

Note: For some time on the ASA website, the highest viewed articles have been about identity-first/person-first language preferences. This is a summary of a recent survey in Canada and Australia.

Article Summary

Person-first and identity-first disability language: Informing client centred care

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The document explores the use of person-first language (e.g., "person with a disability") versus identity-first language (e.g., "disabled person") in addressing individuals with disabilities or chronic health conditions. Key findings include:

Preferences:

- Self-Reference: 42.2% preferred identity-first language, 34.1% preferred person-first language, and 23.7% used both interchangeably.
- Referring to Others: Person-first language was most common (39.4%), followed by both interchangeably (34.0%), and identity-first language (26.6%).

Variability Across Conditions:

- Neurodevelopmental conditions (e.g., autism) and pain conditions showed a preference for identity-first language.
- Digestive and musculoskeletal conditions favored person-first language.

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Demographics:

- Younger individuals and those identifying as non-binary preferred identity-first language.
- Older participants and males were more likely to use person-first language.

Contextual Appropriateness:

- Person-first language was rated more appropriate across healthcare, education, media, and public contexts.
- Identity-first language was deemed more acceptable when used by individuals with disabilities or their family/friends, but less so by third parties.

Generational and Cultural Influences:

- Younger generations and those with congenital conditions leaned toward identity-first language, reflecting evolving societal attitudes.

Limitations:

- The study's online recruitment may have biased responses toward younger, more educated participants, limiting generalizability.

The research highlights the need for nuanced understanding of language preferences based on age, gender, health condition, and societal roles to ensure respectful and inclusive communication.