

## SCLARC PERSON CENTERED LANGUAGE GUIDE\*

**“Use language that promotes dignity and respect by avoiding labels, being specific, and always putting the person first” – Brian Potvin**

**Acronyms:** The contemporary rule is to write out the full name when first mentioned (with the acronym in brackets). Use only the acronym after this.

**Example:** ‘The Service Coordinator (SC) will request records. The SC will attend the IEP...’

Instead of saying...	Because it...	Use this instead
<b>Consumer/Resident/Client/Cases /Caseload</b>	is dehumanizing, clinical, impersonal, and implies an “us vs. them” mentality.	The person’s name, Person /Individual served/supported
<b>“The Planning Team wants...”/ “Parents want...”</b>	suggests the person is not able to make their own decisions and does not mirror the experience of a person without a disability	“(Name) wants/will...” If necessary “Circle of Support” can be used to describe who will assist the individual
<b>Residential Support Specialist/RSS</b>	Is outdated terminology	Direct Support Professional (DSP)
<b>Adult Day Care</b>	is not age-appropriate.	Day program
<b>Disruptive social behavior/aggressive social behavior/ “Having behaviors” / “Challenging Behaviors”</b>	is not specific.	Describe the behavior
<b>Non-compliance/Refusal</b>	suggests the individual is not supposed/allowed to make choices.	Describe the action (i.e. pushing medication away)
<b>Community Outing/Activity</b>	does not mirror the experience of a person without a disability.	Specify where, i.e. “going to the mall.”
<b>Toileting/Dressing/Feeding</b>	is impersonal and not descriptive.	Assisting/supporting someone with...by...
<b>High/Low functioning</b>	does not explain individual needs.	Capable of...needs support with...
<b>Non-Verbal</b>	assumes verbal communication is the only/best form of communication.	Does not use words to communicate... Communicates by...
<b>Wheelchair Bound</b>	has connotations	Uses a wheelchair
<b>Disabled</b>	can be impersonal and does not provide information about an individual’s needs.	Person with a disability
<b>Diapers</b>	may not be age appropriate.	Briefs/incontinence supplies
<b>Placement/”Placed At”/Facility/CCF</b>	is clinical and impersonal.	Home (i.e. “Johnny’s home is at Disneyland Adult Facility...”)
<b>“Runner”</b>	labels the person as their behavior.	Will wander if not supervised.
<b>Maladaptive Sexual Behavior</b>	labels the person as their behavior and is not specific.	Describe the behavior (i.e. masturbating in public, etc.)

**\*Please note:** Some individuals supported by SCLARC may not agree with all of the above terminology. If an individual has a specific preference of how they are referred to/language used, that should be used.