

Our Words Matter

Revised 5/18/23



To demonstrate our desire to partner with people for the best possible life we want to be intentional about the words we use when talking with them, talking about them, or writing about them. The words we use impact the people we support, their families, and their supports. Our language should be clear, understandable, respectful, and affirm our commitment to their full potential.

Some general best practices when writing or talking about or with a person include:

- Use strengths-based thinking vs deficit-based thinking.
- Be aware of the historical context surrounding some of words or language.
- Use quotes from the person or other supports to record information.
- Instead of being general (behavior) it is usually best to be specific (bites wrist when upset).
- Speak or write for the person. Use the appropriate reading and vocabulary level for the person so that the documentation makes the most sense for them. (If the person is an attorney and is living with cerebral palsy they might prefer having documentation written with a broad vocabulary. If the person has moderate intellectual disability and is unable to read without assistance, they might prefer simpler terms written in a more conversational style.) One person may want to be referred to one way that may not be preferred by another person.

While our words matter, our tone and body language is critically important in showing respect when we speak about someone. We can use all the right words and still be disrespectful or disparaging if we are not professional in our tone of voice and body language.

Note: Being person-centered involves identifying what a person’s preferences are. Some people may prefer to use “historical language” when talking about themselves.

Historical Language	Best Practices
Abuser/Addict/Junkie/User	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance use disorder is now the preferred terminology • Uses [specific substance] • Has alcoholism • Is diagnosed with an addiction that experiences the following... • Person with an addiction to substances • Substance abuse interferes with the person’s life
Acronyms/Jargon (may be appropriate to use among colleagues, providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell out for people, families, guardians • Use full name at the beginning of a document, including the Community Support Plan and Notice of Action • Examples are CAC, CADI, BI, EW, AC, PCA, IDD, CCB, CSG, FSG, IHO, NOA, CHF, HTN, ASD, ADHD, etc. • Use ACRONYM LIST as a reference
Acting-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses self by [specific action] • Copes by...
ADLs or Activities of Daily Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Care(s) • Personal Assistance • Self-care or assistance with self-care

Historical Language	Best Practices
Autistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) • Some people who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have stated they prefer “Neurodiversity” vs. “person with Autism.” The preference is to highlight that neurodiversity means thinking and responding diversely or differently. • Ask people you support what their preference is
Baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe where someone is at with a certain area of life • Describe what a person looks like when they are doing well
Behaviors (Challenging Behaviors, Aggressive Behaviors, “Having behaviors”, “Behavioral House”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses frustrations/emotions/self by... • Identify the typical cause of the behavior first (i.e. communication difficulty, change in routine or environment, trouble with something important to them, etc.), then say what specifically may happen: “When having a hard time communicating what they want, they may yell or throw things.” • It may be appropriate to use the term “behaviors” when there are several of them and it would be less person-centered to generate a long list of what they are (this could be in situations where you are documenting eligibility for a program or service). • Consider a person who needs services that are focused on supporting how they express themselves. If this is a home with staff trained to provide this support, it is still the person’s home and should not be referred to as a “behavior or behavioral house.”
Birth Defect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify diagnosis • Congenital diagnosis/disability
Blackball, Black Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use these terms • The terms both imply wrongdoing. If you bear a black mark, you’ve done something that people hold against you. If you’ve been blackballed, you’ve been banned from joining an organization because of something you’ve done. The phrases didn’t originate in times of slavery, but the use of “black” to describe things that are wrong is subconsciously racialized, according to Douglas Longshore, a UCLA researcher who published a study in 1979 on color connotations and race.

