



Strength-Based Language

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Why Use Strength-Based Language?

Words matter.

Behaviors do not define a person.

Using strength-based language:

- Removes stigma, which prevents people from seeking help.
- May help clients see themselves as agents of change.
- Focuses on the innate strengths of people, which aids recovery and empowerment.

What is Strength-Based Language?

Strength-based language highlights how we can use intrinsic abilities to become who we want to be. It empowers people to see themselves as masters of their own destiny, rather than being helplessly swept along by life.

Deficit-based language, on the other hand, may depersonalize or dehumanize people's experiences, which could lead to negative biases.

Stigma

A set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something. *

*Britannica Dictionary



<i>Examples</i>	
<i>Deficit-Based (DO NOT USE)</i>	<i>Strength-Based (USE)</i>
Criminal Justice System	Justice System
Ward/Detainee/Inmate/Delinquent	Youth
Probationer/Defendant/Offender	Client
Criminogenic Needs/Risk Factor	Dynamic Factor
Low Risk Dosage/Client	Likely to Succeed with Low Support
Medium Risk Dosage/Client	Likely to Succeed with Medium Support
High Risk Dosage/Client	Likely to Succeed with High Support
Skill Deficit	Skill to Build/Develop
Alcohol/Drug/Substance Abuse	Substance Use Disorder/Substance Misuse
Addicted to...	Dependent on...
At Risk (for Youth)	At Promise (for Youth)