

GEORGIANS *for* ALTERNATIVES *to* *the* DEATH PENALTY

LANGUAGE GUIDE *for* HUMAN DIGNITY

Thank you for taking time to learn about the work of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (GfADP). When writing or speaking about the death penalty or the broader criminal legal system, we encourage the use of humanizing language. Below you'll find some of our preferred words and phrases. While we do not minimize the impact of serious crimes, we believe that every individual deserves to be treated with dignity through both our actions and our words.

For questions or suggestions, please contact us at info@gfadp.org.

INSTEAD OF	USE
People Impacted by the Criminal Legal System	
ex-con or ex-felon	returning citizen* or person with prior convictions
felon, inmate or prisoner	person who was incarcerated, justice-impacted person or justice-involved person
offender or criminal	person who was convicted of a crime
parolee, probationer or detainee	person on parole, under supervision or in detention
sex offender	person convicted of a sex offense
juvenile or minor	youth, adolescent, child or young adult
victim or survivor	person harmed by...
slave and slave owner	enslaved person and enslaver
Health & Circumstances	
drug addict, alcoholic or substance abuser	person with a history of substance use or person with a substance use disorder
mentally ill	person with mental health needs, person with a mental health condition or person living with mental illness
patient infected with HIV/AIDS	person living with HIV/AIDS
homeless	person experiencing homelessness
Systems & Structures	
criminal justice system	criminal legal system

* Use "returning citizen" only when the person is a U.S. citizen.

** The terms *victim* and *survivor* are personal. Whenever possible, verify with the individual their preference. Otherwise—
Use *victim* when referring to someone who was killed.
Use *survivor* when affirming the person is alive. *Survivor* may be preferred for this reason.