



WORDS WITH DIGNITY

'My disability is that I cannot use my legs, my handicap is your negative perception of that disability, and thus of me.'
- RICK HANSEN

Some words and concepts used to describe disability have their own histories and implications for people with disabilities.



Words that imply that people are weak, broken, or objects of pity.

DID YOU KNOW The original meaning of the word "handicapped" comes from "cap in hand" meaning someone who begs for money.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE

Jeannie suffers from Down's Syndrome

Shifts the focus from the disability to the person. It is respectful and does not put emphasis on any differences.



For a full list of acceptable terms see the Active Living Alliance of Canadians with a Disability 'Words with Dignity' document online!



IF IN DOUBT...

Ask yourself, is the language:

- negative;
- judgmental;
- old-fashioned;
- de-humanising;
- patronising;
- stereotyping?

Jeannie has Down's Syndrome

Think about the word *suffer*, meaning the experience of being subjected to something bad or unpleasant.

KEEP TALKING , KEEP LEARNING! IF IN DOUBT, ASK...

"Most people with disabilities often encounter old-fashioned language and attitudes, they understand that your Granny might say 'handicapped' but they may not be so understanding of the words 'backwards', 'stricken', 'victim' or 'wheelchair-bound'!"

If you keep your language respectful, consistent and current, you will be fine.



What shall I call you?

Rob works great!

