

People First Language Preferred Terminology

Use people first language. When it is necessary to mention a disability, reference the person *first*, *then* the disability. For example, people with disabilities instead of disabled people.

USE:	INSTEAD OF:
Person or individual with a disability	Handicapped or disabled person
Person who is blind	Blind person
Person who is deaf or hard of hearing	Deaf person
Person without a disability	Normal person
Disability organization	Disabled group
Accessible parking	Handicapped parking
Accessible restroom	Handicapped restroom
Accessible transportation	Handicapped transportation
Intellectual disability	Mental retardation
Wheelchair user or person who uses a wheelchair	Confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound

Courtesy of:



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Assisting people with disabilities to attain and maintain their personal independence through advocacy, education and service.

You can support our mission by:

- Donating used medical equipment
- Referring people to our services
- Sharing information about us
- Following us on social media
- Participating in our events
- Joining our board or committees



Disability Etiquette

**A Quick Guide to
People First
Language (PFL)
& Etiquette Tips**





Things to remember...

- **Language evolves** – some words that we were using 20 or 30 years ago are no longer acceptable. Take the word “*handicapped*.” The term “*handicapped*” comes from the image of a person standing on the corner with a cap in hand, begging for money. **People with disabilities do not want to be the recipients of charity or pity.** They simply want to be recognized as people with the civil right to participate fully in their communities.
- Replacing “*handicapped*” with the term “**accessible**” paints an entirely different visual picture. An “**accessible**” restroom implies a restroom that is more user-friendly to everyone.
- Another major language change is removing the words “*mentally retarded*” from our vocabulary and legislation. On October 5, 2010, President Obama signed **Rosa’s Law**, named for nine-year-old Rosa Marcellino. Rosa, an individual with Down Syndrome, first worked with her parents and her siblings to have the words “*mentally retarded*” officially removed from the health and education code in her home state of Maryland, but the advocacy did not end in Maryland. Rosa’s law amends the language in all federal health, education and labor laws to remove “*mentally retarded*” and replace the words with “**intellectual disability**.” Rosa’s brother Nick stated, “**What you call people is how you treat them. If we change the words, maybe it will be the start of a new attitude towards people with disabilities.**”
- **Avoid negative labeling** such as “*afflicted with*”, “*crippled*”, “*victim*”, or “*suffers from*.” These phrases devalue individuals with disabilities.
- **Respectful and inclusive** language is essential for the **dignity** and **humanity** of people with disabilities.
- People who use mobility or adaptive equipment are not *wheelchair-bound* or *confined to a wheelchair*. The mobility device or adaptive equipment affords freedom and access that otherwise would be denied them. Use the terms “**wheelchair user**” or “**person who uses a wheelchair**.”
- **Do not use euphemisms** such as “*handicapable*”, “*differently-abled*”, or “*special*”. Terms such as these reinforce the idea that people with disabilities cannot deal honestly with their disabilities.
- **A person with a disability is a person first and foremost. Don’t bring up the disability, unless it is relevant to the conversation.**
- Treat people the way **THEY** would like to be treated.