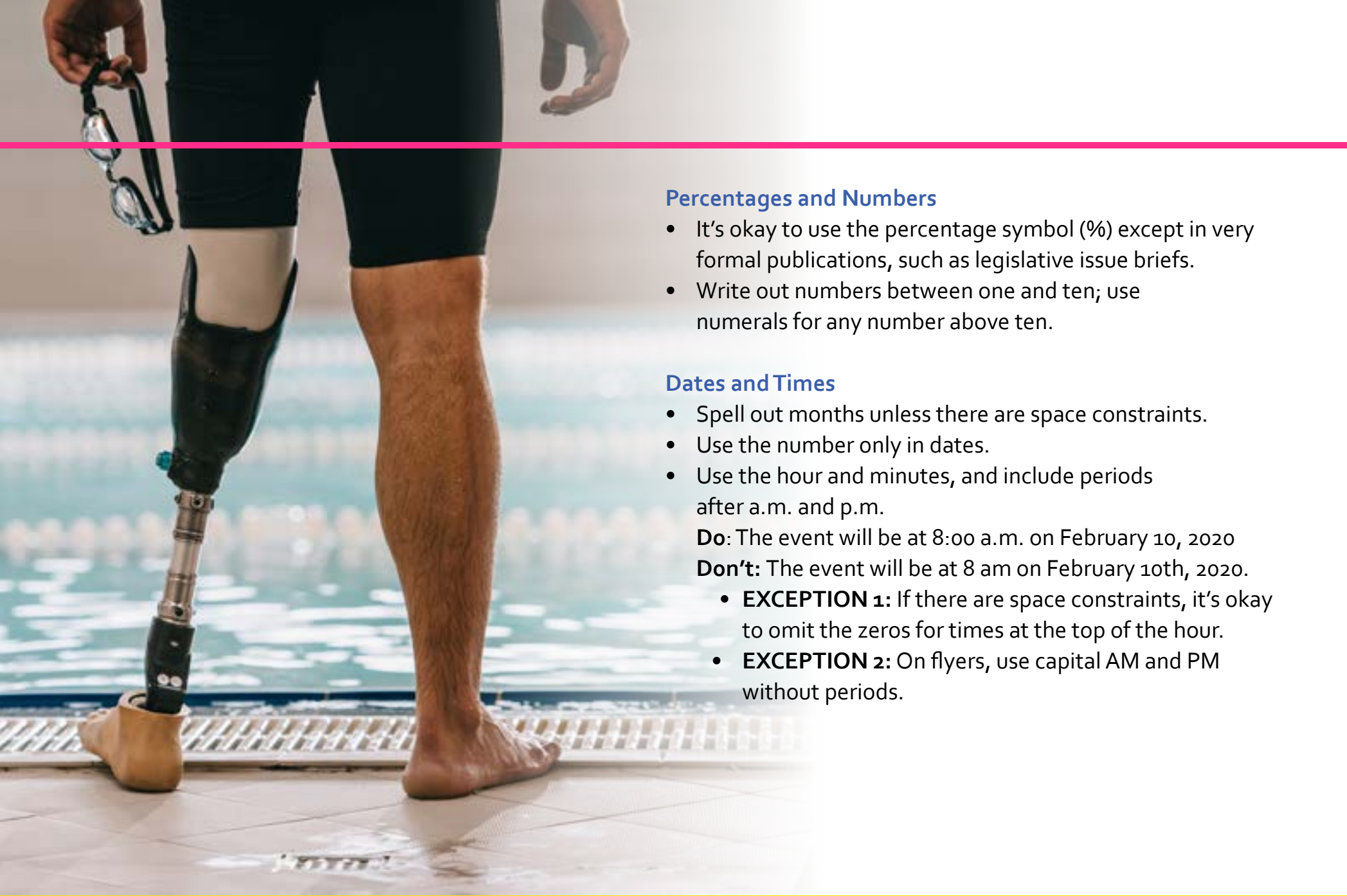
Do: Bill has participated in scuba diving, race car driving, and boxing.

Don't: Bill has participated in scuba diving, race car driving and boxing.



