

WORDS TO AVOID

Avoid words that have negative or judgmental connotations (Tyler, 1990). Words such as these fail to demonstrate respect and do not recognize the person's strengths and abilities. The following words should be avoided as they create images of people who are less able and are to be pitied. Words such as these perpetuate negative stereotypes of people with disabilities (United Cerebral Palsy: Hanft, 1989).

Avoid using words such as these:

afflicted	confined
crippled	drain or burden
stricken	poor
suffers from	unfortunate
victim	disease

DISABILITY OR DISEASE

A disability is not a disease. Often individuals with disabilities are very healthy. Words such as patients, cases or symptoms should be avoided unless talking or writing about someone's health or medical condition.

PORTRAYAL

People with disabilities should "be portrayed as actively going about the business of living as other people do, *not* as passive victims, tragic figures, or super-heroes" (Hadley & Brodwin, 1988).

CATEGORIZING PEOPLE

Avoid grouping people with disabilities into categories such as "the retarded". "the handicapped" (Hanft, 1989), "Do we really see children as individuals, or do we say, for example, that all children with Down Syndrome are warm, friendly, happy and will never be able to read?" (Steer, 1979, p.40).

Use This

Instead of This:

- people with disabilities the disabled
- people with retardation the retarded

- people with disabilities the handicapped
- individuals with hearing impairments the deaf
- children with visual impairments the blind

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Usually a form of the verb "to have" is the most effective way of expressing the link between a person and a disability (Hadley & Brodwin, 1988). "A person is a human being and should not be confused with a condition" (Tyler, 1990, p.65).

Use This:

Instead of This:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • has autism | is autistic |
| • had cerebral palsy or | is cerebral palsy |
| | is CP |
| • has spastic muscles | is spastic |
| • has epilepsy | is an epileptic |
| • has retardation | is retarded |

Assistive devices, prostheses, and wheelchairs are examples of equipment and devices that people use to assist them in their life activities (i.e., wheelchairs enable individuals to escape confinement) (Hadley & Brodwin, 1988; RTC/IL, 1990).

Use This:

Instead of:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| • uses a wheelchair | confined to a wheelchair |
| • walks with crutches | is on or has to use |
| • walks with braces | uses braces |

Some thoughts about using the word "special": "Special" is a word actively utilized in regards to persons with disabilities (i.e., special education, special buses, special needs). About using this word, "Pershe (1988) stresses: "Being seen as special might not be so bad. if you're a top celebrity or the national champion" (p.59). But, if you've been singled out as not...normal, given a label, excluded from full participation, exist in out of the way residences, or attend "out of the real world programs" when you felt you wanted to live "in the middle of things", "calling you special