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DIGNITY & DISABILITY IDENTITY-FIRST LANGUAGE

*Use the words *disability* and *disabled* when referring to disabled individuals to reduce stigmatization of disability and promote a positive disability identity.*



IDENTITY-FIRST LANGUAGE

Say:

(Disability) Individual

Examples:

- Autistic person
- Disabled individual
- Deaf person

Avoid:

Euphemisms

Examples:

- Differently Abled
- Handicapable
- Special needs



WHY

Why the shift to identity-first language?

Language is ever-evolving. Identity-first language acknowledges disability as an identity and promotes acceptance.

Is person-first language bad?

No, some disabled people still prefer person-first language, and most of the community interchangeably uses identity-first and person-first language.

What is wrong with euphemisms (ex: differently-abled)?

Euphemisms were created by non-disabled individuals for disabled people. It reinforces the stigma that disability is something to be ashamed of or covered up.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK

Ask the person their preference of identity or person-first language.

If the person is not available to ask, you can alternate between both.



Seek out and listen to disabled voices.

Disabled people are the authority on what language they identify with.



RESOURCES

Article: Yes, You Can Call Me
Disabled

#SaytheWord: A Disability Culture
Commentary on the Erasure of
“Disability”

Say the Word Campaign