

Building Compassion-Based Relationships with Caregivers



WI Office of Children's Mental Health - Language Guide

Deficit-Based Language	Strength-Based, Recovery-Oriented, Person-First, Trauma-Informed Alternative
<p><i>Describing a Person</i> schizophrenic, a borderline, bipolar</p>	<p>person diagnosed with..., person who experiences the following..., in recovery from...</p>
<p>addict, junkie, substance abuser</p>	<p>person who uses substances; a person with substance use issues</p>
<p>consumer, patient, client</p>	<p>person in recovery, a person working on recovery, a person participating in services</p>
<p>frequent flyer, super utilizer</p>	<p>frequently uses services and supports, is resourceful, a good self-advocate, attempts to get needs met</p>
<p><i>Describing Behavior</i> good / bad, right / wrong</p>	<p>different, diverse, unique</p>
<p>high- vs. low-functioning</p>	<p>doing well vs. needs supports</p>
<p>suffering from</p>	<p>person is experiencing, living with, working to recover from</p>
<p>acting-out, "having behaviors"</p>	<p>person's behaviors may indicate a trauma memory has been triggered, person is upset</p>
<p>attention-seeking</p>	<p>seeking to get needs met, seeking assistance to regulate</p>
<p>criminogenic, delinquent, dangerous</p>	<p>specify unsafe behavior, utilizing unsafe coping strategies</p>
<p>denial, unable to accept illness, lack of insight</p>	<p>person disagrees with diagnosis, person sees themselves in a strength based way. (Honor the individual's perception of self.)</p>
<p>manipulative</p>	<p>resourceful, trying to get help, able to take control in a situation to get needs met, boundaries are unclear, trust in relationship has not been established</p>
<p>oppositional, resistant, non-compliant, unmotivated</p>	<p>the constraints of the system don't meet the individual's needs, preferred options are not available, services and supports are not a fit for that person. (Assume that people do well if they can.)</p>
<p>DTO, DTS, GD (Danger to Others, Danger to Self, General Danger)</p>	<p>people should not be reduced to acronyms; describe behaviors that are threatening</p>
<p>entitled</p>	<p>person is aware of her/his rights, empowered</p>
<p>puts self and/or recovery at risk</p>	<p>person is trying new things that may have risks</p>
<p>weakness, deficits</p>	<p>barriers, needs, opportunity to develop skills</p>
<p>unrealistic</p>	<p>person has high expectations for self and recovery</p>