Historical Language	Best Practices
Brown Bag or Brown Bag Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term. The term “brown bag” refers to a lunchtime talk where participants bring their own food. It alludes to the Brown Paper Bag Test, a racist and colorist practice of comparing a person’s skin color to the color of a brown paper lunch bag. Those whose skin was darker than the bag would be denied privileges afforded to White people. The Brown Paper Bag Test was also traditionally used to judge skin color by certain African-American sororities and fraternities.
Cakewalk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term. It’s what we call an easy victory or something that’s easily accomplished. The word was originally used to refer to a dance enslaved black people were forced to perform by their owners. The enslaved people were made to compete against each other, with the winner awarded some cake.
Case Manager, Clinical Case Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding that this is a billable service or an employer’s job title, consider and respect how the person views this role in their life <i>“I’m not a case, and you’re not my manager!”</i> Recovery Coach or Recovery Guide
Childlike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to develop social skills Can use in a quote if it is what the caregiver, diagnostic assessment, or parent says Specify actual age and correlation to social behavior age Identify the specific situation when this is observed: “Loves watching The Wiggles” or “Prefers to play with little kids instead of other teenagers”
Client, Consumer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the person’s name Person I support Person I work with Ask them how they would like to be referred to Person receiving support Person in recovery People we support

Historical Language	Best Practices
Committed Suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Committed” has the connotation of a crime. Given the stigma surrounding mental health, the use of “committed suicide” is further stigmatizing. • Be mindful of the use of gestures, such as the hand in the form of a gun and shooting one’s own head, mimicking a noose around one’s neck, or any other self-harm related gestures. • Died by suicide • Death by suicide • Lost their life to suicide
... “In the community”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the language utilized in statute and policy refers to a person’s access to and right to live and work “in their preferred community.” Consider how the use of this language may further marginalize people with disabilities who have historically lived or do live in institutions. It can indicate that a person “gets” to go into the community where that is not even questioned for others. Do you say you want to do something “in the community”? It is likely you say specifically what you want to do, such as “I want to get to Como Zoo” or “I am going to start working out at the Y” or “We hope to move to Forest Lake.” • Be specific about what a person wants to do, where they want to go, where they want to live, or where they want to work.
Control Terms (Let, Allow, Make, “You should”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using these terms and focus on words that are supportive • Supports recommend... • Supports encourage... • Help or support with...
Crazy (i.e. “feeling crazy” or “crazy person”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word “crazy” comes from the word “craze” which comes from the Middle English word “crasen” which meant to crush or become cracked or to be diseased or deformed. Many people living with mental health challenges can find this term hurtful, offensive, and stigmatizing. While the word can also have positive meaning in some contexts, consider its negative impact to people with mental health challenges, and their families, who experience unseen struggles every day. • Ridiculous • Unbelievable
“Cute” or “Kid” or “Kiddo” (when referring to an adult with disabilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not refer to an adult with disabilities as “cute” or as a “kid” or “kiddo”

Historical Language	Best Practices
Dangerous or Danger to self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify what is happening and what the safety concern/risk/issue is Sometimes this term should be used, but it should not be used loosely
Dependent/Dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits from support with... Needs support with... Needs help with... Start with identifying a strength before describing what is needed
Disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify the person's diagnosis: "Is diagnosed with paraplegia" Person has a disability or people with disabilities
"Downs"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diagnosed with Down syndrome
Elderly, "Old People"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out how the person would prefer to be referred to Older adult, Older people Over 65
Elopement (History of Elopement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runs away Will go right towards something they are interested in Will leave without telling their family/caregiver/staff
Entitled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring all support options Aware of rights Great self-advocate or does a great job advocating for...
Epilepsy, Epileptic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seizure Disorder OK to say epilepsy if it is being quoted from a diagnostic report or if this is how the person prefers to refer to this diagnosis Diagnosed with a seizure disorder
Fail/Failed/Failure, Decompensated, Relapse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the circumstances and/or causes of the situation Unsuccessful at this time Unable to ____ because... Chose not to... Declined to... Is experiencing symptoms of ____ again... Started to ____ again...
Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be specific about how the person prefers to eat and the areas the person needs help with eating

