

## Unpaved Trails For All

ABOUT TRAILS

ADVOCACY

FIND TRAILS

JOIN US

BUILD A TRAIL

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Inclusive Language

Person First

Using "person first" language is usually the best way to go. For example, people have a disabling condition, they're not disabled. They have a chronic illness, they're not chronically ill.

### **Trails are either Accessible or Non-accessible**

Categorizing non-accessible trails as "normal trails" creates the impression that mobility considerations, disabling conditions, and access needs are abnormal.

### **Trail Users With or Without Access Needs**

Alternatively, you could also say trail users with mobility considerations. Categorizing those without access considerations as "regular" or "normal" trail users implies there is something abnormal about disabling conditions

### **Terms To Avoid:**

Handicap- Often considered a slur by those in the disability's community. Replace this word with "accessible" e.g., accessible entrance, accessible parking.

Differently-abled, Special Needs, and other similar terms- These can seem patronizing to individuals with disabling conditions.

Impaired- This is outdated and potentially offensive.

Example: visually impaired, replace this with blindness and low vision instead

## **Wheelchair Terminology**

People are wheelchair users. Don't say people are "in, bound or confined to" a wheelchair. Wheelchairs are pieces of equipment that provide more freedom and independence for the people who use them, they are not confining.

Wheelchairs are either: Manual (human-powered) or Power (motor-powered). Don't call power chairs "electric". There is an obvious negative connotation with the term electric chair.

## **More Inclusivity Tips**

Don't assume someone's ability based on their equipment. For example, some people who use a wheelchair have the use of their legs, others don't.

Don't assume someone's ability based on how they look. Invisible disabilities (like heart, lung or neurodivergent conditions) often don't have outward signs.

When speaking to a person with a disabling condition, speak directly to them, not to their companion.

Don't assume someone with a disabling condition needs assistance.

It's ok to ask/offer assistance, but be sure to respect the person's response.

A piece of mobility equipment should be considered to be part of someone's body. Never touch mobility devices if it wouldn't be appropriate to touch that person's body. If giving assistance requires you to touch someone's mobility device, ask first to be sure it's ok.

People's needs can vary depending on their condition and the situation. You may see people use equipment one day that they don't need the next. You may see people use equipment and then put that equipment aside. There are many reasons for this, which you may not understand, it's best to not assume they are "faking" or "don't really need" their device. If a piece of equipment is put aside, it could be less about the person's need and more about the space not being as accessible as it should be. Mobility equipment that's been put aside should still be treated as a part of that person, it's best not to touch or move it.

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