



Introducing a six part series of emails which will examine DE&I topics that are informative, inspiring and sometimes shocking. Our DE&I training committee believes knowledge is the first step to transformational change.

**TOPIC**

**#1 WORDS MATTER**

Spread the Word...Have you heard of them? It's a worldwide organization and fast-growing movement founded on an audacious belief, a simple observation, and an urgent goal:

- **Their belief:** that the world would be better if all people were valued, respected, embraced and included. Included in the games we play and the friends we make. Included in our schools, our workplaces, and our communities.
- **Their observation:** that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, a group made of more than 200 million people, representing every country, belief system, sexual orientation, gender expression, race, and ethnicity, suffer the most from isolation and exclusion.
- **Their goal:** to disrupt this cycle of isolation and exclusion with grassroots action for inclusion.

We can take action today. Seek out someone who has been left out, isolated, or bullied. Sit with them. Welcome them. Be a friend. Be a teammate. Start with a visit to: [www.spreadtheword.global/about](http://www.spreadtheword.global/about)

## ADOPTING PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE

In essence, people-first language is exactly what it sounds like: the use of phrases and personal identifiers that convey respect for individuals with intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disabilities. People-first language places the emphasis on the person, rather than their level of ability.

While there are many ways to do this, making a commitment to choose affirmative phrases over stigmatized titles or ableist phrases is one of the best places to start.

Affirmative Phrases	VS.	Negative Phrases
Person who is blind		The Blind
Person who uses a wheelchair		Wheelchair bound
Person with a disability		Crippled, handicapped
Person with a cognitive disability		Slow, Retarded

For more info visit: [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)

## THIS IS CONNIE'S STORY!

Strange looks. Impatience. Rudeness. "Are you drunk?" comments. These are some of the things Connie, who suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury after an accidental fall, experienced coming back into the workforce.

Connie, who now works for Goodwill as a wares processor, had to re-learn basic skills such as walking, talking, cooking and driving over a 10 year span after falling 18 ft. onto a hard concrete surface.

On top of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles Connie overcame, being left out, marginalized and talked about behind her back was probably the most difficult.

To get through tough days at work, Connie would repeat a message to herself; "I'm doing a good job and I'm doing the best I can."

Things got brighter after coming to Goodwill where she is surrounded by a supportive staff and caring friends but still faces occasional struggles.

Connie has simple, yet profound advice to anyone interacting with those suffering from brain injuries: "People tend to be judgmental toward people with brain injuries and they get scared at times. A good day at work is when I'm joking around and being treated the same as anyone else."



We'd like to hear from you. What's on your mind? Do you have a topic you would like to see covered? A Goodwill employee to highlight? Email us at: [dei@goodwillni.org](mailto:dei@goodwillni.org)