

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

When we communicate, whether it be spoken or written, it's important to know the significance of our words and the influence of language. To be inclusive and welcoming, we must be mindful of how we address others and ourselves. While our intention is typically not to cause offense or harm, we must know that our impact may not always match our intentions.



USE	INSTEAD OF	WHY
The Arc	ARC	"Arc" isn't an acronym and using all capitals could imply the "R" word. The full and proper name is The Arc.
Person People	Client Individual Participant Persons PWS (People We Support)	Using 'individual' or 'persons' suggests a division between people with disabilities and people without disabilities, implying different levels of worth between these people.
Support	Serve	"Support" shows the independence of the person receiving assistance.
Person with disabilities	Handicapped Disabled	Refer to the person first. A person is not their disability, they have a disability.
Has more support needs Manages independently	Low functioning High functioning	Labels based on functioning abilities create a divide between people with disabilities and people without disabilities, leading to unnecessary comparisons.
Advocating for themself	Acting out Misbehaving	Self-advocacy and confidence are sometimes misunderstood and incorrectly labeled as 'acting out,' a term that carries negative implications.
Uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair-bound Crippled	The focus should be on someone's abilities.
Organization	Agency	An organization is a group of people working together striving for common goals. An agency acts as the "go-between" for two parties.
Direct Support Professional (DSP) Job Coach	Caregiver Counselor Staff "Your" staff	DSPs help the people they support to do things for themselves, a different role than a caregiver.
People without disabilities Children developing typically	Normal Average Healthy Regular Non-disabled	Avoid using words that imply negative stereotypes about people with disabilities.

Reminder: Be considerate of how a person chooses to be addressed. Never use the R-word.