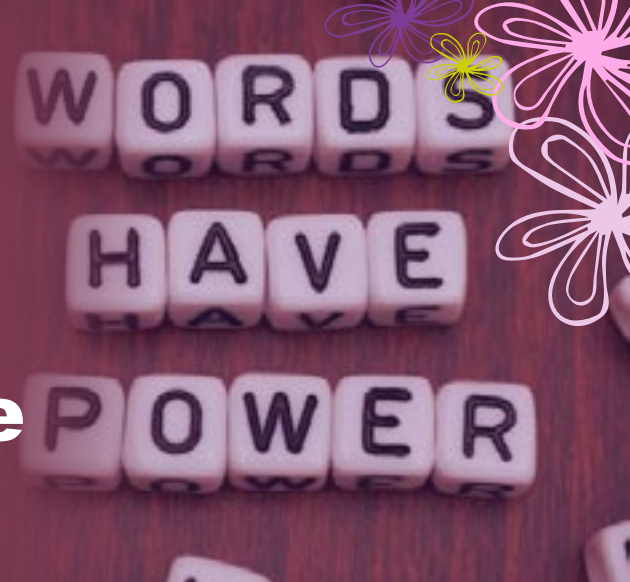


Respectful Language



Discrimination and harassment are experiences that people with disabilities may face. For instance, individuals with intellectual disabilities might be called hurtful names such as 'kuku', 'ulukau', or 'retarded', which can cause them to avoid social situations and school.

It's crucial to use 'person-first' language when referring to people with disabilities, recognising that every person has dignity, feelings and rights. This language emphasizes the person before the disability, placing more value on the person themselves instead of on the issue they have. For example, instead of saying, 'That blind student,' we would say 'The student who is blind.' Similarly, instead of saying, 'The slow learner,' we would say, 'The student who has some learning difficulties.' It's important to remember that people with disabilities are more than their impairment, and using respectful language when discussing disabilities and differences can support this idea.

It's worth noting that some Deaf individuals prefer to be referred to as 'Deaf', while others may have different preferences, such as 'hard of hearing'.

Some people may find that their disability provides them with a sense of identity, and they

may prefer certain language. If you're unsure, you can pay attention to the language used by the person with a disability or respectfully ask them about their preferences.

Examples of person - first language

| Negative Phrase | Affirmative Phrase |
|--|---|
| Disabled, handicapped | Person with a disability |
| Retarded, mentally defective | Person with an intellectual / cognitive / developmental disability |
| Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair | Person who uses a wheelchair |
| The deaf, deaf and dumb | Person who is deaf |
| CP victim | Person with cerebral palsy |
| Epileptic | Person with epilepsy, person with a seizure disorder |
| Dumb, mute | Person who is unable to speak, person who uses augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) |
| Crazy, nuts, mental | Person with a psychosocial / psychiatric disability |
| Has overcome their disability, is courageous (when it implies the person has courage because of having a disability) | Person who is successful, productive |

"All schools shall promote fair and equitable access to education for all learners with disabilities regardless of their gender, age, social status, economic background, geographical location, race, ethnicity, religious background, sexual orientation and gender identity, or intersections between these factors."

(MoE, Special and Inclusive Education Policy)

"Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education."

(Fiji Constitution)

Who can help? For more information on disability advocacy and disability awareness, contact the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/DisFiji>. Alternatively, by phone 867 9687 or email fdpoffice@fdpf.org

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Ministry of Education

