

DIGNIFIED WORDS AND PHRASES

People who have disabilities must be given respect in verbal and print communications. "Person First" language needs to be utilized in order to portray these individuals with dignity. Describe the person first, then the disability--only if necessary. Show all humans as equals, avoid words that evoke pity or guilt. The following guidelines are supported by disability organizations around the world.

Note: A handicap is an obstacle society imposes on a person with a disability (i.e. inaccessible buildings, no signage, non-inclusive programs.)

The best thing one can say to a person with a disability is "**Hello**". Offer assistance before providing it. (some may not need or want help.)

- 1.) Look directly at a person with a disability.
- 2.) Speak in a normal tone of voice.

Words to Use and Avoid

Use: person(s) with a disability

Avoid: disabled, handicapped, crippled, invalid (invalid means not valid)

Use: person who has...

Avoid: crippled by, afflicted with, suffering from, victim of, deformed

Use: person with a physical disability

Avoid: lame, crippled, physically challenged

Use: person who uses a wheelchair

Avoid: confined, restricted, wheelchair-bound

Use: person who is Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal
Avoid: deaf and dumb, deaf mute

Use: person with a developmental disability or a cognitive impairment
Avoid: retard, mentally retarded, mongoloid, special, learning disabled, lazy

Use: person of short stature
Avoid: dwarf, midget

Use: person born with Cerebral Palsy
Avoid: birth defect, spastic

Use: person with a mental illness, person with schizophrenia...
Avoid: mental patient, mentally ill, mental, insane, crazy

Use: Person who is visually impaired, persons who are blind
Avoid: visually impaired, blind

Use: people without disabilities, Temporarily Able Bodied
Avoid: normal people

Use: accessible parking
Avoid: handicapped parking

Use: person with a congenital disability
Avoid: birth defect

Use: person with a spinal cord injury
Avoid: quadriplegic, paraplegic

Use: person with epilepsy
Avoid: epileptic, fits

Use: person with a psychiatric disability
Avoid: emotionally disturbed, crazy