

# What Is Person-First Language?

Person-first language emphasizes the **person** and views the condition a person has as **only one part of the whole person**.

For example, **a person with diabetes** not a diabetic.



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The words we use can make a big difference in how someone feels. Being mindful of the words we use is the first step in changing the culture. Use this list to start a conversation around destigmatizing language with your friends, family, and care team.

## Examples

Instead of failed treatment...

Use *the treatment was not effective in the patient* or *the patient did not respond to treatment.*



Instead of homeless people...

Use *persons who are unhoused*, or *persons without an address.*



Instead of addicts/ drug abusers...

Use *persons with substance use disorder*, *persons who use drugs*, or *persons who returned to use.*



## Examples

Instead of caretaker...

Use *caregiver* or *care partner.*



Instead of crazy, insane, mental defect...

Use *persons with a mental illness*, or *persons with a diagnosis of mental health disorder.*



Instead of rural people...

Use *residents of rural areas* or *persons who live in sparsely populated areas.*



"You are not your diagnosis."

"You are not your conditions."

