

Imagine Conference Speaker Guidelines

In order to promote best practices in the field and an atmosphere of respect and integrity toward participants, all speakers contributing to the Imagine Conference of the Autism Programs should be aware and mindful of the following:

- Please familiarize yourself with **People First Language and More** to ensure that your presentation and phrasing reflects this philosophy.

Kathie Snow, **Disability is Natural** : <https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/people-first-language.html>

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Replace “**autistic** person” with “person with autism”
- Replace “**confined** to a wheelchair” with “uses a wheelchair”
- Replace “**suffers** from cerebral palsy” with “has cerebral palsy”
- Replace “**battling** physical **problems**” with “has physical disability”
- Replace “**schizophrenic** man” with “man who has schizophrenia”
- Replace “**SPED** kid” with “child who receives special education supports”

We encourage you to examine your own biases and assumptions prior to your presentation and to remember that this audience consists of people with disabilities and/or their family members. Saying or implying that family members of people with disabilities “have it so hard” conveys your own (possibly incorrect) assumptions about the experience and has the potential to offend or ostracize many in the group.

People frequently report that societal assumptions and attitudes negatively impact people much more so than their disability or loved one who has a disability. Please remember that this conference encourages education, acceptance, progress, empowerment, social change, and advocacy.

It is our expectation that all speakers promote, model, and foster respectful attitudes and language free from value judgments.