

Proper Terminology

WORDS DO MATTER

Language is critical in shaping and reflecting our thoughts, beliefs and feelings. Some words degrade and diminish people with disabilities. Always try to avoid stereotypical depictions of people with disabilities. Promote "people first!"

PUT THE PERSON FIRST

Still, individuals have their own preferences. If you are not sure what words to use, simply ask the person!

SAY

- Person with a disability
- Person with multiple disabilities
- Person with Tourette Syndrome
- Person who has Cerebral Palsy

AVOID SAYING

- Disabled person; invalid person; handicapped
- The disabled; the challenged; crippled
- That person has Tourette Syndrome
- He suffers from Cerebral Palsy

Many people with disabilities dislike terms such as "physically challenged" and "differently abled".
If you are not sure what words to use, A-T-P: Ask The Person!

- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person who has a physical or mobility disability

- Confined to a wheelchair; wheelchair-bound
- Cripple

The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it's liberating, not confining.

- Person with a disability since birth
- Has Down syndrome
- Person who is blind
- Person with a visual impairment
- Short-statured person
- Hearing impaired (Lack of speech usually results from impaired hearing)

- Birth defect; deformity; congenital defect
- Mongol; mental
- The blind person
- Visually impaired
- Dwarf; midget
- Deaf and dumb; deaf and mute

People with disabilities are generally comfortable with the terminology used to describe daily activities. For example, people who use wheelchairs go for "walks," and people with visual impairments "see" what you mean.

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A Way with Words and Images: Suggestions for the Portrayal of People with Disabilities. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. 2006. Retrieved from the Government of Canada Accessibility Resource Centre. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/migration/documents/eng/disability/arc/way_with_words.pdf



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HIRE for TALENT has made every effort to use the most respectful words possible while writing these materials. We realize, however, that the most appropriate terminology may change over time. We developed these materials with the intent to respect the dignity and inherent rights of all individuals.