

Using Words with Dignity

The following words have strong negative connotations and should not be used:	The following words are more affirmative and address people with dignity:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handicapped ▪ Cripple ▪ Victim ▪ Invalid ▪ Spastic ▪ Patient (except in a hospital) ▪ Wheelchair bound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person with a disability ▪ Person with a physical disability ▪ Person who has (cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, etc.) ▪ Person who uses a wheelchair ▪ Person who uses (crutches, a cane, a mobility device, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mental patient ▪ Mental ▪ Crazy ▪ Insane ▪ Nuts ▪ Schizo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person with a mental illness ▪ Person who has (depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.) ▪ Person with a psychiatric disability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retarded person ▪ Retard ▪ Mentally deficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person with a developmental disability ▪ Person with a cognitive disability ▪ Person with a cognitive impairment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Down ▪ Mongoloid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person with Down Syndrome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deaf and dumb ▪ Deaf mute ▪ Mute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person who is deaf ▪ Person who is hard of hearing ▪ Person with a speech impairment ▪ Person without speech
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brain damaged ▪ Brain injury victim ▪ Closed head injury victim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person with a traumatic brain injury ▪ Person with a closed head injury
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Midget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person of short stature ▪ Little person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deformed ▪ Birth defect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person with a congenital disability



Rule of Thumb: Make reference to the person first, then address the disability. Emphasize the person and his or her strengths; don't define the person by his or her disability. People are not conditions, so don't label them with the name of the condition or as part of a disability group. We don't say "the cancerous," nor should we say "the blind" or "the mentally ill."