Capitalization

- Headlines – Use title case, not sentence case.
- Job titles – Capitalize job titles (Director of Marketing; Media Relations Coordinator)
- Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing
 - Deaf (with a capital D) refers to the Deaf community or someone who uses identify-first language. (Example: She is a Deaf person.)
 - Use lower case d in deaf when referring to the medical condition or if someone uses person-first language. (Example: She was diagnosed as deaf at an early age.)
 - When writing about a group of people with hearing loss and you are unsure how they identify, use d/Deaf/hard of hearing (d/D/HH)
 - Never capitalize hard of hearing unless it's part of a title.



Percentages and Numbers

- It's okay to use the percentage symbol (%) except in very formal publications, such as legislative issue briefs.
- Write out numbers between one and ten; use numerals for any number above ten.

Dates and Times

- Spell out months unless there are space constraints.
- Use the number only in dates.
- Use the hour and minutes, and include periods after a.m. and p.m.

Do: The event will be at 8:00 a.m. on February 10, 2020

Don't: The event will be at 8 am on February 10th, 2020.

- **EXCEPTION 1:** If there are space constraints, it's okay to omit the zeros for times at the top of the hour.
- **EXCEPTION 2:** On flyers, use capital AM and PM without periods.



FORMATTING

Spacing

Use one space after periods. Double space between paragraphs.

Bulleted lists

Capitalize the first word if the bullets are standalone sentences.

Example:

Three ways to make someone smile:

- Send them a card.
- Bring them flowers.
- Give them a compliment.

Do not capitalize the first word if it's part of the lead sentence.

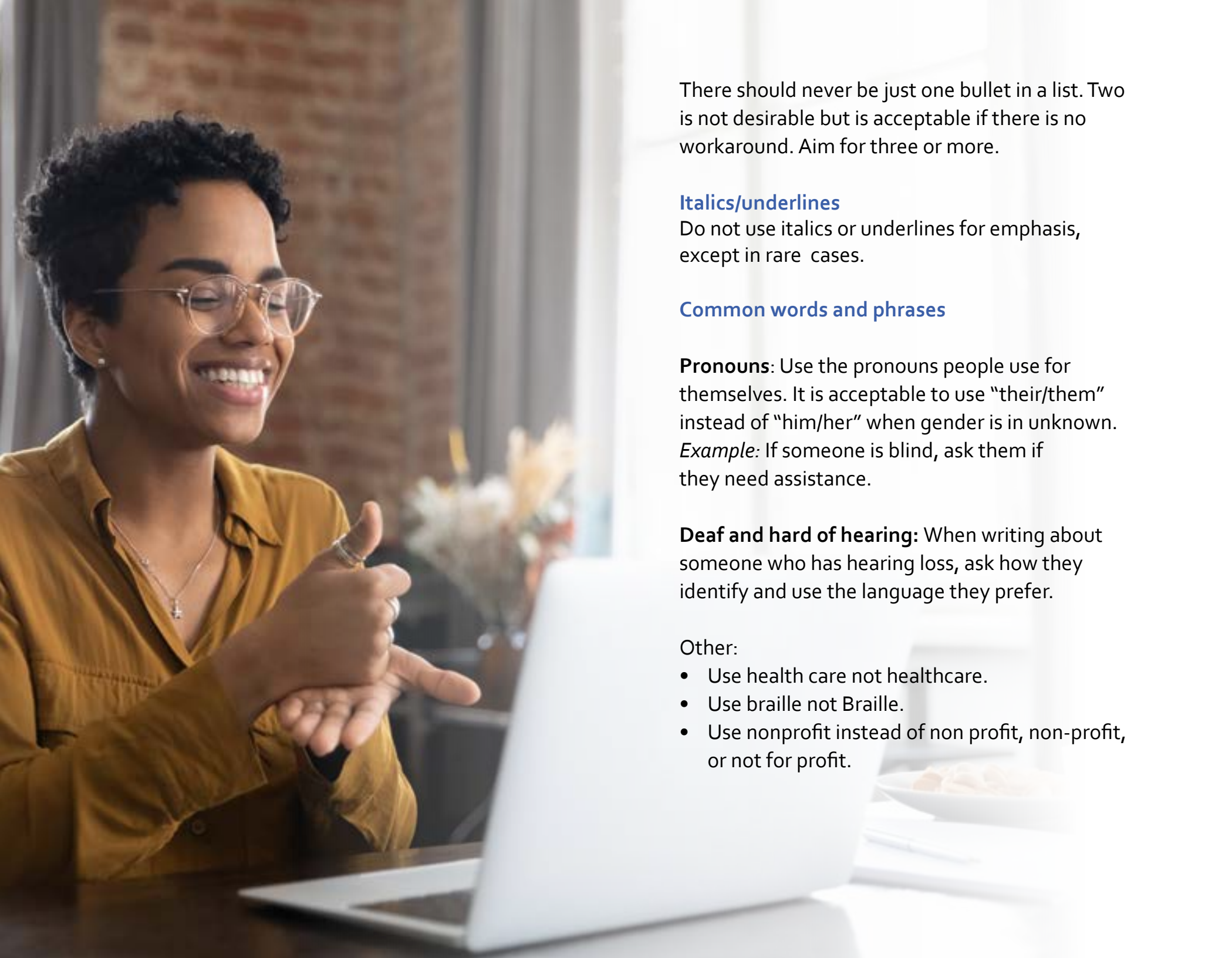
Example:

You can make someone smile by:

- sending a card;
- bringing flowers;
- giving compliments.
- Use a period if it forms a complete sentence or thought (see first example above).

If it's not a complete sentence, use semi-colons for all except the last bullet.

Use a period in the last bullet (see second example above).



There should never be just one bullet in a list. Two is not desirable but is acceptable if there is no workaround. Aim for three or more.

Italics/underlines

Do not use italics or underlines for emphasis, except in rare cases.

Common words and phrases

Pronouns: Use the pronouns people use for themselves. It is acceptable to use “their/them” instead of “him/her” when gender is unknown. *Example:* If someone is blind, ask them if they need assistance.

Deaf and hard of hearing: When writing about someone who has hearing loss, ask how they identify and use the language they prefer.

Other:

- Use health care not healthcare.
- Use braille not Braille.
- Use nonprofit instead of non profit, non-profit, or not for profit.



Widows and orphans

A widow is a very short line – usually one word or the end of a hyphenated word – at the end of a paragraph or column. An orphan is a single word or part of a word that appears at the beginning of a page. Avoid both widows and orphans whenever possible by utilizing the widow/orphan control feature.

Section headings

In longer documents that are broken into sections, there is no need to repeat a section heading unless not doing so would create confusion.

Common writing mistakes

Misusing who and that. When referring to a person, use “who.” When referring to a thing, use “that.” (Example: Did you see the lady who came in today? I gave her the brochure that she needed.)

Putting periods outside of quotation marks. Always put periods within quotation marks at the end of a sentence. (Example: He said that he “needed a good laugh today.”)

Using big words, long sentences or jargon. Keep writing simple and easy to understand.

Using emojis. Never use emojis when writing consumer-facing pieces. One emoji in an email subject line is fine as long as it's applicable and appropriate.

Capitalizing the "I" in Veteran in Charge.

- Peer Support
- Transitions
- Housing
- Employment
- Benefits
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Low Vision/Blindness
- Youth Services
- Assistive Technology



Intellectual Property

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), "intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce."

Both ethically and legally, The IC respects the IP rights of others and will not use others' work without citation and/or written permission in our publications, website, press releases, social media, and any other communications. There are many guidelines available online to determine "fair use" and whether a citation and/or permission is required. Unfortunately, it's not always clear cut so, when in doubt, seek permission from the original creator of the work. Refer to the following resources for more information:

World Intellectual Property Organization:

<https://www.wipo.int/portal/en/> (This website contains exhaustive information about IP.)

Intellectual Property Rights: What Researchers Need to Know: <https://www.enago.com/academy/intellectual-property-rights-what-researchers-need-to-know/> (This is a very brief explanation of IP, as it relates to researchers. But it can also apply to The IC.)



How to Avoid Intellectual Property Violations:

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6043-intellectual-property-tips.html>

Disney Trademark Infringement: Everything You Need to Know: https://www.upcounsel.com/disney-trademark-infringement?fbclid=IwAR3JDcuysG93fpYXCCOojiR6Kr_Y4yorTdFt4Tu3SxM1xe1t3O8ZD5Rr2RM#examples-of-lawsuits-for-disney-trademark-infringement

Citations/permissions for others using our materials

In instances where another party is creating a derivative work from our copyrighted material with our permission, we require our logo be placed in an appropriate location within the publication with a phrase crediting The IC. (Example: "This workbook is used with permission and a derivative of "The Independence Center's Personal Emergency Preparedness Workbook" by The Independence Center of Colorado Springs, CO.")

