

DISH

À LA CARTE



The Language of Diabetes: What you Say Matters

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

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

Click here to view more alternatives from: <https://www.diabeteseducator.org/docs/default-source/practice/educator-tools/HCP-diabetes-language-guidance.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

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:

Dickinson, et al. (2017). The use of language in diabetes care and education. *Diabetes Care*, 40(12), 1790-1799.

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

American Association of Diabetes Educators (2017). Speaking the language of diabetes (Handout).

<https://www.diabeteseducator.org/docs/default-source/practice/educator-tools/HCP-diabetes-language-guidance.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

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](#)
- [Diatribes Summary of Language of Diabetes Article](#)