

## Be Aware of Language: People-First

It is very important to remember when you are communicating about someone who has a disability to always talk about the person first. Always remember that every person is unique. A disability does not define a person and it is not who they are. It is an attribute or characteristic of that person. People with disabilities strive for equality every day and you can help by using positive language.

### Unacceptable

### Acceptable

disabled or handicapped person (except when citing laws or regulations, the word <b>handicap</b> should never be used to describe a disability)	person with a disability
the blind, the deaf, the mentally retarded	a person that is blind a person that is deaf a person with mental retardation
wheelchair bound or confined to a wheelchair	a person who uses a wheelchair
the learning disabled	someone with a learning disability
quadriplegic, paraplegic	he/she has quadriplegia, paraplegia
handicapped parking	accessible parking
he is arthritic	he has arthritis
she is cerebral palsied	she has cerebral palsy
"normal person" or "able-bodied person"	a person without a disability
he is mentally ill or schizophrenic	he has a mental illness or schizophrenia
"she/he overcame their disability"	she/he lives with a disability- People overcome obstacles or barriers
suffers a hearing loss or vision impairment	person who has hearing loss, person with a visual impairment

The following words have derogatory connotations when talking about a person with a disability: victim of, afflicted with, mute, lame, fragile, disfigured, invalid, abnormal, poor, unfortunate, dumb, disturbed. These words carry various negative meanings and emotional ties.

This information can be found in the ARTability Awareness Tool-kit, a kit designed to serve as a tool for the media when writing or talking about people with disabilities.

The information was collected from multiple sources. To find out more information about people-first language and the sources that this information was collected from call (602) 757-8118.