

- GM=EqAl endorses the **Social Model of Disability**.
- GM=EqAl will use the term 'disabled people', which refers to the Social Model understanding that people are disabled by society.
- GM EqAl supports the self-definition of disabled people.
- Under the Social Model, impairment and disability are not the same.
 - **Impairment** is when part of a person's body, mind and/or emotions works differently (or is perceived to be different) from what is considered 'normal' by society.
 - **Disability** refers to the barriers, discrimination and prejudice disabled people face. It is not people's bodies or minds which are disabling, it is society.
- The Social Model states that society is responsible for removing the barriers disabled people face, and for ensuring that disabled people are equally included and valued.

- Avoid negative, medicalised and dehumanising language in favour of affirmatory terms. For example:
 - ‘Experiencing’ (not ‘suffering from’)
 - ‘Disabled person’ (not ‘handicapped’)
 - ‘Wheelchair user’ (not ‘wheelchair bound’)
 - ‘Long-term health condition’ (not ‘ill health’)
 - ‘At higher risk’ in a given situation (not ‘vulnerable’)
- Refer to **young disabled people** rather than to ‘children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)’. Because inclusion is for all, we understand SEN to mean ‘specific’ rather than ‘special’ educational needs.
- Recognise that being disabled is not the only aspect of a person’s identity. A person’s identity and experience are affected by their gender, sexuality, race, culture and age – as well as the age at which they become disabled.
- Ensure there is culturally competent practice, including peer mentors, to acknowledge and accommodate the fact that different cultures have different understandings of disability.
- Recognise that language is always evolving, so that terms and communication methods should be proactively reviewed from time to time.