

What Labels Should We Use?

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BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Read the box on the right. What are the different ways of describing people? What do you think about them?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using labels to describe people?

All Kinds of People

For all of human history, there have been all kinds of people. Humans are very diverse. Some people can move their bodies very well. Others cannot move as fully. Some people have access to all five senses. Others may not be able to hear or see very well. Some people learn best one way. Others learn best a different way.

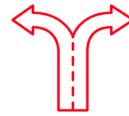
All Are Able

The problem comes when we label people as disabled. That's a mistake. All people are able in some way! People with disabilities can do so many different things! They may not be able to do all the things that other people can do, or they may do them in a different way, but they are still able!

Access and Respect for All

People with disabilities struggle because society discriminates against them. Our buildings and sidewalks are not accessible. Schools and workplaces are not set up for people with different abilities. Sometimes, people with disabilities are treated like children, and are not given respect.

If you label someone as "disabled," you reduce that person to their disability. People with disabilities are so much more than their condition. They deserve to be treated as what they are: a person, a human being who is able to do as many things!



Different Names, Different Meanings

People with disabilities describe themselves in different ways. Some use person-first language:

I am a person with diabetes.



I am a person who uses a wheelchair.

Others use an identity first:



I'm a deaf person.



I am dyslexic.

Others might not center the name of their disability when they describe themselves:

I am a mom.

I am a student.



AFTER YOU READ:

1. What argument is the author making? How does she make her case?
2. For another perspective, read the article on pp. 3- 4, where the two writers have different preferences for how they use the word disabled.
3. How would you describe your identity?

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