



Language is power, and we want children and young people to feel empowered in their care experience.

LANGUAGE MATTERS



POWERED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



We will
#KEEPTHEPROMISE

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Inverclyde
council

CVS
Communities and
the Voluntary Sector
Inverclyde

INVERCLYDE
HSCP
Health and Social
Care Partnership

your
voice
Inverclyde Community Care Forum

LANGUAGE MATTERS

Without communication there is no relationship

Changing the way we talk about and with Children in Care

A word can make us feel empowered or invisible. The workforces approach needs to be inclusive and not judgemental; as words (verbal or non verbal) can have an impact far reaching than one can comprehend, especially in the setting of children and families with care experience.

Language is a powerful tool for communication but sometimes the way that it is used in social care creates stigma and barriers for understanding. We want all children and young people to feel empowered in their care experience.

“With great power...”

As the saying goes... “With great power, comes great responsibility”. Hopefully our language matters guide goes some way towards realising the importance of that ethos.


Services need to reflect the language of childhood if you are to help care experienced children feel like everyone else. We want to encourage our workforce to use language akin to their own families to prevent depersonalisation of what are children’s homes and precious childhoods.

We hope that together we can start to make the changes needed. We want our community to be a place where care experienced children and young people are supported and are proud of themselves, their achievements and look forward to a future of opportunity, equality and equity.

We have asked care experienced children, young people and the workforce about the words used in care. This resource is by no means exclusive, we hope it is a useful tool to spark the conversation and begin Inverclydes journey in creating a shared inclusive language.

Let us rethink how we promote belonging and secure childhoods and recovery from trauma - let’s start with our language.

Best wishes,
Proud2Care



“Scotland must understand that language creates realities”

Those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their stories and lives; simple, caring language must be used in the writing of care files.

— THE PROMISE p69

LETS STOP USING	THIS SOUNDS AND FEELS BETTER
ABSCOND	Run away; Go missing, went out without permission
CARE PLAN	Future plans; My plan, guidance plan
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR	Having trouble coping; feeling distressed; Difficult thoughts
CONTACT	seeing our family; Family meet up time/Family time; Seeing Dad/Mum/Gran/etc.
PERMANENCE	My home
PLACEMENT	Our home; My house or the house where I live
RESPITE	A break for children (not carers); Day out; Stay over; Sleepover, holiday, Short Break
SIBLINGS	Our brothers and sisters
STAFF, SUPPORT WORKER, UNIT MANAGER	Their name
UNIT	house, home
LAAC	"Children and Young people." Never use LAAC to describe a child!
SAFEGUARDING	Protecting / keeping you safe
CSO	Decisions and Plans
ICSO	Decisions and Plans
MEETINGS	Get together / catch up
IN CARE	Care experienced
SCATTER FLAT	Flat/ Your house/ Your home
CASE FILE	We're still undecided on this one...!
TRANSITIONS	Going forward
RESTRAINT	Safe hold
COMMUNITY TIME	TIME WITH FRIENDS / going out
LAAC/ TAC	YOUNG PERSONS MEETINGS/ meetings
Panel / Hearing	Meeting /
CHANGE OVER	CHAT / CATCH UP
KEY WORKER	We're still undecided on this one...!
LOGS/ SWIFT NOTES	your diary / daily diary
SHIFTS	We're still undecided on this one...!
PETTY CASH	Money
ROUTINES	shower, tidy your room
DEVICES	phone, controller
RISK ASSESS	make sure it's safe
YOUNG PEOPLE	name/ or our kids
REVIEW	Check In

PRINCIPLES and PRACTICE

Principles

We have suggested some principles for good practice for interactions between teachers, social workers, health, panel, community and other members of the workforce with care experienced children and young people and their families drawn up from reference of our own care experience and experiences of the workforce who work alongside and support us.

Be aware that language, both verbal and non-verbal, has enormous power, which can have positive or negative effects i.e. use of lanyards can create a power imbalance.

Recognise that some words, phrases and descriptions are potentially problematic, whatever the intention of the user.

Become alert to the use of language, and non-verbal communication i.e. body language and recognise if it may be creating a negative effect.

Use language (including tone and non-verbal gestures) that is: collaborative and engaging, rather than authoritarian or controlling.

Below we have shared examples of language use from our experiences and suggest alternative responses or ways to deal with them. These are by no means comprehensive but are intended to demonstrate the negative impact of language in everyday practice and how this could be addressed and reduced.

“Your behaviour has been really challenging lately”

Children and young people who are finding coping tough are not ‘challenging’ they are in need of your help and support

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

Ask how they are, do they feel they are coping

“We are having a handover meeting”

Children who live in a family home do not experience handovers.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

Involve young people in ‘catch-ups’ where appropriate to do so

The POWER of LANGUAGE

Seeing family is normal for anyone but 'contact' makes it sound like it's not normal.

Can we stop using 'Care Plan'? I'm well, it sounds like something if you were in hospital. If it's got to be called something can i tbe called 'future plan' or 'my plan'?

Respite - I didn't even know what this word meant. Have you ever googled the word 'respite'?

Abscond makes you sound like a criminal. I didn't abscond, I went out without permission. So did my friends, but they live at home where this word would not be used!

"Say 'MY HOME' or 'FOSTER HOME' - and not my 'PLACEMENT' - placement is something temporary students go on."

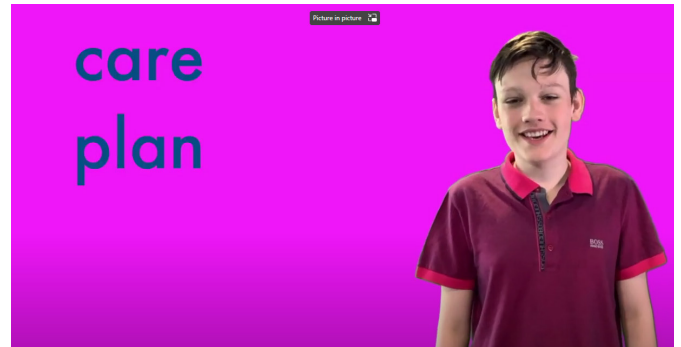
Who calls their brother and sisters "siblings"? Makes it sound pure social worky!

Just say I'm going out with my friends! 'Community Time' sounds ridiculous!

RESOURCES

Stigma Film - LANGUAGE MATTERS!

Find the link on www.yourvoice.org.uk/news/ipromise



Stigma Film - LANGUAGE MATTERS!

www.yourvoice.org.uk/news/ipromise



WATCH THIS SPACE!

We will continue to update the stigma resources as we create and launch more.

iPROMISE!



LANGUAGE MATTERS

Find out how we're working with services to reflect the language of childhood - Language is power, we want children and young people to feel empowered in their Care Experience.



If you would like more information on this resource or Proud2Care you can contact

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