

WORDS OF DIGNITY

DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

"the handicapped"

"handicapped people"

REASON: The word "handicapped" comes from "cap-in-hand" (begging). **People with disabilities are not beggars anymore.**



Beggar. Jan van der Vliet.
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

USE WORDS LIKE:

"people with disabilities" or

"an individual with a disability"

THE REASON: It puts the person first and says that disability is only one part of us. We are also people who work, pay taxes, have families, take part in our community, etc.

(Artwork: Beggar. Jan van der Vliet
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Not available in alternative formats)

YOU CAN ALSO CALL US:

"citizens"

"lowans"

"neighbors"

"co-workers"

"friends"

"the Disability Community"

DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

"She's a victim of ..." (cerebral palsy)

"He is crippled with ..." (multiple sclerosis)

"He's been stricken with ..." (Parkinson's)

"She was deformed by ..."

THE REASON: It implies that there is something wrong with having disabilities.

DO NOT USE THE "R WORD":

"She's a retard" (OR "He's got mental retardation," (or "MR"), She's an idiot, "George's low functioning" (or high functioning) OR "Don't mind him, he's just slow" ...

DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

"He's a lunatic," OR "Sue is mental," OR "She's psycho," (OR crazy, insane, mad ...)

DO NOT CALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

"PATIENTS" (unless you are their doctor)

THE REASON: It says that people with disabilities must be "fixed" to be whole or OK.

USE WORDS LIKE:

"She is a strong self-advocate"

"Bill has ..." (schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, bi-polar disorder, etc.)

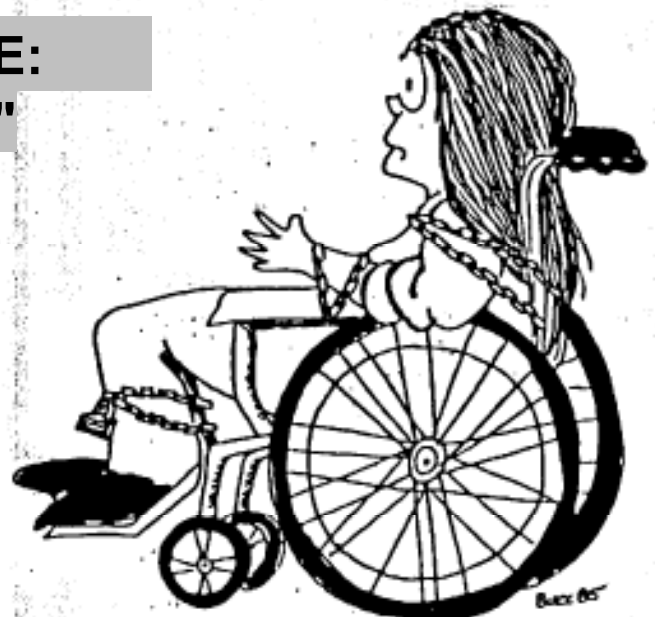
DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

"He's wheelchair-bound"

"She's confined to a
wheelchair"

"He's housebound"

THE REASON: **People are NOT bound** to their house or to their wheelchair. Their devices make people more independent and better able to participate in the community.



WOMAN CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR

USE WORDS LIKE:

"He uses a wheelchair" (or a walker or crutches)

"She can't find accessible transportation."

(Graphic cartoon showing woman chained to her wheelchair with the caption "WOMAN CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR" not available in alternative formats.)

DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

"She is mentally challenged"

"He is physically challenged"

THE REASON: People with disabilities don't "overcome" our disabilities - we live with them. We overcome the barriers related to our disabilities, like social, economic, psychological, attitudinal, architectural, transportation, educational, and employment related barriers.

USE WORDS LIKE:

"He has overcome some architectural barriers in his office"

"She has a mental disability"

"She has a physical disability"

"Mary is blind"

"John is deaf"

"Jim has schizophrenia"

"Caroline has an emotional disability"

"Joe has an intellectual disability"

"Joan has a learning disability"

Used & adapted with permission 7/95 from Use Words with Dignity, Iowa Commission of Persons with Disabilities. Wheelchair graphic from The Disability Rag, July 1985.