Historical Language	Best Practices
Freeloader, Lazy (in context of utilizing unemployment benefits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider individual situations for not working or not being able to work • Some people have experienced receiving these comments during the COVID-19 pandemic when using unemployment benefits due to the inability to work because of being immunocompromised and to keep themselves safe
Frequent Flyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests/needs support often • Will reach out often if feels help is needed • Familiar face • Is needing a lot of support right now • Takes advantage of services and supports when needed • Resourceful • Good self-advocate
Front-lines/In the trenches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify role or job title • Support staff • Direct support
Gender Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender identity isn't about who a person is attracted to, but who the person IS • Gender identity can't be assumed based on appearance, anatomy, social norms, or stereotypes; there is a spectrum of gender identity and it's about who they know them self to be. • Ask what the person's gender identity is, some include: Agender, androgyne, bigender, butch, cisgender, female, gender expansive, gender fluid, gender outlaw, masculine of center, male, nonbinary, omnigender, polygender and pangender, transgender, trans, two spirit

Historical Language	Best Practices
Ghetto, “That’s so ghetto”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ghetto, often called the ghetto, is a part of a city in which members of a minority group live, especially as a result of political, social, legal, environmental, or economic pressure. Ghettos are often known for being more impoverished than other areas of the city. Wikipedia • Historically, the term ghetto has been associated with Jewish urban areas and goes back to the early 16th century when Venice confined its Jewish population to a small island north of the city known as the New Ghetto in efforts to make the city Christian-only. All Jewish districts spread through the 18th century with these areas being referred to as Ghettos. During World War II, the Nazis somewhat revived the ghetto as a site of enforced Jewish segregation. In the early 1900’s, the term ghetto began to be used by African Americans in response to being prohibited from living on blocks where the majority of the residents were white. Use of “Negro ghetto” or “black” ghetto increased during urban race riots in the 1960’s. Time article • Do not use this term
Grandfathered In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a legal term that broadly refers to the grandfather clause, which exempted anyone who was able to vote before 1867 from the literacy tests, property requirements, and poll taxes needed for voting. However, enslaved Black people were not freed until 1865 and not granted the right to vote until 1870. This clause effectively excluded Black people from voting, which continued until the 1960’s. • Do not use this term • Exempt from
Grandiose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has high hopes and expectations of self • Is very confident about themselves or achieving___ • Term could be referenced if quoting a diagnostic report
Gyped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referring to “gypsies” (itself a derogatory term implying criminality), which was applied to South Asian Romani people arriving in Europe, misidentified as Egyptians • Do not use this term • Cheated, swindled, shorted, conned
Handicapped (Handicapped Parking, Handicapped Accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the person’s diagnosis: “Is diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy” • Accessible parking • _____ is/is not accessible
Hearing Impairment, Hearing Impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing loss • Deaf • Use specific diagnosis

Historical Language	Best Practices
Heavy Hitter, Button Pusher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs a lot of support at this time
Helpless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaware of capabilities
High Functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does really well in _____ areas Does really well with _____ Use a specific diagnosis, if known: “diagnosed with mild intellectual disability”
Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are biases, stereotypes, and misunderstandings towards people who do not have stable shelter People who do not have a shelter may be offended by the implication that they do not have a home, as they may view a city or community as their home While the term may not always be offensive to people who do not have permanent homes, consider the stigma surrounding the word Unhoused, houseless Unsheltered Person without housing Specify where the person is currently living “Currently living at ABC Hotel...”
Hopeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaware of opportunities
IADLs or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home management Daily living needs/areas/affairs Community living needs/areas
IDD, DD [acronyms]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual/Developmental Disability Spell out or say the acronym, at least initially Consider saying “intellectual disability” or “developmental disability” (whichever is the person’s diagnosis) when talking amongst colleagues
Labeling a person’s home (i.e. Brain Injury/BI Home, CADI Home, Mental Health Home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider being mindful of putting a label on the house – it is or could be the person’s <i>home</i> Home supported by staff who specialize in supporting people with brain injuries Home that accepts CADI waiver funding Home supported by staff that have experience with mental health needs
Lack of insight, Lacks insight, Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has difficulty understanding how memory is affecting their ability to make good decisions/stay safe/manage money Does not see how [mental health symptom] affects ability to keep a job, maintain friendships, and why they don’t have consistent staff

