

Words with Dignity

Language is powerful! Use respectful terms when referring to Persons with Disabilities.

Use	Don't Use
Person who experiences, a person with	Victim, afflicted with (e.g., Victim of cerebral palsy)
Uses a wheelchair	Restricted/confined in a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound
Person with a disability, disabled	Cripple, handicapped, invalid
Learning or intellectual disability, developmental disability, cognitive disability, ADD/ADHD	Mental retardation, slow, retarded, lazy, stupid, underachiever
Non-disabled or able-bodied	Normal (referring to non-disabled persons as "normal" insinuates that people with disabilities are abnormal)
Disabled since birth, born with	Birth Defect
Deaf, Hard of Hearing	Deaf-mute, Deaf, and Dumb
Epilepsy, seizures	Fits
Psychiatric history, psychiatric disability, emotional disorder, mental illness, consumer of mental health services	Crazy, insane, mental patient, wacko, lunatic, psychotic, a schizophrenic

Preferred Terms:

- Vision loss (no visual capability)
- Legally blind, low vision (some visual capability)
- Hemiplegia (paralysis on one side of the body)
- Hearing loss, hard of hearing (some hearing capability)
- Paraplegia (loss of function in the lower body only)
- Quadriplegia (paralysis of both arms)
- Residual limb (post-amputation of a limb)

Terms to avoid

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abnormal - Differently-abled - Imbecile - Moron - Pitiful - Suffer - Burden - Disfigured - Manic - Palsied - Retard - Tragedy - Condition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handicapable - Maimed - Pathetic - Spastic - Unfortunate - Deformed - Incapacitated - Madman - Physically – challenged - Stricken with - Victim |
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