

Check your Language: How to Write and Talk about Disability

The language that is used to describe people with disability has evolved significantly over time. Some terms that were once commonplace are no longer used as they are considered to be offensive. When you refer to people with disability either in person or in writing, it's important to try to keep your language respectful. The *Disability Access Bench Book*, published by the Judicial College of Victoria,¹ suggests the following:

Outdated language	Preferred language
'disabled person', 'handicapped', 'the disabled'	'person with disability', 'person living with disability', 'person with lived experience of disability', 'people with disabilities'
'non-disabled', 'able-bodied'	'person without disability'
'suffering from...', 'struck down by', 'afflicted by/with...' 'mental health problem'	'Michael experiences depression', 'Philippa developed Multiple Sclerosis', 'Jarrod has autism'
A person confined to a wheelchair	A person who uses a wheelchair or wheelchair user

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¹ Judicial College of Victoria, *Disability Access Benchbook*, 1.5, Definitions and Terminology, <http://www.judicialcollege.vic.edu.au/eManuals/DABB/index.htm#59210.htm>