Setting the Stage for Student Empowerment: Using Identity-first Language in Practice

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects…

Access and Inclusion
and
Civility and Respect
…this week and in all aspects of our organization.
As AHEAD moves to promote concepts of disability informed by social justice, we are adopting identity-first language across all communication, information and materials.

This is not a directive or a recommendation about how others should identify; it is one way to model new thinking on disability that we see reflected in disability studies and in the disability rights community.

**AHEAD Statement on Language**
How did we get here?

- More than a year of discussion and research
- Small sub-committee of Board members drafted memo outlining proposed changes and Board approved in October 2020 meeting
- Subcommittee members: Tammy Berberi, Amanda Kraus, Enjie Hall, Zebadiah Hall, Allen Sheffield, Melanie Thornton
Implications

People First
- I am a person with a disability.
- Separates person from disability

Identity First
- I am a disabled person.
- Reflects social model – disabled by
- Consistent with disability studies and many disabled leaders
Guidance

- Name disability explicitly
- Avoid euphemisms
  - Special
  - Physically/mentally challenged
  - Differently-abled
Resources

- Disability Language Style Guide, National Center on Disability and Journalism
- Guidelines: How to Write About People with Disabilities, University of Kansas, Research and Training Center on Independent Living
- PC Labels Do a Disservice: Inside Higher Ed, Stephen Stern
- Language and Disability: Explore Access, UA Partners for Inclusive Communities
- The Language of Disability Activity: Disability as Diversity Toolkit, Explore Access, UA Partners for Inclusive Communities
Resources cont’d

- Language Guide: Disability Cultural Center, Syracuse University
- Guidelines for Writing About People with Disabilities: ADA National Network
- Disabled: Just Say the Word: NPR
- Identity-First Language: Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
- Disabled Person or Person with a Disability: Annie Elainey
- Disability as Diversity: Inside Higher Ed

(Links to resources in Resource Handout and on the AHEAD Statement on Language page)
Discussion
Session Evaluation

- Your feedback helps shape future programming.
- Thank you for attending!