

# Values-Based Language & Communication

## Including People – One Word at a Time

The way we talk with and write about people is central to our values in that people with learning disabilities should be treated with respect, dignity, and receive the support they need.

Our language highlights that the people we support are valued members of the community, able to make their own choices and decisions. By choosing words that uplift and empower, we reinforce our commitment to helping people achieve their dreams and aspirations.

Our language can either uplift people by respecting their dignity or contribute to a disrespectful and demeaning environment which will harm the person's feelings of self-worth and self-esteem.

By ensuring that our communication reflects our values, we promote a more inclusive, supportive, and respectful environment, helping everyone feel valued and understood.

## Key Principles

- 1 Respect and Dignity**  
 Always use language that respects the value of the people we support. Avoid terms that may be demeaning or condescending.
- 2 Person-First Language:**  
 Emphasise the individual rather than defining them by a condition or characteristic. For example, use 'a person with a disability' instead of 'a disabled person'.
- 3 Inclusivity:**  
 Use language that the person is comfortable with - using their preferred communication methods.
- 4 Empowerment:**  
 Use words that uplift and encourage, helping people overcome barriers and pursue their dreams.
- 5 Clarity and Precision:**  
 Communicate clearly and precisely to avoid misunderstandings, ensuring that everyone understands what we are saying.
- 6 Equality:**  
 Choose language that acknowledges people as equal citizens with the same rights as others.

## Benefits of using values based language

- **Promotes Inclusion:** Inclusive language ensures that everyone feels welcomed and valued, fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Builds Trust:** Consistent, respectful communication builds trust among staff, clients, and the broader community.
- **Enhances Team Morale:** When people feel respected and valued, it boosts morale and creates a positive work environment.
- **Reflects Organisational Values:** Adhering to these principles demonstrates our commitment to dignity, respect, and inclusion.
- **Improves Communication:** Clear and precise language reduces misunderstandings and promotes better collaboration.



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## Some Examples



### Respectful Language:

Do not talk about people over their heads or about them to other people when they are in the room or part of the conversation. Include people at every opportunity without exception.

Do not talk with others in a language that the people you support, or other staff members cannot understand. This excludes people, divides people and creates barriers to an inclusive environment.



### Avoiding Assumptions

Do not assume someone's abilities based on stereotypes. 'I assumed David wouldn't want to join the art class because he wouldn't understand instructions'.

Instead, ask and listen to someone's preferences and promote inclusion at every opportunity. Instead of assuming he can't, think about how he can - 'David may need help to do that'.



### Language of Equality

Use 'People we support' instead of impersonal terms like 'clients' or 'service users'.

Avoid describing our place of work as 'The floor' or support workers being on 'The front line'. We do not work in factories or shops and are not soldiers.



### Inclusive Language

Do not say things like 'he can't communicate' or assume that it is your role to talk for someone.

All people, no matter their disability, can communicate. They may not use words, but they will use behaviours, vocalisations or mannerisms which may take time to understand.

When supporting people with their communication, you must be respectful, use communication tools and include the person, without exception.



### Language that gives choice:

Use language that helps to give lots of choice in people's lives and gives them the chance to make decisions. Example: 'I am making Tom lunch'. It would be better to say, 'I am helping Tom to make lunch'.

## Staff Role:

- **Model Appropriate Language:** Lead by example, consistently using respectful and inclusive language in all forms of communication.
- **Provide Guidance and Feedback:** Help colleagues understand the importance of these principles and offer constructive feedback when necessary.
- **Continuous Learning:** Stay informed about best practices in inclusive communication and be open to adapting your language.
- **Advocate for Inclusivity:** Actively promote and support an inclusive environment by addressing language or behaviours that do not align with our values.
- **Ensure Consistency:** Apply these principles across all forms of communication, from written documents to verbal interactions, ensuring our values are always reflected.
- **Be Friendly:** Show that you're down-to-earth and warm. You connect with people in a human way and are inclusive. You make people feel valued and looked after. We can also be fun and light-hearted.
- **Be Accessible:** We pride ourselves on sharing our message simply, so that everyone can understand what we say. Try to avoid complicated language and jargon. Don't make assumptions.
- **Be Confident:** Be proud of the important job you do. There are many experts at LDN London. You can be proud of sharing your knowledge with others. Celebrate your achievements.