What is Person Centered Language?

PART I

Menorca Collazo and Mickie Muroff
Objective

- To learn about the power of person centered language.
What is Person Centered Language?

It is more than People First Language which ensures people are called “people”...not consumers or patients, or other terms.
“People first language is very, very important. It's very simple. It's not hard to understand. You put the person before the disability.”  

*Kathie Snow*
People First Language

- Using People First Language changes your perception of the people you support.
- Kathie Snow talks about the power of language in her articles….
  
  “People First Language puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is.”

- Are you “myopic” or do you wear glasses?
- Are you “cancerous” or do you have cancer?
- Is a person “handicapped/disabled” or does he/she have a disability?
People Centered Language

- For a deeper understanding…

- It is important to engage the person and his/her supporters), in identifying descriptive language.

- How does the person view his/her disability and its impact - if any - on their lives?

- Some people with disabilities use “identity-first” language instead of person-centered language, since they find their disabilities to be an inseparable, integral part of who they are.
Person Centered Language

It is a way of interacting that conveys:

- value and respect for people
- your role as a coach to support people
- promotion of decision-making, choice and self-direction

How we speak about something is indicative of how we value and treat it.
Why is it important to use Person Centered Language?
The Way We Use Language

- Conveys the way we perceive people
- Can change our attitude
- Can put limitations on our expectations
- Can keep us from recognizing and supporting people’s gifts
We sometimes use what some people call "loaded words".

We need to avoid them.
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High-functioning, low-functioning – It is better to describe how the person is supported, rather than to label the person as one of these.

“My” people, “my wheelchairs” – These terms imply you own people.
Loaded words. Avoid them!

NON WORDS

NON-Compliant
NON-Verbal
NON-Ambulatory
Loaded words. Avoid them!

Scratchers, runners, biters, food stealers

Retarded, handicapped, special needs

Consumer, patient
Doing it for attention.. or Attention seeking – This term paints the person as being a pest and seeking too much attention from staff.

Having a behavior – We certainly hope so!
Outings – This term comes from the Nursing Home industry where people rarely get “out’ of the building.
- Have you heard some loaded words?

- Would you be willing to share them by typing them to us?
Questions and Feedback

The Georgia Collaborative ASO
Thank you

For Georgia Collaborative ASO general inquiry or questions please email:

GACollaborative@beaconhealthoptions.com