

Respectful Language and Action Examples:

(Adapted from: Guidelines for Reporting and Writing about People with Disabilities, Research and Training Center, University of Kansas, 2008)

Respectful Language/Actions	Less Respectful Language/Actions
Person with a disability	Disabled Person
Person without disabilities	Normal, Able-bodied, whole
Person with an intellectual disability	Retarded
Person with Down syndrome	Downs person
Child with special needs	Handicapped Child
Person with hearing impairment	Deaf and Dumb
Person with communication disorder	Mute; dumb
A person with autism	He/She is autistic
A polio/burn survivor	Polio/burn victim
Person with mental illness/psychiatric disability	Schizo; psycho; crazy
Person with dementia	Demented; Lost their mind
Accessible bathroom, parking space, changing room	Handicapped bathroom, parking space, changing room.
Person who uses a wheelchair; a wheelchair user	Person confined to a wheelchair
Speaking first to the person with a disability	Speaking first to the caregiver instead of the person with a disability
Asking the person with disabilities if they need help	Doing something for a person with a disability that they could do for themselves.
Moving to eye-level when speaking to a person using a wheelchair.	Towering over a person who uses a wheelchair when speaking to them.
Listening sensitively without judgment to the struggles of a person with special needs	Minimizing the struggles or making people with disabilities into overachievers with comments like, "I couldn't do what you do. You must be so special."

References: The Holy Bible (NIV): Psalm 139; Philippians 4; Luke 6