

Language that empowers

Employees who have difficulty moving around ...

Wheelchairs are an extension of personal space for people who use them, therefore, it is not polite to lean on them.

When talking with a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, place yourself at the wheelchair user's eye level to spare both of you a stiff neck

Employees who have difficulty remembering ...

It may take extra time for an individual with a learning disability to grasp all the aspects of a new job. It is important to train people in a style and pace that is comfortable.

When providing training, speak on an adult-to-adult level and be as straightforward as possible when you explain information or ask questions.

Teach multi-step jobs one step at a time and allow extra time for the worker to learn the procedure. Visual or auditory cues might help the person learn the job, such as a checklist or color cues. These types of accommodations should be agreed upon with the employee.

Employees who have difficulty with their interpersonal skills ...

Knowing what to expect can assist an individual who has difficulty with their interpersonal skills.

Try to be consistent with your interactions. Assist the individual to learn the subtleties of workplace norms and identify examples of workplace humor.

If an individual needs constructive feedback, try to respect the need for privacy during that exchange. Suggest a person take a break and ask what you can do to help if a person seems to be having difficulty coping.

Adapted from: *Supporting Workers with Disabilities: valuing what each of us brings to our work, and Awareness: The First Step towards Change: Tips for Disability Awareness.*

The Disability never defines the total person. Remember to emphasize the person rather than the disability

A guide to acceptable terminology

Preferred Language

little person
person of short stature
person who is deaf
person who is hard of hearing
person who uses a wheelchair
wheelchair user
person with a psychiatric disability
person with a learning disability
person with mental retardation
person with cerebral palsy
person who is blind
person who is visually impaired
person with ...
person who ...

Suggested Phrases

person who is blind; person who is visually impaired
person with a disability
person who is deaf; person who is hearing impaired or hard of hearing
person who has multiple sclerosis
person with cerebral palsy
person who has muscular dystrophy
person with mental retardation
person with epilepsy; person with a seizure disorder
person without disabilities
person who is physically disabled
unable to speak, uses synthetic speech
seizure
successful, productive
person with psychiatric disability
person who no longer lives in an institution
says she has a disability

Considered Offensive Language

dwarf
midget
the deaf, deaf and dumb
stone deaf
confined to a wheelchair
wheelchair bound
crazy, mentally disturbed
retarded
retard, slow, stupid
spastic
the blind
living in a world of darkness
victim of . . . , sufferer of...
handicapped, afflicted, crippled

Considered Offensive Phrases

the blind
the disabled, handicapped
suffers a hearing loss
afflicted by MS
CP victim
stricken by MD
retarded, mentally defective
epileptic
normal person (implies that person with a disability isn't normal)
confined or restricted to a wheelchair, crippled, lame, deformed
dumb, mute
fit
has overcome his or her disability; courageous (when it implies the person has courage because s/he has a disability)
crazy, nuts
the deinstitutionalized
admits she has a disability

Adapted from: *The President's Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities, and Guidelines to Report Writing about People with Disabilities*, from the Research and Training Center at the University of Kansas.