Instead of	Please Use
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf without speech.
Deaf-Blind (the)	Person who is deaf-blind (person who has any combination of visual and auditory impairments).
Differently Abled	A person with a disability.
Disabled (the)	People with disabilities.
Elderly (the)	Seniors, older adults.
Epileptic	A person who has epilepsy.
Fits, spells, attacks	Seizures.
Handicapped (the)	Persons with a disability. The term handicapped may be used when referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier as in "a person who is handicapped by a set of stairs leading to the entrance."

For more information on understainding disabilities and accessibility visit ontario.ca/AccessON

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July 2013

Ontario

Talk About Disabilities Choose The Right Word

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or a negative view.

Here are some tips that can help make your communication and interactions with or about people with all types of disabilities more successful.

Use disability or disabled, not handicap or handicapped.

Never use terms such as retarded, dumb, psycho, moron or crippled. These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.

Remember to put people first. It is proper to say person with a disability, rather than disabled person.

If you don't know someone or if you are not familiar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his/her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Your assumptions may be wrong.

The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful.

Instead of	Please Use
Afflicted by cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	A person who has cerebral palsy. A person who has arthritis, etc. A person who has multiple sclerosis.
Aged (the)	Seniors
Autistic	A person with autism. A person who has autism
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	A person who has a congenital disability. A person with a disability since birth.
Blind (the), visually impaired (the)	A person who is blind. A person with a vision disability. A person with vision loss. A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision.
Brain damaged	A person with a brain injury. A person with an acquired brain injury.
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound	A person who uses a wheelchair.

Instead of	Please Use
Crazy, insane, lunatic, psycho, mental, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind, schizophrenic	A person with a mental health disability. A person who has depression. A person with schizophrenia.
Cripple, crippled, lame	A person with a mobility impairment or, more specifically: A person who walks with crutches A person who uses a walker A person who uses a mobility aid A person with arthritis, etc.
Deaf (the), hearing impaired (the)	A person who is deaf (person with profound hearing loss). A person who is deafened (deaf later in life). A person who is hard of hearing (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech). A person with a hearing loss. When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use "the Deaf."