

Felicity House recognizes that the women who participate in our programs refer to and identify themselves differently when it comes to their diagnosis, personal and gender identity. We respect that people may choose different terminology to describe themselves. To foster respect and create a climate of acceptance and inclusivity, when we interact with women individually, we defer to each person's chosen terms, and use those terms in our interactions with that individual. If you would like to clarify the language you'd like us to use when interacting with you individually, please speak with your staff contact.

For our website, printed materials and in reference to our larger community, we had to choose language that is consistent, inclusive and clear. Therefore, we refer to participants at Felicity House as "women with autism."

In the research leading up to the publication of DSM-5, the previous diagnostic categories used to describe neurodevelopmental disorders were found to be unreliable, with different professionals using different diagnostic terms to mean different things. We have seen such diversity and disagreement in language within our community. To bridge this challenge, we use one term, "autism", to be inclusive of DSM-5 Autism Spectrum Disorder, as well as DSM-IV Autistic Disorder, Asperger Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS).

We have also chosen to use person first language. This language refers to people as "a person with autism" rather than "autistic person" and underscores the fact that people "have" autism, they do not "suffer from" it and are not "afflicted by" it.

Finally, we refer to our community as "women," and use the pronouns "she" and "her" in our materials. However, we respect and will use whichever pronouns our individual participant's request.