

## Perplexity.ai on the phrase disability, 1st September 2024

**In the past, disabled people were often referred to using degrading and offensive terms. Some examples of derogatory language that was used include:**

### **## Offensive Terms**

- “Cripple” or “crip” - used to refer to people with physical disabilities
- “Spastic” or “spaz” - offensive terms for people with cerebral palsy[4]
- “Retard” or “retarded” - derogatory terms for people with intellectual disabilities[4]
- “Idiot”, “imbecile”, “moron” - once used as medical classifications, now considered highly offensive[4]
- “Mongoloid” or “mong” - extremely offensive terms for people with Down syndrome[4]
- “Invalid” - implies the person is not valid or worthy[3]
- “Handicapped” - considered outdated and offensive by many[1]

### **## Other Problematic Language**

- Using “the” before a disability (e.g. “the blind”, “the disabled”) - seen as dehumanizing[4]
- “Wheelchair-bound” - implies wheelchairs restrict rather than enable mobility[4]
- “Afflicted with” or “suffers from” - implies the disability is a punishment or burden[4]
- “Special” or “special needs” - can be seen as patronizing euphemisms[1]

Many of these terms originated from outdated medical classifications or reflect prejudiced attitudes towards disability. Disability advocates have worked to reclaim respectful language and promote person-first or identity-first terminology preferred by disabled people themselves[3]. The language around disability continues to evolve as society's understanding improves.

### **Citations:**

[1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_disability-related\\_terms\\_with\\_negative\\_connotations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_disability-related_terms_with_negative_connotations)

[2] <https://dsq-sds.org/index.php/dsq/article/view/306/361>

[3] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/22/language-of-disability-stereotypes-disabled-people>

[4] <https://ukdhm.org/a-z-offensive-disablist-language-and-origins/>

[5] <https://disabilitycenter.colostate.edu/inclusive-language/>

[6] <https://forum.scope.org.uk/discussion/30680/more-than-words-the-changing-language-of-disability>

[7] <https://nowthenmagazine.com/articles/crip-a-story-of-reclamation>

**Disabled people's language preferences can vary widely, as there is no universal consensus within the disability community. However, there are some general trends:**

## **## Person-First vs. Identity-First Language**

Many disabled people prefer one of two main approaches:

1. **Person-first language**: Puts the person before the disability, e.g. “person with autism” or “people with disabilities”. This is often preferred as it emphasizes the person's humanity first[1].
2. **Identity-first language**: Places the disability identity first, e.g. “autistic person” or “disabled people”. Some feel this affirms disability as an important part of their identity[2].

## **## Individual Preferences**

It's important to note that preferences can differ significantly between individuals and disability groups:

- Many autistic people and culturally Deaf individuals tend to prefer identity-first language[3].
- Some disability activists, particularly in the UK, favor “disabled people”[3].
- Others strongly prefer person-first language.

## **## Key Considerations**

- **Ask the individual**: When possible, ask the person how they prefer to be described[1][3].
- **Context matters**: Preferences may vary depending on the situation or audience.
- **Avoid outdated terms**: Terms like “handicapped” or “crippled” are generally considered offensive[5].
- **Focus on neutral language**: Describe disabilities factually without loaded terms like “suffers from”[2].

## **## Evolving Language**

Disability language continues to evolve. While these guidelines provide a starting point, it's crucial to remain open to learning and adapting to individual and community preferences over time.

**Citations:**

- [1] <https://maplecommunity.com.au/the-ultimate-guide-to-inclusive-language-for-disabilities/>
  
- [2] [https://disability.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj26391/files/media/file/disability-language-guide-stanford\\_1.pdf](https://disability.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj26391/files/media/file/disability-language-guide-stanford_1.pdf)
  
- [3] <https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>
  
- [4] <https://www.ungeneva.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Disability-Inclusive-Language-Guidelines.pdf>
  
- [5] <https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing>
  
- [6] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability>
  
- [7] <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/accessibility/quick-reference-guides/disability-language-words-matter.html>
  
- [8] <https://disabilitycenter.colostate.edu/inclusive-language/>