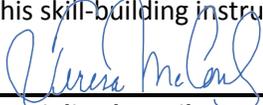


SPECIALIZED FAMILY CARE
Provider Training

Category:	Advocacy
Title:	Communicating With People With Disabilities
Materials:	“What is People First Language?” by ARC of United States, www.the.arc.org/who-we-are/media-center/people/-first-language , “People First Language” by Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, www.t added February 2017
Goal:	Provider knows how to appropriately communicate with a person with a disability
Credit Hours:	1 Hour
Date Developed:	March 2014, Updated February 2017
Developed by:	Donna McCune, SFC Program

This skill-building instruction has been approved for Specialized Family Care Provider training by:


Specialized Family Program Manager 2/14/2017
Date


Content Reviewed and Updated by: Carol Brewster, FBCS 02-10-2017
Date

Training Objectives:

- Specialized Family Care Provider can define and use people first language
- Specialized Family Care Provider knows how to address persons with a disability
- Specialized Family Care Provider advocates for the use of appropriate language in communications with persons with a disability

Training Procedures:

- Specialized Family Care Provider initiated self-study
- Test completed by Specialized Family Care Provider
- Review of test responses by Family Based Care Specialist and Specialized Family Care Provider

I certify that I have completed all the materials associated with this training module. I feel that I have a basic understanding of the material completed.

Specialized Family Care Provider	Start Time	End Time	Date
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Reviewed by: _____
Family Based Care Specialist Date

This Program is funded by the WV Department of Health & Human Resources, Bureau for Children & Families and administered by the Center for Excellence in Disabilities, West Virginia University.

WVDHHR/CED/SFC/Communicating With People with Developmental Disabilities/ Updated February 2017

What is People First Language?

People with disabilities are – first and foremost – people who have individual abilities, interests and needs. They are moms, dads, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, friends, neighbors, coworkers, students and teachers. About 54 million Americans -- one out of every five individuals -- have a disability. Their contributions enrich our communities and society as they live, work and share their lives.

People with disabilities constitute our nation’s largest minority group, which is simultaneously the most inclusive and the most diverse. Everyone is represented: of all genders, all ages, all religions, all socioeconomic levels and all ethnic backgrounds. The disability community is the only minority group that anyone can join at any time.

The language a society uses to refer to persons with disabilities shapes its beliefs and ideas about them. Words are powerful; Old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptors perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudinal barriers. When we describe people by their labels of medical diagnoses, we devalue and disrespect them as individuals. In contrast, using thoughtful terminology can foster positive attitudes about persons with disabilities. One of the major improvements in communicating with and about people with disabilities is "People-First Language." People-First Language emphasizes the person, not the disability. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual, but one of several aspects of the whole person. People-First Language is an objective way of acknowledging, communicating, and reporting on disabilities. It eliminates generalizations and stereotypes, by focusing on the person rather than the disability.

Disability is not the “problem.” For example, a person who wears glasses doesn’t say, “I have a problem seeing,” they say, “I wear/need glasses.” Similarly, a person who uses a wheelchair doesn’t say, “I have a problem walking,” they say, “I use/need a wheelchair.”

Our words and the meanings we attach to them create attitudes, drive social policies and laws, influence our feelings and decisions, and affect people’s daily lives and more. How we use them makes a difference. People First Language puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is. Using a diagnosis as a defining characteristic reflects prejudice, and also robs the person of the opportunity to define him/herself.

Representation in the media

Historically, people with disabilities have been regarded as individuals to be pitied, feared or ignored. They have been portrayed as helpless victims, repulsive adversaries, heroic individuals overcoming tragedy, and charity cases who must depend on others for their well being and care. Media coverage frequently focused on heartwarming features and inspirational stories that reinforced stereotypes, patronized and underestimated individuals' capabilities.

Much has changed lately. New laws, disability activism and expanded coverage of disability issues have altered public awareness and knowledge, eliminating the worst stereotypes and misrepresentations. Still, old attitudes, experiences and stereotypes die hard.

People with disabilities continue to seek accurate portrayals that present a respectful, positive view of individuals as active participants of society, in regular social, work and home environments. Additionally, people with disabilities are focusing attention on tough issues that affect quality of life, such as accessible transportation

Eliminating Stereotypes — Words Matter!

