



Person First Language

To ensure inclusion, freedom and respect for all, Signal Centers Adult Services encourages all to embrace person-first language. Words are powerful. Old, inaccurate descriptors and the inappropriate use of medical diagnoses perpetuate negative stereotypes and reinforce a significant and incredibly powerful attitudinal barrier. Person-first language puts the person before the disability.

INSTEAD OF	SAY
The handicapped or disabled	People with disabilities
He's mentally retarded	He has an intellectual disability / diagnosis
She's autistic	She has Autism (or a diagnosis of...)
He's Downs; a mongoloid	He has Down Syndrome (or a diagnosis of ...)
She's learning disabled	She has a learning disability
He's a quadriplegic / is crippled	He has a physical disability
She's a dwarf / midget	She's of short stature / She's a little person
He's emotionally disturbed / mentally ill	He has a mental health condition / diagnosis
She's confined to / is wheelchair bound	She uses a wheelchair
He's in special education	He receives special education services
She's developmentally delayed	She has a developmental disability
She / He is non verbal	She communicates with her eyes / device / etc.
Birth defect	Congenital disability
Brain damaged	Brain Injury
Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.	Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.