




# PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE PLEDGE



Words matter! For too long, hurtful words have been used about people who have disabilities. So I pledge to make changes in how I think and talk, and will use PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE, to put the person first, not the disability. The examples below will be my guide. Using PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE is about having respect and following the Golden Rule.

***I WILL SAY:***

**People with disabilities**

**Cognitive disability**

**Mike has autism.**

**JoAnn uses a wheelchair.**

**Steve has a physical disability.**

**Maria has a mental health condition.**

**Tyrone communicates with...**

**Accessible Parking**

***INSTEAD OF:***

**Handicapped/disabled**

**Mental retardation**

**Mike is autistic.**

**JoAnn is wheelchair-bound.**

**Steve is crippled.**

**Maria is mentally ill.**

**Tyrone is non-verbal.**

**Handicapped Parking**

I also pledge not to use the “R-Word” (retard) or terms like idiot, imbecile, moron, psycho, lame, sped kid, special needs, and other disability labels that are used as insults or that may be hurtful. I will treat others as I want to be treated.



I make this pledge on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_. Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Like gender and ethnicity, disability is a natural part of life. One in five Americans is a person with a disability. One of the five apples in the bowl is green. The green apple is more like red apples than different, and a person with a disability is more like people without disabilities than different.



Visit [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com) to see People First Language articles and bookmarks, and other new ways of thinking about disability! You may copy and distribute this Pledge.

©2010 Kathie Snow, BraveHeart Press

