

# Disability Language & Facts

## LANGUAGE WE USE

### General Disability Language

- “Neurodiverse/Neurodivergent” can be used to reference intellectual disabilities
- “Neurotypical” instead of “normal”
- “Intellectual disabilities” or “developmental disabilities” instead of “Special Needs”
- Avoid language on function levels like “high/low functioning” and instead focus on strengths and progress with phrases like “strong/gifted in” and “practicing/working on”
- “I/DD” means intellectual and developmental disabilities

### Autism-Specific Language

- We prefer to use Identity-first language instead of People-first language when communicating about autism
- “Autistic person” or “autistic” instead of “person with autism” or “person has autism”
- “On the autism spectrum” is generally accepted by all

### Rule of Thumb

**If you're unsure which language to use, the best thing to do is ask the individual themselves.**

## DISABILITY FACTS

- 1 in 4 adults in the US have some disability—about 13% of the population or 45 million people.
- Disability is the third largest minority group in the US.

## WHO WE SERVE

At Pathways, we serve adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Below are some facts about the population we serve:

- Developmental disabilities are a group of disabilities that begin during developmental stages of life and impair physical, learning, language, or behavior.
- Intellectual disability is a term used when there are limits to a person's ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life.
- 6.5 million people in the US have an intellectual disability.
- The most commonly known intellectual and developmental disabilities are Fragile X Syndrome, Down Syndrome, and Autism. Some other intellectual and developmental disabilities are Apert Syndrome, Williams Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Phenylketonuria, Cerebral Palsy, and Spina Bifida.
- 1 in 44 children are diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum in the US.
- 1 out of 700 children are diagnosed with Down Syndrome in the US.