If they are requesting the use of a copyrighted graphic or image, the following citation should be used under the image: "Image reproduced with permission from The Independence Center of Colorado Springs, CO." In addition, we request an emailed copy of the final document with citation so that we can approve and keep a copy for our records.



Crisis Communications

All crisis communications responses should be deferred to the Marketing Director. In the event the Director is out of the office for any length of time, they will discuss how the Marketing Department should respond if a crisis were to occur in their absence.

In a crisis situation, Marketing may be called upon to write press releases, craft statements, contact the press, arrange interviews, send emails, and other content. All content created should be approved by the Director before distribution. When creating content, use these best practices using the following format:

- Begin with a statement of values, purpose, priorities, or intent.
- Acknowledgement: State awareness of the event or issue.
- Empathy: If there are victims or potential victims, express empathy.
- Values: Describe the organization's values that will inform the response to the crisis.



- Approach: Describe ways the organization will handle the response to the crisis, including what has been done or what is under way.
- Commitment: Outline the substantive or procedural commitments The IC is making now.
- Show you care: Always lead with empathy.
- Be direct: No euphemisms.
- Tell the truth. No misleading half-truths. It's okay to say you don't know if you truly don't know.
- Convey a positive attitude to balance urgency and prevent panic.
- Address all relevant elements of the problem: public health, business, economic, information, and social.
- Expectations are dynamic and changing; write to actual current expectations.
- Communicate at multiple levels including partners, vendors, consumers, clients, staff, and leadership
- Remember: People are feeling vulnerable. Acknowledge that and be compassionate.

FILE TYPES:

JPG

USE WITH MICROSOFT PRODUCTS OR WEBSITES THAT ONLY TAKE JPGs.

PNG

USE WHEN PROJECT REQUIRES A TRANSPARENT BACKGROUND (NO WHITE SQUARE AROUND THE LOGO).

EPS

SCALABLE FILE, REQUIRED FOR MOST VENDORS SUCH AS PRINTERS, PROMO PRODUCT VENDORS. CAN EASILY BE USED IN ALL ADOBE PRODUCTS.

AI

ORIGINAL FILE. USE ONLY TO MAKE EDITS TO THE LOGO.

DESIGN STYLE GUIDE

LOGOS

LOGO TYPE



EVERYDAY USE LOGO

Use this logo for most design purposes.

WHITE WITH GREEN LEAF

ON DARK

Can be used for dark color promo products and branded wear products.

This logo is transparent and does not include the black box.



WHITE ON DARK

To be used on any advertising for high contrast/low vision.

Can be used for dark color promo products and branded wear products.



This logo is transparent and does not include the black box.



BLACK ON WHITE

Use this logo for black on white design purposes such as newspaper ads.

HORIZONTAL PROMO LOGO

To be used on promo products when the product requires a long logo such as lanyard and pill boxes.

LOGO PLACEMENT

- Every publication MUST have a logo.
- Default for publications should place all logos to the left side unless the design makes this impossible. Secondary placement should be the center. Right side should be a last resort due to Design having a compelling reason.

LOGO SIZE

For a standard document the logo should not size more than 2.5 inches except for the following reasons:

- Low vision documents, in which case the logo can size as large as needed.
- Presentations where it needs to be seen across the room.

LOGO BACKGROUNDS

Do not place logos on photo backgrounds unless Design has a compelling reason.

Logos can be placed on background solid colors but use this option sparingly out of necessity.



LOGO NO NO'S

- Do not skew or change the ratio of any logo for any reason.
- Do not change the logo colors unless there is a full rebrand that should be overseen by the Marketing Director.
- If a need arises for a new logo other than a different file type, approval must go through the Marketing Director.

