

## Misuse of Disability Terminology

A handicap is a disadvantage in filling a role in life relative to a peer group. The disadvantages are barriers that prevent role fulfillment but that, when removed, create access and allow the person with the impairment or disability to perform the role of their peer group. When a person is handicapped by a disadvantage such as a barrier, then the person does not have access. When the barrier is removed, the person has access and is no longer handicapped, even though they live with a disability or impairment. It is the barrier that creates the handicap, not the disability. Therefore, a person may have an impairment or a disability but not a handicap. A person is handicapped by a barrier. A person in a wheel chair is handicapped by stairs but has access with a ramp and is no longer handicapped. Handicapped Parking would be parking that is blocked by barriers and unusable by a person with a disability. Accessible Parking would be parking that can be used by a person with a disability. The phrase so often used, ***handicapped accessibility***, makes no sense; it is a non sequitur; an oxymoron. When asked, don't refer to parking or your building as *handicapped accessible*, but simply say, "Yes, we have accessible parking and an accessible building."