Person-Centred Language & Person-Centred Care: At a Glance

Did you know? The way we communicate shapes the way we provide care.

Person-centred language (PCL) and person-centered care (PCC) are two approaches that can be used together to create inclusive, respectful and life-affirming environments.Person-centred language ensures people are spoken to and about with respect and dignity, while person-centred care ensures people receive compassionate, individualized support.

The goal of this resource is to briefly describe both approaches and highlight how they can be used together to positively transform the culture of care and everyday interactions.

Person-Centred Language ("How We Communicate")	Person-Centred Care ("How We Support")
Definition: Using language that puts people first rather than the disease, symptoms, conditions, or personal expressions that they may have.	**Definition:** A way of delivering care and support that is tailored to the individual, ensuring their preferences, values, and needs are at the centre of decision-making.
In Practice: • Focuses on how we speak to, write about, and communicate with individuals • Involves the use of positive and respectful terminology • Avoids labels and negative stereotypes, reducing stigma • Encourages care providers to use person-first language in all communication and interactions	**In Practice:** • Focuses on how we provide care and support to individuals • Involves collaboration between the individual and care partners and the use of active listening (i.e. showing engagement through nodding and eye-contact, paraphrasing and summarizing to confirm understanding, asking clarifying questions, etc.) • Supports choice, autonomy, and shared decision-making • Encourages care providers to consider lifestyle, values, and personal goals in care plans to deliver compassionate care
Example: Instead of referring to someone as "a demented person", say "a person living with dementia".	**Example:** Instead of making decisions for a person living with dementia, involve them in choices about their daily routine, meals, and activities.

Similarities Between the Two Approaches:

- Respect for the individual – both emphasize treating people with dignity and honouring their unique life experiences
- Focus on strengths and abilities – both aim to recognize and build upon a person's capabilities rather than their limitations
- Empowerment – both aim to give people more control over their own lives and decisions, improving their quality of life and well-being
- Holistic approach – both consider the whole person, including their emotions, preferences, cultural values and identity
- Broad application – both are used in all care settings (e.g., long-term care, retirement, acute care, community) and social service environments

For a visual representation of this information, see the diagram on the next page.

PERSON-CENTRED LANGUAGE

- Using plain language that is easy for a general audience to understand instead of complex terms or jargon

- Calling a person by their preferred name instead of their legal name

- Describing a personal expression instead of labelling the person (e.g., wanderer, aggressive)
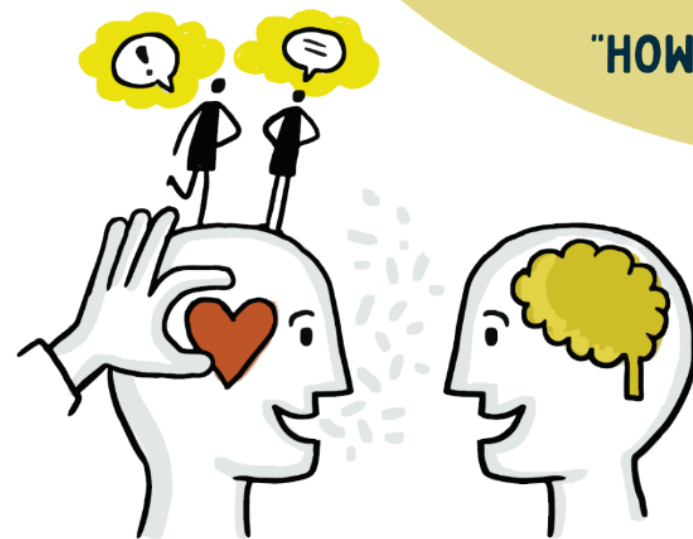
"HOW WE COMMUNICATE"

BOTH INVOLVE:

- Showing respect and promoting inclusivity

- Focusing on strengths and abilities

- Reducing stigma and discrimination

PERSON-CENTRED CARE

- Providing information and resources to help a person and their care partner(s) make informed decisions

- Encouraging and supporting a person to maintain their self-management skills and live a fulfilling life

- Creating personalized care plans to reflect a person's needs and preferences (i.e. beliefs, cultural values, life experiences, etc.)

"HOW WE SUPPORT"