FONTS

- Standard font: Corbel
Use for all standard copy or headings
- Logo font and secondary heading: Lucida Sans
Use for logo creation such as the event logos.
- Heading fonts can be changed for creativity purposes as long as they are accessible.
- Standard size: 14 point
- Accessibility mandates a minimum of 14 point. Do not go under this size without approval from the Marketing Director.
- Low vision size: Minimum 24 point

BRAND COLORS



PRIMARY COLORS

DARK BLUE

280 U
HEX 1e3366
CMYK= 100, 89, 32, 21
RGB= 30, 51, 102

LIGHT BLUE

661 U
HEX 3b5fa8
CMYK 85, 68, 2, 0
RGB 59, 95, 168

DARK GREEN

2423 U
HEX 00a717
CMYK 94, 1, 100, 0
RGB 0, 167, 23

LIGHT GREEN

2246 U
HEX 98de99
CMYK 40, 0, 53, 0
RGB 152, 222, 153

YELLOW

115 U
HEX ffdfoo
CMYK 0, 10, 100, 0
RGB 255, 224, 0

BRIGHT PINK

Rhodamine Red
Hex U ff2d89
CMYK 0, 92, 10, 0
RGB 255, 45, 137

NOTE:

Tints of all primary colors are acceptable as long as the publication also incorporates 100% of the color.

HIGH CONTRAST COMBINATIONS

High contrast colors are typically white font on a black background, and no other color should be added to the document. Other high contrast colors could be used if requested if they fall into the color palette guidelines.

PATTERNS/SHAPES/TEXTURES

- Dimension should be present in all publications with use of layering and drop shadows.
- Typical background texture is the leaf background with leaves falling in different directions. This can be used as teal or eggplant color files only.
- Circles are a core feature within The IC brand. Circles can be used alone or with a dotted line around the circle.
- Publications should not be produced without some kind of curve.

FOOTER

All document and flyers should have The IC address, phone number, video phone number, and web address on the document.



PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE GUIDE

PURPOSE

Photography at The IC is used as an integral element of our brand and should reflect a positive and upbeat image of life and activities at the center.

MOOD

When shooting, try to capture people who are engaged and/or smiling.

RESOLUTION

Ensure that all photos are shot and archived in high resolution.

FOCUS

Photos should be shot with the subject in crisp focus. If shooting a photo at distance, consider capturing an object in the foreground along with your subject. This can give visual interest to a photo that might otherwise seem boring.



BACKGROUND

When shooting, avoid backgrounds that appear cluttered or busy. Sometimes this just isn't possible, but if you have control of the area, try to declutter (e.g., hide computer cables, straighten signage that isn't straight, wipe off reflective surfaces, etc.).

CROPPING

Provide extra space around the subject so the graphic designer has options when laying out publications.

ORIENTATION

Make sure to shoot photos in portrait and landscape. This will provide additional options for the graphic designer.

FLASH

When possible, use the removable flash unit to improve dim lighting and to ensure that images are shot at a faster shutter speed, eliminating soft and blurry photos.

VIDEOGRAPHY STYLE GUIDE

PURPOSE

Just like photography, videography is used as an integral element of our brand and should reflect a positive and upbeat image of life and activities at The IC. Though much of the videography standard is the same as the photography standard, there are distinct differences.

DRESS

Subjects should dress in a professional manner consistent with The IC's dress code. From a technical standpoint, video can be a very finicky medium when it comes to the clothing worn by people on screen, so please follow the attached "Video-Friendly Clothing Guidelines" if you are part of a video shoot.

INTERVIEWS

When interviewing The IC employees, make sure the interviewee is a subject matter expert on the content they are discussing. Make sure to capture at least three seconds of video footage before and after the starting and stopping point when the subject is speaking.

B-ROLL

When shooting B-roll, capture 15- to 20-second clips. If someone is transiting the scene, make sure their movement begins off camera and ends off camera.

LIGHTING

Lighting should always be used when shooting a subject indoors. If possible, the background should be lit as well. When shooting video outside during the day, lighting generally isn't necessary.

RESOLUTION

Ensure that all videos are shot and archived in high definition.

FOCUS

Videos should be shot with the subject in focus.

BACKGROUND

When shooting, avoid backgrounds that appear cluttered or busy. Sometimes this just isn't possible, but if you have control of the area, try to declutter (e.g., hide computer cables, straighten signage, wipe off reflective surfaces, etc.).

CROPPING

Provide extra space around the subject so the video editor can zoom in and out as needed.

