

Person-first language takes hold in CO

written by admin | November 12, 2021



By [Colette Bordelon](#) . . . A board created by Colorado's state legislature, which develops standards for the treatment and supervision of convicted sex offenders, is changing the language surrounding the term "sex offender."

The [Sex Offender Management Board](#) (SOMB) was created in 1992 and works with around 500 treatment providers within the state, which serve approximately 2,000-3,000 sex offenders.

The Program Manager of the SOMB, Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, said the board has previously looked at person-first language and making a transition from the term "sex offender" to something like "adults who have committed sexual offenses." He said their standards already include person-first language in a number of the sections. The board asked if that should be expanded to all sections, and assigned the topic to a subcommittee. "Trying to be sensitive in using person-first language on both sides. Not just on those who commit sexual offenses, but those who are victimized," said Lobanov-

Rostovsky.

The subcommittee made a recommendation for a new guiding principle that described the importance of using person-first language with the sex offender population. Lobanov-Rostovsky said the board is required to create standards based on research and evidence. "The evidence is pretty conclusive that to use labels for people in a variety of areas, whether that's in a sexual offense, or a learning disability, or other types of scenarios, that to label somebody actually makes outcomes worse rather than better... If we use person-first language, that actually helps facilitate change and it decreases the likelihood, in this case, that someone will commit another sexual offense," said Lobanov-Rostovsky.

[Read the rest of the piece here at KOAANews5.](#)