

# “How You See Me”

**Words to Use & Avoid** - Avoid passive, victim words. Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own lives

## AVOID

## USE

(the) handicapped, (the) disabled

**disabled (people) or people with disabilities**

afflicted by, suffers from, victim of

**has [name of condition or disability] impairment**  
(People who are deaf prefer Deaf or hard of hearing, they don't like the word impairment, such as hearing impaired)

confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound

**wheelchair user**

mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, subnormal,

**with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural)**

slow

**person with learning difficulties**

cripple, invalid

**disabled person or person with a disability**

spastic

**person with cerebral palsy**

able-bodied

**non-disabled**

mental patient, insane, mad

**person with a mental health condition**

deaf and dumb; deaf mute

**deaf, user of British Sign Language (BSL), person with a hearing impairment**  
People who are deaf prefer Deaf or hard of hearing, they don't like the word impairment, such as hearing impaired

the blind/ visually impaired

**people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people**

an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on

**person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression**

dwarf; midget

**someone with restricted growth or short stature**

## **AVOID**

## **USE**

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fits, spells, attacks

**seizures**

Autistic, on the spectrum

**Person with autism or neurodiverse, neurodivergent**

Mong, Mongolian

**Person with Down syndrome**

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### **Some Tips on how to respond to people with a disability**

- use a normal tone of voice, don't patronise or talk down
- don't be too precious or too politically correct – being super-sensitive to the right and wrong language and depictions will stop you doing anything
- never attempt to speak or finish a sentence for the person you are talking to
- address people with a disability in the same way as you talk to everyone else
- speak directly to a person with a disability, even if they have an interpreter or companion with them

More information can be found about language and use of words on the Level Playing Field website <https://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/>