VOICEOVER

All text within a video must include voiceover so people who are blind or have low vision can receive the same information as others. The person being interviewed should be asked to make a verbal introduction, alleviating the need for voiceover when their name is displayed in the video.

ORIENTATION

When shooting video, always shoot in landscape.



VIDEO-FRIENDLY CLOTHING GUIDELINES

WHAT TO WEAR

- Solid-colored, non-white dress shirts/tops.
- Solid-colored tops of the following colors: cool blues (the top choice), natural tones (tan, coral, etc.), pastels.
- No glasses (if you have the option to use contacts or go without glasses).
- Clothes that aren't too tight or too baggy.
- Jackets and sweaters with a collared shirt or blouse help with hiding mics and/or wires.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Patterns of any kind, especially tight patterns such as pinstripes, plaids, checkered, or herringbone.
- Shirts with writing/logos.
- Bright or bold colors, especially neon or red (burgundy or maroon is acceptable).
- White shirts and blouses and black jackets.

SPECIFICS FOR MEN

- Blue dress shirts for men look great on video.
- If wearing a tie, please bring two or three different ties to choose from. Again, no tight patterns.
- Mid-range colors look best on video. Black suits are not advised. Again, solid colors are preferred over patterns.

SPECIFICS FOR WOMEN

- Subtle jewelry and make-up.

WEBSITE STYLE GUIDE

HEADINGS

All page titles should be "h1" headers for search engine optimization reasons.

FONT SIZE

14 point is the minimum font size allowed on the website.

CONTRAST

All text should have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1.

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

The website was designed with Section 508 compliance in mind and does include the latest features to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. To test website accessibility for compliance with the most current version of Section 508, visit <https://wave.webaim.org/>.

THEME

The website was setup to reflect The IC style guide and color pallet described in the brand standards document, and any new website content should be built to have a similar and consistent appearance.

IMAGE OVERLAYS

Some images on the website contain color overlays with a partial transparency. There is also a partially transparent leaf overlay that occurs over the custom title block and image on some pages. Whenever adding a new page, be mindful that these elements remain consistent.

TITLE BLOCK

The custom title block should always be aligned to the left side of the screen to ensure consistency with other pages.

OTHER

HIPAA AND PHOTO RELEASES

If not in a public space, always get signed photo and HIPAA releases of all subjects being videotaped. If an event is in a public space, there is no need for a release. If an event is in a private space, but open to the public, and with a sign notifying them they are subject to being in photos or videos, there is no need for a release. If there is a minor in a video being shot in a private location, have the releases signed by a parent or guardian.

TESTIMONIALS

Using testimonials from consumers, clients, or partners who have used our services is an important part of building trust in The IC's brand. However, prior to publishing the testimonial, it's important to go through the proper channels and procedures.

- If you do not know personally know or have a relationship with the person giving the testimonial, find out who does.
- Ask them to contact the person who gave the testimonial and find out if it's okay to use their testimonial in our marketing materials (website, brochures, social media, etc.).
- If possible, ask them to introduce the two of you so you can follow up.
- If the testimony has to be rewritten, send it to the person who originally gave the quote for approval.
- Always get a HIPAA release signed (see above), even if you're not using their name.

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

- Keep posts short and smart.
- Tone should be friendly but professional.
- Spell out words. Avoid using shortcuts like "2b" for "to be" or acronyms like ICYMI instead of "in case you missed it."
- Use image descriptions.

EMAIL BLASTS

- **Privacy:** We never sell or distribute our email list.
- **Subject lines:** Use sentence case.
Do: You're invited to our event!
Don't: You're Invited to Our Event!
- **Keep it short:** Get the message across in as few words as possible.
- **Make it visually interesting.** When possible, include images, subheads, bullets, numbered lists, etc., to break up the copy and keep the eye moving down the page.

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING LOW VISION DOCUMENTS

- Use the "white on dark" logo.
- Use Corbel font.
- Use a minimum font size of 24pt.
- Choose high contrast colors (e.g., white font on black background).
- Paper color can make a big difference in how easy or difficult it is to read a document. If possible, ask about color preference. When in doubt, lavender, blue, or yellow is usually a safe choice.
- Limit or eliminate images, other than the logo.

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