Disability Inclusive Language Guide

Referring to Individuals or People with Disabilities

When referring to individuals or people with disabilities, it is acceptable to use person-first language:

- People with disabilities

- Person(s) or individual(s) with disability/disabilities

- Persons with different abilities

- Person-first language is designed to stress personhood

- Person with _

- Person who _

Disability-Neutral Language

When disability-neutral language is required, it is acceptable to use the following:

- People with disabilities, the disability community

- "Disability" terms are adjectives, so they must be accompanied by a noun. i.e., the blind community, the Deaf community

- Has a disability, is a person with a disability, physically disabled, walks with a cane, uses leg braces

- Non-disabled, person without disabilities

- Accessible parking, Accessible entrance

- Person who uses a chair/wheelchair, chair/wheelchair user

Disability-Negative Language

- The disabled, the blind, the deaf, the handicapped, crippled or special needs

- Crippled, suffers from, afflicted with, stricken with, victim of, invalid

- Impaired, impairment

- Normal person, healthy, whole

- Disabled parking, handicapped entrance

- Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound

Other Notes

- Using the word disability is fine

- When writing or speaking about people with disabilities it is common to put the person first. Catch-all phrases such as 'the blind', 'the deaf' or 'the disabled, do not reflect the individuality, equality or dignity of people with disabilities.

- There are discrepancies among the resources and in expert opinions. Following person-first language is widely used, but person-first language is not preferred by all people with disabilities. Specifically, some members of the autism and Deaf communities prefer identity-first language.

Key Points

- People First Language puts the person before the disability, and it describes who a person is not what a person has.

- If a person says they prefer a certain type of language, use that when talking to or about them, regardless of your own preference.

- The social model says that though our impairments (our diagnostic, medical conditions) may limit us in some ways, it is the inaccessibility of society that actually disables us and renders us unable to function.

Helpful Links

- [National Center on Disability and Journalism](https://ncdj.org/style-guide/) (https://ncdj.org/style-guide/)

- [The National Disability Authority](http://nda.ie/Publications/Attitudes/Appropriate-Terms-to-Use-about-Disability/) (http://nda.ie/Publications/Attitudes/Appropriate-Terms-to-Use-about-Disability/)