

# People First Language

If thought corrupts language,  
language can also corrupt  
thought.

George Orwell

# We are each unique

- Finish the sentence: “I am...”
- People with disabilities are unique individuals
  - They are moms and dads; sons and daughters; employees and employers; friends and neighbors; teachers and students; scientists, reporters, doctors, actors, presidents and more.

## **Refer to people as individuals**

- Avoid using generic labels and nouns to describe people
  - “the disabled”
  - “an epileptic”
- Refer to people first
  - “person with an intellectual disability”
  - “child with Down’s Syndrome”

## **Maintain each person's dignity**

- Avoid using victimizing language such as, “she suffers from multiple sclerosis”
- Avoid condescending terms such as “handicapped, crippled, mentally retarded, and physically challenged”
- Avoid portraying people as heroes
- Portray people with disabilities as everyday people with everyday issues