

**Words Matter**, from the online guide, “Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities,” from the National Disability Rights Network

The following list depicts phrases and terms that are generally considered appropriate, as well as terms and phrases to avoid using. Please keep in mind that language is constantly evolving and not everyone has the same preference, so the best guideline when referring to people is to *ASK*.

| PREFERRED  | AVOID   |
|--|---|
| accessible parking/accommodations  | handicapped accessible  |
| children with disabilities   | special children  |
| individual without a disability  | able-bodied; normal; whole  |
| individual with a physical disability                                      | crippled, handicapped; deformed; defective  |
| individual with a spinal cord injury                                       | quadriplegic; paraplegic; incapacitated   |
| individual with multiple sclerosis (MS)                                    | person who suffers from MS  |
| individual who uses a wheelchair   | wheelchair-bound/confined to a wheelchair   |
| individual who is blind or has low vision                                  | the blind   |
| individual who is deaf or hard of hearing                                  | the deaf; deaf and dumb; mute; hearing impaired   |
| individual with burns  | burn victim; disfigured   |
| individual of short stature  | dwarf or midget   |
| individual who had a stroke  | stroke victim/suffered from a stroke  |
| individual with a cleft lip/cleft palate                                   | hare lip  |
| Individual with a congenital disability                                    | deformed/person with birth defect   |
| individual with epilepsy or a seizure disorder                             | epileptic; spastic (this term refers to cerebral palsy, not epilepsy); person who has "fits" or "attacks" |
| individual living with HIV or AIDS   | HIV or AIDS victim  |
| individual with a learning disability                                      | slow learner; retarded; stupid  |
| individual with an intellectual disability                                 | slow; retarded; dim-witted  |
| individual with dyslexia   | dyslexic  |
| individual with a psychiatric disability or with a mental health diagnosis | crazy; maniac; lunatic; demented; schizo; psycho; feeble-minded   |

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