



INCLUSIVE VOCABULARY – PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE, AGEISM

Treating patients from diverse backgrounds calls for thoughtful consideration and precise language can help patients and their families feel more comfortable when receiving care. Diversity includes:

- Ability.
- Ethnicity.
- Race.
- Religion.
- Sexuality and gender identity.
- Socioeconomic status.

Providing a safe and welcoming environment to all our patients and their families helps us provide better, patient-centered care for everyone.

Person-first language is used to speak appropriately and respectfully about someone with a disability. Person-first language emphasizes the person first, not the disability. In a health care setting, this helps create an environment where someone living with a disability is not defined by the disability.

Ageism is discrimination against people based on age. Ageism in health care can affect the quality of geriatric care and patient-provider communication. Recognizing and addressing ageism in the hospital environment will help patients, young and old, feel comfortable and supported.

These guidelines were written by the American Psychological Association and Maysa Akbar, Ph.D., chief diversity officer of the American Psychological Association, the Associated Press, the American Medical Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Term to avoid	Suggested alternative
victim, survivor	someone who has experienced. someone who has been affected by trauma.
wheelchair-bound	someone who uses a wheelchair.
mentally ill	someone living with a mental health condition. someone with a mental disorder. someone with a mental illness.
abusive relationship	relationship with someone who is abusive.
addict	someone with a substance abuse disorder.
homeless person	someone without housing.
prostitute	someone who engages in sex work.
prisoner, convict	someone who is/has been incarcerated.
slave	someone who is/was enslaved.
the elderly elderly people the aged aging dependents seniors senior citizens	older adults. older people. people 65 and older. the older population.