

Media Guidelines

As a leader in the field of developmental disabilities, Mosaic insists that correct and inclusive terminology is always used when referring to the people we assist.

- Intellectual or developmental disability refers to the condition of people Mosaic serves; mental retardation more specifically describes the type of developmental disability some may have. Only use the clinical distinction when it is necessary, otherwise use intellectual or developmental disability.
- People Mosaic assists are not referred to as “residents,” but rather as “people” or “individuals.” For example, “the individuals who receive assistance from Mosaic.”
- Mosaic believes in “people first” language when referring to people with developmental disabilities. Instead of saying “disabled people,” we prefer to say “people with developmental disabilities.”
- Do not use labels or generalizations such as “the deaf” or “the retarded.”
- A developmental disability is not a disease. Do not mention "symptoms," "patients," or "treatment," unless the person you're describing has an illness as well as a disability.
- Mosaic advocates the importance of focusing on a person’s abilities, rather than their disabilities. For example, Jane is not “crippled” or “confined to a wheelchair,” but rather, “Jane cannot walk” or “Jane uses a wheelchair.”
- Refer to people with developmental disabilities by first and last name just as you would with anyone else. Do not refer to someone as simply “Jane.”
- Recognize people with developmental disabilities at their appropriate age level. A woman in her 30s should not be referred to as “Janie” unless that is her preferred name. She also should not be referred to as “girl” or “kid” but rather as “woman.”
- Avoid sensationalist words, such as “inspirational” or “tragic.” Both are stereotypical.
- Always refer to persons without developmental disabilities as “without disabilities” rather than “normal.”