What is Person Centered Language?
PART II

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Objectives

- Gain a deeper knowledge and understanding the power of person centered language
- How to use it in documentation and throughout your organization
The Impact of Everyday Interactions with People on Person Centered Language
Traditional supports have focused on maintaining control which impacts how people are spoken to as in:

- Reminding people to do things they already do as part of their routine
- Giving help to people before they need it or request it
- Assuming people do not know what to do without being told

Person centered practice is supporting decision-making for people by yielding control to them in all things possible.
So How do We Break These Habits?

- Give up control: Interact as a coach, not a boss or parent
- Support people to work on things as a team: a team that stresses equal importance
- Examine who has control of daily interactions in the support setting
- Educate people to think for themselves
- Wait to see what people will do without telling them
We want to help people but sometimes our admirable eagerness to help robs them of the opportunity to learn new things.

Assume Competence
# Person Centered Language Conveys Respect

**Respect**

- Receptive language exceeds expressive language
  - Assume people understand the explanation
  - Give time to respond
  - Ask for opinions/advice on the activity
  - Promote leadership skills
  - Listen with intent
Person Centered Language in Documentation
Person Centered Documentation Includes:

- Responses to activities
- Any activity outside the routine
- New responses
- New experiences
- Any information that adds to your knowledge of what is important to and for the person
Person Centered Documentation

- Embraces person-centered language
- Conveys activities in the lives of a real person, not an entity to be worked on, or someone who needs to be fixed or improved
- Reflects respectful interactions; how staff support people in a person centered way
- Includes how people respond to the activities, training, and events in their lives
- Avoids labels and negative descriptors
- Relies on positive descriptions of people - that includes a person’s gifts, not an identifier such as a clinical term or diagnosis
Meet Barry

- Barry is a 60 year old Asian male diagnosed with Autism. He has negative and non-compliant behaviors if his routine is disrupted. He is one of our wheelchair residents who is non-verbal.

**VS.**

- Barry has lived in his home for a long time. He uses a wheelchair which allows him to move freely in his home and the community. He is very observant, likes to stick to his schedule and communicates through gestures and occasionally with a communication board.
Making a Language Culture Shift in Your Organization
Tips For the Spoken Word

- Raise awareness by brainstorming “loaded words” and the more positive alternative way to say them
- Put them on a poster and display as a reminder
- Try the Buzzer Game
  - Using the words from your brainstorming poster, make a buzzing sound aloud when one of your colleagues accidentally uses one of the “loaded words”
More Tips

- Review all policies, procedures and job descriptions to ensure person centered language is used
- Gently call each other out when someone is overly directive or is helping people when they don’t need it
- Review of person centered language a part of your management’s documentation review process
- Model for others
- Share Kathie Snow’s work, e.g. 2008 Article
Questions and Feedback

The Georgia Collaborative ASO
Thank you

For Georgia Collaborative ASO general inquiry or questions please email:

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