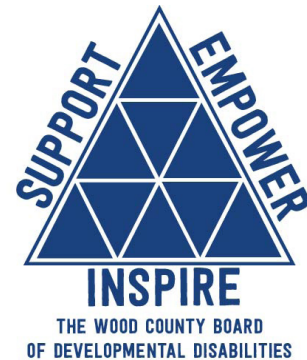




So...How Do I Refer to Someone with a Disability?

People with disabilities are referred to in many different ways. One common way to hear someone refer to a person or people within the intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) community is as an “individual” or “individuals”. This isn’t necessarily negative, but you can also always simply refer to a person or people with I/DD as a “a person”, or “people” since that’s what they are.

This is the heart of using person-first language: truly seeing the person for who they are, and not categorizing them in a way that says they’re still somehow different than you or me.



Respectful Disability Language

When speaking about a specific diagnosis or disability, there are some phrases and terms that you should be aware of. These terms are outdated and should not be used, as the connotations have become disrespectful and hurtful over time. In the list below, you’ll find the terms that should be avoided, as well as the respectful, person-first terminology that has replaced the outdated phrases.

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Language to Avoid</i>	<i>Person-First Language</i>
Blind, Visual Impairment	Dumb/Invalid	Person who is blind or visually impaired.
Deaf, Hearing Impairment	Invalid, Deaf-Mute	Person who is deaf or hard of hearing.
Intellectual Disability	Mentally Retarded, Retard, Slow, Special Ed, Afflicted	Person with an intellectual disability.
Mobility, Physical Disability	Afflicted, Handicapped, Special Needs, Cripple, Wheelchair-bound, Lame	Person with a mobility or physical disability.