

Terminology People First Language



Always speak directly to the person who has a disability, not just the family, friend or staff member that accompanies them.

Don't give excessive praise or change your tone of voice when speaking with a person with disabilities. It can be patronizing.

If addressing an adult with disabilities, use the same respect and conversation content that you would use with an adult without disabilities.

Don't assume that a person with disabilities is not capable of attending certain classes or participating in certain activities or events. Ask them directly about their desires to participate or attend. It is not for us to decide for them...it is their choice.

USE AFFIRMATIVE LANGUAGE	AVOID NEGATIVE LANGUAGE
Person who has	Suffers from, victim of, afflicted by
Person with a disability, People with disabilities	Handicapped, crippled, victim, unfortunate, disabled
Person with Down syndrome	Downs child, mongoloid, feeble-minded
Person with Autism	Autistic
Uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair
Person with an intellectual disability or has a developmental disability	Retarded, mentally defective, impaired, feeble-minded
Deaf or hard of hearing	Deaf & dumb, hearing impaired
Communicates using Sign Language, speech disability, communication disability, non-verbal	Tongue-tied, mute or dumb
Has a physical disability	Lame, crippled, deformed, feeble, Palsied, CP or spastic
Seizures	Fits
Has a learning disability	Learning disabled, slow
Paralyzed	Invalid or paralytic
Mental illness or emotional disorder	Crazy or insane
Blind, low vision, partially sighted	Blind as a bat, sightless, the blind

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