



## OUR ATTITUDE IN LANGUAGE AND ACTIONS

People genuinely have a desire to help others. However, it is how they help, and with what level of understanding, that creates a full communication between the helper and the receiver.

Often times the person helping, reporting, or facilitating enters the process in good faith and uses words and/or actions that they have developed or encountered through general society.

The lack of proper media coverage, the lack of opportunities to socially meet and/or work with people with disabilities, and the lack of physical access in general, have reinforced the images held of people with disabilities. Images, which imply that they are unable to be competitive in the world are depicted.

There are two changes that need to take place to begin training that is necessary for recovering the ground we have lost, before we can move to a positive form of communication. These two changes are: *Language* and *Actions*.

### LANGUAGE

The term disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. This is the same definition used in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitations Act, and the Fair Housing Amendments Act.

People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases. They are individual human beings. For example, a person is not an epileptic, but rather a person who has epilepsy.

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First and foremost, they are *People*. Only secondarily do they have one or more disabling conditions. Hence, they prefer to be referred to in print or the media as *People with Disabilities*.

*The First Rule is to Always Use "Person" First – with Descriptors After*

Positive Language

a person with a disability  
a person who is hearing impaired or deaf  
persons that are blind  
a person who is developmentally disabled

Mrs. Kelly has arthritis

Walt Whitman had a stroke

Bill Cullen has a disability, (specifically)  
post polio

Jim has a disability, (specifically)  
cerebral palsy

Wheelchair User

Negative Language

Handicapped, cripple(d)

Deaf and dumb

Blind people

Retard

Mrs. Kelly is an arthritis  
patient (case)

Walt Whitman is a stroke  
victim

Bill Cullen was stricken  
with (afflicted by, a  
victim of) polio;  
Bill Cullen is post polio

Jim suffers from cerebral  
palsy

Confined to a wheelchair  
Wheelchair bound  
In a wheelchair  
Special, Invalid  
Special Needs, Atypical  
Exceptional

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People with auditory impairments are deaf or hearing impaired

*a ♡ disability*

Inconvenienced  
Physically challenged

Deaf and dumb  
Dumb, mute, dummy  
Deaf mute

### Positive Language

People with speech impairments, or who have a communication disability

Emotional disability

Bill Sackter is mentally disabled

Has a developmental disability

Down's Syndrome

John Merrick has a severe physical disability

The child is multi-disabled.

Phillip is significantly disabled.

### Negative Language

Stammerer  
Stutterer, lisp

Mentally ill, maniac  
Crazy, insane

Retarded, slow  
Retard, backward  
Simple, simple-minded  
Feeble-minded  
Dull witted

Moron, idiot  
Imbecile, crazy

Mongoloid (ism)

Freak, monster

Creature

Vegetable

### ACTIONS: Part A

#### *Conversational Etiquette*

When talking to a person with a disability, look at and speak directly to that person, rather than through a companion who may be along.

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Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted common expressions such as "See you later" or "Got to be running along" that seem to relate to the person's disability.

To get the attention of a person with a hearing impairment, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, naturally and slowly to establish if the person can read lips. Not all persons with hearing impairments can lip read, those who are unable will rely on facial expression and other body language to help in understanding. Show consideration by placing yourself facing the light source, and keeping your hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking. Keep mustaches well trimmed. Don't shout. Writing notes may be helpful.

When talking with a person in a wheelchair or scooter for more than a few minutes, sit in a chair whenever possible. This will place you at the person's eye level to facilitate conversation, and the person will not have to look up at you constantly.

<http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf>

[http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/disability\\_handbook/disability\\_handbook.asp](http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/disability_handbook/disability_handbook.asp)

<http://txddc.state.tx.us/resources/publications/pfanguage.asp>

- \* Ask before you help. Be sensitive to/ person you help.
- Careful w physical contact - don't pat on head etc
- don't grab person - blind person uses arms for balance
- don't grab chair (wheel) - part of their physical space
- Let them hold on to you - don't you hold them, ~~them~~.
- Don't push chair w/out asking
- No protruding objects - cane sweep (blind person)
- Don't bend over the wheelchair.
- I identify self - announce yourself - to a blind person and let them know who is in the room. " I am \_\_\_\_\_ and there are \_\_\_\_\_ people at the table / room
- Only time you grab a blind person's hand is to help them find back of a chair or a door frame
- for people w/ speech impairments, give full attention and don't finish sentences for them.



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- For Intel. Disabil - use concrete words + definitions. Don't  
use baby talk or talk down to them.

-  $\Psi$  disabilities - ~~are~~ not necess violent.

Service animals - not a pet - a working animal - don't pet.  
You can exclude the pet but not the person if the pet is  
unruly.