



## People First Language

Developmental Disabilities of Clark County uses “people first language.” People first language is a reflection of how people see each other and reflects the dignity of people with disabilities - words that put the person first, rather than the disability.

Here are ways to use people first language:

- Use language that empowers. Think people first. Say "a woman who has a disability" rather than "a disabled woman."
- Avoid words like "unfortunate," "afflicted," and "victim." Also, try to avoid casting a person with a disability as a superhuman model of courage. People with disabilities are just people, not tragic figures or demigods.
- A developmental disability is not a disease. Do not mention "symptoms," "patients," or "treatment" unless the person you're describing has an illness as well as a disability.
- Avoid terms with obvious negative or judgmental connotations, such as "crippled," "deaf and dumb," "lame" and "defective." If you aren't sure how to refer to a person's condition, ask. If the disability is not relevant to your conversation, why mention it at all?
- Never refer to a person as "confined to a wheelchair." Wheelchairs enable people to escape confinement. A person with a mobility impairment "uses" a wheelchair.
- Try to describe people without disabilities as "typical" rather than "normal."