Every individual regardless of sex, age, race or ability deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. As part of the effort to end discrimination and segregation — in employment, education and our communities at large — it's important to eliminate prejudicial language.



Every individual regardless of sex, age, race or ability deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Like other minorities, the disability community has developed preferred terminology — People First Language. More than a fad or political correctness, People First Language is an objective way of acknowledging, communicating and reporting on disabilities. It eliminates generalizations, assumptions and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability.

As the term implies, People First Language refers to the individual first and the disability second. It's saying "a child with autism" instead of "the autistic" (see Examples of People First Language) While some people may not use preferred terminology, it's important you don't repeat negative terms that stereotype, devalue or discriminate — just as you'd avoid racial slurs or saying "gals" instead of "women."

Equally important, ask yourself if the disability is even relevant and needs to be mentioned when referring to individuals, in the same way racial identification is being eliminated from news stories when it is not significant.

What Should You Say?

Be sensitive when choosing the words you use. Here are a few guidelines on appropriate language.

- Recognize that people with disabilities are ordinary people with common goals for a home, a job and a family. Talk about people in ordinary terms.
- Never equate a person with a disability — such as referring to someone as retarded, an epileptic or quadriplegic. These labels are simply medical diagnosis. Use People First Language to tell what a person HAS, not what a person IS.
- Emphasize abilities not limitations. For example, say "a man walks with crutches," not "he is crippled."
- Avoid negative words that imply tragedy, such as afflicted with, suffers, victim, prisoner and unfortunate.
- Recognize that a disability is not a challenge to be overcome, and don't say people succeed in spite of a disability. Ordinary things and accomplishments do not become extraordinary just because they are done by a person with a disability. What is extraordinary are the lengths people with disabilities have to go through and the barriers they have to overcome to do the most ordinary things.
- Use handicap to refer to a barrier created by people or the environment. Use disability to indicate a functional limitation that interferes with a person's mental, physical or sensory abilities, such as walking, talking, hearing and learning. For example, people with disabilities who use wheelchairs are handicapped by stairs.
- Do not refer to a person as bound to or confined to a wheelchair. Wheelchairs are liberating to people with disabilities because they provide mobility.

- Do not use special to mean segregated, such as separate schools or buses for people with disabilities, or to suggest a disability itself makes someone special.
- Avoid cute euphemisms such as physically challenged, inconvenienced and differently abled.
- Promote understanding, respect, dignity and positive outlooks.

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.” – *Mark Twain*

What Do You Call People with Disabilities?

Friends, neighbors, coworkers, dad, grandma, Joe’s sister, my big brother, our cousin, Mrs. Schneider, George, husband, wife, colleague, employee, boss, reporter, driver, dancer, mechanic, lawyer, judge, student, educator, home owner, renter, man, woman, adult, child, partner, participant, member, voter, citizen, amigo or any other word you would use for a person.

Examples of People First Language

Examples of what you should say.	Examples of what you should not say.
Say This	Not This
people with disabilities	the handicapped, the disabled
people without disabilities	normal, healthy, whole or typical people
person who has a congenital disability	person with a birth defect
person who has (or has been diagnosed with)...	person afflicted with, suffers from, a victim of...
person who has Down syndrome	Downs person, mongoloid, mongol
person who has (or has been diagnosed with) autism	the autistic
person with quadriplegia, person with paraplegia, person diagnosed with a physical disability	a quadriplegic, a paraplegic

Examples of People First Language

Examples of what you should say.

Examples of what you should not say.

person with a physical disability

a cripple

person of short stature, little person

a dwarf, a midget

person who is unable to speak, person who uses a communication device

dumb, mute

people who are blind, person who is visually impaired

the blind

person with a learning disability

learning disabled

person diagnosed with a mental health condition

crazy, insane, psycho, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, demented

person diagnosed with a cognitive disability or with an intellectual and developmental disability

mentally retarded, retarded, slow, idiot, moron

student who receives special education services

special ed student, special education student

person who uses a wheelchair or a mobility chair

confined to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound

accessible parking, bathrooms, etc.

handicapped parking, bathrooms, etc.