For me, words are a form of action capable of influencing change.

~ Ingrid Bengis

EQUALITY CHOICE COMMUNITY

ICDD

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People First Language

"The words you use matter."

People First Language

- Are you myopic <u>or</u> do you wear glasses?

- Are you cancerous <u>or</u> do you have cancer?

- Are you freckled <u>or</u> do you have freckles?

- Are you handicapped/disabled <u>or</u> do you have a disability?

- People First Language says what a person has, <u>not</u> what a person is.

- People First Language puts the person before the disability.

This table has examples of positive and negative phrases. You can see that positive phrases put the person first. 👉

People First Language is terminology used when referring to people with disabilities. It refers to the person first, rather than the disability.

A disability is simply a diagnosis given by a doctor. If you were recently diagnosed with pneumonia would it make sense to refer to you as pneumatic? No. Just like it doesn't make sense to call someone who has been diagnosed with autism "autistic," someone with mental retardation "retarded," or someone who has epilepsy "epileptic."

People First Language is about speaking accurately about an individual with a disability. It emphasizes the person's worth and abilities. It is not about being politically correct, it's about effectively communicating on the subject of disability. The term "handicapped" refers to a person having to beg on the street with "cap in hand." The term "disabled" means "broken down." The use of these terms and others like them are not accurate or appropriate. They are offensive and do not reflect the individuality, equality, or dignity of people with disabilities.

People with disabilities are an integral part of the general public. Be careful not to use terms "we/they" that suggest segregation or group all individuals with disabilities together, for example, "the disabled," "the deaf," or "the blind."

A person's disability should be mentioned only if it is relevant. If it isn't relevant, why mention it? Don't be intimidated by terminology. Remember, people with disabilities are simply <u>people</u> who happen to have disabilities.

☺ *People First Language*   ☹ *Avoid These Words*

☺ People First Language	☹ Avoid These Words
☺ Person with a disability or a person who has a disability	☹ Cripple/handicapped/invalid (invalid means "not valid")
☺ Person who has a learning disability/intellectual disability/developmental delay/ADD/cerebral palsy/autism/epilepsy	☹ Slow/retarded/lazy/stupid/underachiever/moron/mongoloid/victim/afflicted/autistic/epileptic
☺ People/individuals without disabilities	☹ Healthy/normal person (this implies that a person with disabilities is not normal)
☺ Person who is deaf/cannot speak/uses a communication device	☹ Deaf mute/deaf & dumb
☺ Person who is blind/has visual impairments	☹ The blind
☺ Person who was born with a disability/congenital disability	☹ Birth defect
☺ Person who uses a wheelchair/crutches (people use a wheelchair for mobility and freedom).	☹ Restricted/confined to a wheelchair/wheelchair bound/cripple
☺ Accessible Parking	☹ Handicapped Parking