Historical Language	Best Practices
Lame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lame is defined as having a body part that is unable to move freely, is stiff or sore, is weak. In slang, it is “not being in the know.” Merriam-Webster Often used to describe something boring or uncool, the slang term is linking disability with weakness or undesirability and can be offensive Boring Dull Ridiculous
“Long time no see”, “No can do”, “Chop chop”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These were developed to mock new immigrants simplified use of English, especially during the first wave of laborers immigrating from China in the 19th century Do not use these terms
Low Functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term Has challenges with... Needs support with or benefits from support with... State testing that has been completed during a diagnostic, if appropriate: “Testing scores are at the same level as a 5-year-old” Struggles with... Symptoms interfere with their [relationships, work habits, etc.] in the following way... Be specific with needs Use a specific diagnosis, if known: “diagnosed with severe or profound intellectual disability”
“Low man on the totem pole”, “Low post on the totem pole”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily traditional to tribes in the Pacific Northwest, totem poles are vertical structures in which the order of carvings do not equate to their hierarchy. When using these phrases to describe a low rank, it trivializes the tradition and meaning of totem poles. Do not use this term
Lynch Mob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term The racist roots of the phrase is hidden in plain sight. The phrase has evolved into an umbrella term for an “unjust attack,” but lynch mobs originated as groups of people, most always White, who would torture and kill Black people, often by hanging them, as a form of vigilante justice.
Manipulative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resourceful Really trying to get help

Historical Language	Best Practices
Master Bedroom/Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term A master bedroom typically refers to the largest bedroom in the house, often accompanied by a private bathroom. While it's unclear whether the term is rooted in American slavery on plantations, it evokes that history.
Mental Retardation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term Intellectual Disability (when there is an actual diagnosis with an IQ of 70 or below) Developmental Disability (when there is not necessarily an IQ below 70, such as Autism, Cerebral Palsy, etc.) Use actual diagnosis when possible
Minimize risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize growth
Neurodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have stated they prefer this term be used vs. "person with Autism." The preference is to highlight that neurodiversity means thinking and responding diversely or differently
Nitty Gritty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term A phrase that is used to mean getting down to the key facts, but also originates in the slave trade. The "nitty gritty" is believed to be a reference to what was left behind in boats that were used to ship enslaved people across the sea. The "nits" are insects sometimes found in people's hair and the "grits" refer to the train used to feed the people who were enslaved.
Noncompliant, Resistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declines Does not take medications as prescribed because... Not open to... Chooses not to... They have their own ideas of how they want to live their life Prefers to use other ways to support themselves
Nonverbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses self by [specific way(s) they communicate]... Provide specific examples of how they communicate: "Claps when they are happy", "Points when they want something", "Uses Proloquo2Go on their iPad" or "Reads lips" Does not communicate with words
Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not have a disability Does not have mental health challenges/symptoms
"On a waiver"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a waiver Uses services funded by [specify] waiver

Historical Language	Best Practices
Patient, Person Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the person’s name • Person I support • Person I work with • Ask them how they would like to be referred to • When discussing a large group: “People we support”
Peanut Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates back to the late 19th century and referred to sections of a theater where Black people typically sat • Do not use this term
Placement, Bed, “Looking for an opening”, “Looking for a bed”, “Looking for a four-bed home”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • Specify the type of home if the person knows what they want: assisted living, group home • Home supported by [staff, provider name, etc.]... • Supportive environment • Exploring available home options... • Be specific: “I am working with someone that is looking for a group home in the Newport area. He’d like to live with other guys in their 30s and be close to a bus line. Do you know anything that is available?”
Powwow (“Let’s powwow”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to ask to meet or discuss something, it demeans the elaborate cultural, social, and spiritual celebrations among Native American communities • Do not use this term
Pronouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should always be using a person’s preferred pronouns • Ask what a person’s preferred pronouns are when first starting to work with them • When referring to a group of people, consider saying “they/them” instead of “him/her” or “he/she” • <i>See examples at the end of this document</i>
Puts self at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking chances to grow and experience new things... • Doing as much as possible by themselves is important to them • Chooses to use other supports or chooses to not use support
Refused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the situation into context/be specific: If the person said “no” when asked if they want to take a shower, this is a <i>choice</i> not a refusal • Chooses to... or Has chosen not to... • Prefers to... or Prefers to take a bath in the morning... • Is choosing to do ___ instead • Does not want to.... • Is not in agreement with.... • Declined offer for....

