

People-First Language (PFL)

Metro

Regional Quality Council

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What is People-First Language?

- People-First Language puts the person before the disability.

Why use it?

- By placing the person first, the disability is not the thing that defines the person
- It reduces generalizations and stereotypes by focusing on the person
- It removes barriers and encourages mutual respect

Tips for using People-First Language:

- Avoid using terms or descriptions that suggest pity (i.e. "suffers from"). This assumes the person with a disability is living a reduced quality of life.
- Focus on people's abilities rather than their disabilities. Emphasize what they can do or like to do, not what they cannot do.
- Use the term accessible rather than disabled or handicapped to refer to facilities. Avoid outdated, offensive words such as handicapped, retarded, crazy, challenged, etc.
- When talking to or writing about someone with a disability, ask them which words or phrases they prefer.
- Refer to the person with the disability the same way you would refer to yourself, a family member or friend.

Examples of People-First Language:

Instead of this:

Disabled people

Ben is confined to a wheelchair



Say this:

People with disabilities

Ben uses a wheelchair

If you have questions or want to learn more about people-first language, contact:

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Sources:

USC Aiken Inclusive Language Guide

People First Language Style Guide: <http://www.dcbdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/People-First-Language-Style-Guide.pdf>