

This guide offers appropriate language choices for discussing mental health issues.

Respectful language	Disrespectful language
“person with schizophrenia” “person with bipolar disorder” “person with a disability”	“schizophrenic” “manic depressive” “handicapped person”
Empowering language	Disempowering language
“person with a mental illness”	“mentally ill” “victim” “sufferer” “crazy” “wacko” “lunatic”
Do	Don't
Put the person first Become informed about mental illnesses Speak up about stigma Talk openly about mental illnesses	Refer to people by their illness Be judgmental Let jokes or misinformation go Treat mental illnesses as something to be embarrassed about
Terms to avoid	
“challenged” “special” “normal” or “not normal” “psycho” or “psychopath” or “demented”	

Source: MediaSmarts. (n.d.) *Teacher Training Guide*.
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