Historical Language	Best Practices
Relapse/Failure (in terms of use of substances)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has started using ____ again
Revolving Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiar face • Uses services or asks for help when feels it is needed • Recidivist (used in legal situations)
Schizophrenic, Autistic ("Is Borderline or Autistic" or "Is a borderline")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosed with [Autism, Schizophrenia, Borderline Personality Disorder] • The person HAS the diagnosis, not the person IS the diagnosis
Services (when translating to the Hmong language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not a word for "services" in the Hmong language • Consider alternative ways to discuss supports to ensure information is translating such as, "How can I help you?" or "How are you?" (versus "What services do you need?")
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual orientation is about who a person is attracted to and who a person feels drawn to romantically, emotionally, and sexually • Ask what the person's sexual orientation is, some include: Asexual, bisexual, demisexual, graysexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, polysexual, straight
Slave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis is what happened to and was enforced upon the person, not a feature of who they are • Enslaved
Sober	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the term or phrase the person prefers • In recovery • Is doing well in recovery
Spaz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term stems from the medical term spasticity or spastic paralysis or when a person does not have control of their movements • It is a slang term commonly used to refer to a person's challenges with mobility, the way a person expresses themselves, or when a person does not have knowledge in a certain area(s) • Do not use this term
Special Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the person's diagnosis: "Is diagnosed with Mild Intellectual Disability"
Specially Abled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the intent may be inclusive, consider that people or families may find this term offensive or confusing • Specify the person's diagnosis
Stability, Maintain stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific about why the person is doing well or better • Is doing well with _____ because of the support system and support plan

Historical Language	Best Practices
Suffering from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the person identifies as suffering from something (pain, mental health disorder), then appropriate to use this terminology • If the person does not see it as suffering from something: “struggling with [mental health disorder]” or “has [mental health disorder/health condition]” • Working to recover from... • Experiencing... • Living with... • Be as specific as possible
Tantrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific about what is happening and why: “Drops to the floor, kicks, and cries when the Internet stops working”
Toileting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific about what the person needs help with when using the bathroom • Needs support with using the bathroom
Total Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the identification of support needs with the person’s strengths and what they can do on their own • Needs support with all areas of... • Needs assistance with... • Needs full support with...
Train wreck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use this term • Be specific about what is going on with the person: “Has unmanaged diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and vision loss” or “Is experiencing mental health symptoms, is using meth and has chosen not to take medications at this time”
Treatment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the term or phrase the person prefers to use, considering they may not want to refer to supports as a “team” • Team • Supports • Recovery Team • Support system or support team
Undocumented, Migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful and respectful of the person’s story and reasons why they are now living in the U.S. • Does not have citizenship • Immigrated from...

