

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"
"Iowans with disabilities"
"Neighbors" or "Friends"
"Co-workers" or "the Boss"
"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 ..." (a bomb in the war)

THE REASON: It implies that there is something wrong with having a disability. Disability is a normal, natural part of life – about 1 in 5 people has a disability.

DO NOT USE THE “R WORD”:

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

DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

“He’s a lunatic,” OR “Sue is mental,” OR “She’s psycho,” (OR crazy, insane, mad, certifiable, ...)

DO NOT CALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

patients OR my cases (unless you are their doctor)

THE REASON: It says that people with disabilities must be “fixed” to be whole or OK. These words also carry heavy stereotypes.

USE WORDS LIKE:

“She is a strong self-advocate, even though she doesn’t talk...”
“Joe is in a program for people with intellectual disabilities”
“Bill has ...” (schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s, bi-polar disorder, etc.)

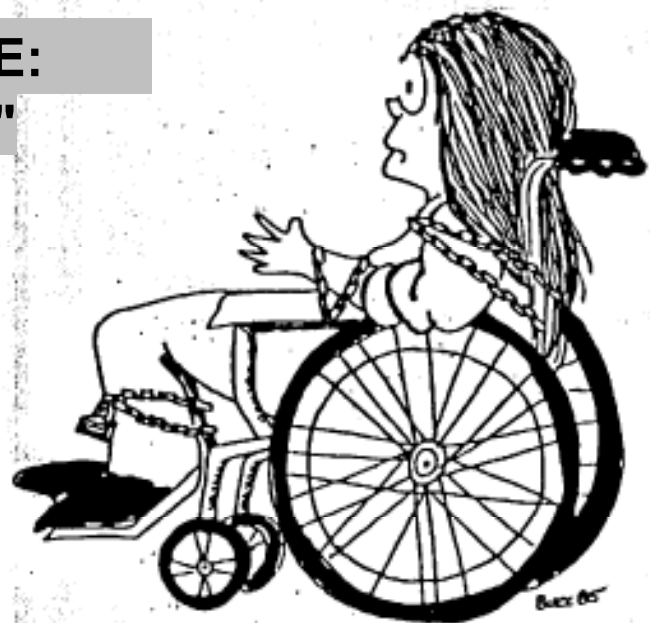
DO NOT USE WORDS LIKE:

“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 some problems hearing"

"She has a physical disability"

"Cherie has CP – that stands for cerebral palsy"

"Mary is blind"

"John is deaf"

"Jim has schizophrenia"

"Caroline has an emotional disability"

"Pat has an intellectual disability"

"Joan has a learning disability"

"This is my Dad, Jose"

Or ... "This is my friend, _____"