



Tip #7

Don't call me "Honey!"

Have you listened to yourself?

Using person-centered language impacts your life and those around you. The right words will:

- Build relationships,
- Create positive emotions,
- Improve self-esteem, and
- Enhance physical abilities.

Do words hurt?

Language that is not person-centered makes life unpleasant for all:

- Labels (such as "feeder" or "complainer" or "the Parkinson's") turn people into objects.
- Baby talk (speaking in a high voice) shows disrespect for that person.
- Terms of endearment ("Honey" or "Sweetie") without consent, takes away a person's dignity.
- Using collective/plural nouns ("Should we take a shower?") demeans that person.
- Asking pseudo-questions ("You want to go to bed now, don't you?!") insults that person.

Which words make a happy home?	
USE	NOT
Home, our Community	Facility
Move in or out	Admit or discharge
Neighborhood	Unit or wing
Caregivers, Care Partners	Front-line staff

Does it matter how I say it?

- Speak at eye-level. No one likes to be towered over. Sit across from a person who is in bed or seated.
- Stop and talk. A "drive-by" comment as you pass is not really a conversation.
- Be polite. Please wait for a response after asking permission to enter the person's room.
- Be heard. Avoid noisy distractions when having a conversation.

Action Steps:

1. Please post this flyer for all caregivers to read!
2. Encourage care partners to monitor their language for a few days to make their own list of words that do or don't show respect for the people in their long-term care community or themselves.
3. Have a brainstorming session/learning circle to come up with a community-wide list of person-centered words to use and replace any reference to a person according to their care needs or diagnosis.
4. Recognize people who use the correct person first terms and, perhaps, have a light-hearted "penalty" for those who forget.

It may take a little while, but soon everyone will be comfortable-and happy-using person-centered language!

Additional Resources:

- *The Power of Language to Create Culture* by Carmen Bowman, Galina Madjaroff and Judah Ronch on www.pioneernetwork.net/CultureChange/PowerOfLanguage/.
- *Words Make Worlds* on the Eden Alternative website - a "Person-Centered" dictionary at edenalt.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/04Eden-Alternative-Dictionary-Full-Continuum-Version-ABFinal.pdf.
- Action Pact sells a book of reproducible flyers by Missouri's own Joan Devine entitled *Word of the Week: Building a Culture Change Dictionary* at actionpact.com/index.php/product/word-of-the-week.
- A good list of Old/New terms is at www.pioneernetwork.net/CultureChange/Language/.



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