Historical Language	Best Practices
Unmotivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific examples of the situation and reasons for not having interest: “When experiencing symptoms of depression, they may not have the energy to [clean the house, take medications, etc.]” • Does not wish to ____ when [symptom, situation, etc.]... • Quote the person if they identify as being unmotivated or use other ways to describe how they are feeling • Avoid assuming someone is unmotivated without a reason or clinical/medical reason, such as depression • Preferred supports are not available • Is not interested in... • Is unsure what they want or need • Lack of inertia (used to describe depressive symptoms, but consider if this is the person’s preferred description)
Unrealistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our job is not to identify what is realistic or unrealistic, rather capture what is important to the person and what they want to do in their life and help them get there, or as close to it as possible • Be as specific as possible about the situation: “Wants ____, but the team is concerned they need to work on ____ first to be safe and to work towards their goal.”
Uppity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adjective that was used by White people during the Jim Crow era to describe Black people they believed were not showing them enough submission or respect. It remains an insulting way to describe a Black person because it insinuates they have poise or independence they should not have. • Do not use term
Vision Impairment, Visually Impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Loss • Blind • If born with vision loss, low or no vision or use actual diagnosis
Vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OK to say as it is identifying risk, but be specific about the area of vulnerability (i.e. finances, etc.) and why
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific while using respectful and strengths-based words • Needs support with... • Experiences barriers to/with... • Sometimes this term is used to describe physical or medical situations: “Has weakness on the left side of the body after a stroke”

Historical Language	Best Practices
Wheelchair bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a wheelchair to get around

See below – “Additional” Pronouns

Standard and Non-Standard Pronouns					
	Nominative (subject)	Objective (object)	Possessive Determiner	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
Traditional pronouns					
He	<i>He</i> laughed	I called <i>him</i>	<i>His</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>his</i>	He likes <i>himself</i>
She	<i>She</i> laughed	I called <i>her</i>	<i>Her</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>hers</i>	She likes <i>herself</i>
It	<i>It</i> laughed	I called <i>it</i>	<i>Its</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>its</i>	It likes <i>itself</i>
They	<i>They</i> laughed	I called <i>them</i>	<i>Their</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>theirs</i>	They like <i>themselves</i>
Invented pronouns					
Ne	<i>Ne</i> laughed	I called <i>nem</i>	<i>Nir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>nirs</i>	Ne likes <i>nemself</i>
Ve	<i>Ve</i> laughed	I called <i>ver</i>	<i>Vis</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>vis</i>	Ve likes <i>verself</i>
Spivak	<i>Ey</i> laughed	I called <i>em</i>	<i>Eir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>eirs</i>	Ey likes <i>emself</i>
Ze (or zie) and hir	<i>Ze</i> laughed	I called <i>hir</i>	<i>Hir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>hirs</i>	Ze likes <i>hirsself</i>
Ze (or zie) and zir	<i>Ze</i> laughed	I called <i>zir</i>	<i>Zir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>zirs</i>	Ze likes <i>zirsself</i>
Xe	<i>Xe</i> laughed	I called <i>xem</i>	<i>Xyr</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>xyrs</i>	Xe likes <i>xemself</i>

Resources for the Best Practices Language include:

- Andrew, Scottie and Kaur, Harmet. “Everyday words and phrases that have racist connotations.” *CNN*, www.cnn.com/2020/07/06/us/racism-words-phrases-slavery-trnd/index.html
- Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog <https://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/category/gender-neutral-pronoun/invented-pronouns>
- Mental Health Coordinating Council Recovery Oriented Language Guide <http://mob.mhcc.org.au/media/5902/mhcc-recovery-oriented-language-guide-final-web.pdf>
- Office of Mental Health, New York State Person Centered Planning Practice and Resources www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/pros/Person_Centered_Workbook
- Tondra, et al., (2007)
- Washington County Peer Learning Circles & Best Practices Workgroup
- University of Iowa, Style Guide: People with Disabilities <https://diversity.uiowa.edu/dei-style-guide/style-guide-people-disabilities>

- Yale University School of Medicine Program for Recovery and Community Health
www.ct.gov/dmhas/lib/dmhas/publications/PCRPLanguage.pdf

If you have additional words or phrases for *Our Words Matter*, please email:
ComSvsPersonCentered@co.washington.mn.us or call at 651-430-6500.

This document was developed by Washington County Community Services and STAR Services. It was made possible through grant funding through the Department of Human Services Disability Services Division.



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