



Commitment to Person-Centered Language

As a fellow pioneer, dedicated to creating a culture of Aging that is Life-Affirming, Satisfying, Humane and Meaningful, I commit to the following:

- ✓ I support the belief that institutional/clinical language unintentionally demeans people, contributing to a hierarchical sense of 'us and them' leading to a dehumanizing institutional culture instead of a nurturing community with respect (for) its members.¹
- ✓ I will do my best each day to be intentional about the language I use, assuring that what I say and how I say it supports home and dignity and does not perpetuate the institutional and clinical nature of relationships with Elders and fellow care partners.
- ✓ I recognize that language, like everything in a person-centered world, is grounded in relationships, and so I will consider the relationship I have with an individual as I choose the words I use.
- ✓ I will work together with Elders and fellow care partners to define the words that best support home in our setting.
- ✓ I will not use the "F" word...facility, a word that lays the foundation for institutional thinking.
- ✓ When referring to the environment, I will use words like home, community, living room, family room and neighborhood, not words like unit or dayroom.
- ✓ When I hear others using institutional or unnecessarily clinical language, I will respectfully open a discussion regarding better choices.
- ✓ If someone hears me using institutional or unnecessarily clinical language, I will be open to having a discussion regarding better language choices.
- ✓ When referring to people, I will use terms such as resident, Elder, guest, a person or individual who needs my help with eating (never feeder), a person living with dementia (or diabetes, etc), a person with concerns (not complainer), care partner, care team member.
- ✓ I will use language that describes the things we do in the context of home rather than institution. Some examples are: Move-in vs admission, move-out vs discharge, walk vs ambulate, helping someone to the bathroom vs toileting.
- ✓ My language will reflect that I do not ALLOW or LET my resident to do things, instead I support, encourage, welcome and mostly, I honor their choices.
- ✓ My language will reflect us and we, not them and they.
- ✓ My language will reflect the abilities and possibilities that exist. I will respond and not react, look for what is right and not for what is wrong. I will seek out ways to say "yes" and try to say "no" less often.
- ✓ I will use conscious language such as I can, I am, I will, I choose, I have, I create, I enjoy and I love.
- ✓ I will take pride in knowing that I am making a difference and I understand that I am accountable to myself and the individuals that I support to a make a change in the world, fighting ageism through language.

