

Media Tips

Communication matters...

An individual's quality of life is dependent on their ability to fully participate in community life.

Words, and the way we communicate, profoundly influence acceptance and participation. Language can empower individuals or reinforce unhelpful stereotypes.

Communication to the public should be based on respect.

To ensure your communication with and about people with a disability is positive and inclusive, please take a moment to check that your media coverage and reporting is in line with currently accepted terminology.

Please use People First Language. (See chart above)

In Summary...

Avoid using variations which place the disability before the person, this places the focus on the person and not the disability.

Using person first language helps your audience remember they are reading or hearing about a person who has feelings, needs and rights.

"Disability is not something you are it's something you have"

This slight but powerful language shift helps us view people with disabilities as capable and deserving of respect.

If you have any questions, or need further information about People First Language please contact us!


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Communicating With and About People With Disabilities

People first language emphasizes the person first not the disability.

People First Language	Language to Avoid
Person who is blind/visually impaired	The blind
Person who has a communication disorder, is unable to speak, or uses a device to speak	Mute, dumb
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic
Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities



For more information about disability and health, visit: www.cdc.gov/disabilities