



Your Words, Our Image

You are in a unique position to shape the public image of people with disabilities. By putting the person first and using these suggested words, you can convey a positive, objective view of an individual instead of a negative, insensitive image.

Do say

Don't say

Disability	Differently abled, challenged
People with disabilities	The disabled, handicapped
Person with spinal cord injury	Cripple
Person with autism, on the autism spectrum	Autistic
Person with Down syndrome	Mongoloid
Person of short stature	Midget, dwarf
Uses a wheelchair, wheelchair user	Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound
Has a learning disability	Slow learner
Has chemical or environmental sensitivities	Chemophobic
Has a brain injury	Brain damaged
Blind, low vision	Visually handicapped, blind as a bat
Deaf, hard of hearing	Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb
Intellectual disability	Retarded, mental retardation
Amputee, has limb loss	Gimp, lame
Congenital disability	Birth defect
Burn survivor	Burn victim
Post-polio syndrome	Suffers from polio
Service animal or dog	Seeing eye dog
Psychiatric disability, mental illness	Crazy, psycho, schizo
How should I describe you or your disability?	What happened to you?
Accessible parking or restroom	Handicapped parking, disabled restroom

Want more information?

Download our brochure *Guidelines: How to Write and Report About People with Disabilities* at www.rtcil.org/guidelines.

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