Session Objectives

• Define “The Language of Diabetes” and person-centered language
• Discuss why person-centered language is important in diabetes care
• Provide examples of person-centered language and preferred alternatives to common terms
What is “The Language of Diabetes?”

• A language movement in the diabetes community

• Important as we move to personalize diabetes care, and show respect for those who are impacted by diabetes

• Opportunity for health care providers and those who work with patients with diabetes to show respect and support healthy, respectful communication
Person-First and Strengths-Based Language

- Person-First Language
  - Puts the person first, instead of the disease
  - Emphasizes the person first to avoid equating the person with a disability

- Strengths-Based Language
  - Focus on strengths rather than deficits
  - Can help with encouraging people to take more control over their disease process
Why does language matter?

- Language is a primary method for communicating and sharing information. Words convey meaning AND influence how a person feels.
- Words and language shape attitudes, identity, perceptions, and stereotypes
- Patients with diabetes may be impacted by words. They may shape their thoughts about motivation, behaviors, and outcomes.
- Use of thoughtful language can improve patient outcomes and perceptions
Information Specific to Children

• Judgmental words and messages can inflict shame, leading a person to pull away from other people and situations.

• Adolescents with diabetes may be especially vulnerable to language. Effective, but non-judgmental language can help build trust, promote self-care, and encourage honest communication.

• It is important to promote healthy and thoughtful language when working with students who may also have a diagnosis of diabetes.
## Easy Language Swaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problematic</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diabetic</td>
<td>Person with Diabetes</td>
<td>PWD emphasizes value of the person. Avoids using disease to describe a person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Control is difficult to achieve when the body no longer works as it is supposed to and may convey judgment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Language-Centered Ideas

- In diabetes there are no “good” or “bad” numbers – keep it neutral
  - Every number provides information about how to make the next decision towards staying healthy
- A child’s worth is not equal to their diabetes control
- Encourage sharing of information
- Avoid strategies that may foster negative feelings, guilt, etc.
This information was based on:

https://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/40/12/1790

Suggested Resources

• AADE Language in Action: Using Words to Support People with Diabetes (Video with examples)
• A New Language for Diabetes – Diabetes Australia
• AADE Handout (Speaking the Language of Diabetes)
• The Use of Language in Diabetes Care and Education (2017) – Full Article
• Diatribe Summary of Language of Diabetes Article