LANGUAGE

This Gentle Teaching theme focuses on community, in particular the use of our language. We have spent a lot of time emphasizing how important the use of our language can be: it can either build up a relationship or tear it down and destroy it.

Language is simple in concept but is a challenge when put into action. We know that language includes verbal, physical and visual: but for our intended purposes we are going to place our primary focus on our verbal language.

Throughout the following sections we will spend some time focusing on the use of language, how it becomes "Gentle" and the challenge that faces us as individuals, as supports and as an influential organization.

Kick-start the conversation on language, by watching the following videos:

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes into his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."

-Nelson Mandela

1 The Sketch Show UK - Learn ABC

https://youtu.be/5yA1sF7nspg?list=PLCFFB473F6CE8F477

2 SCTV - English for Beginners

https://youtu.be/_OaYZCYAOfc?list=PLCFFB473F6CE8F477

While each of these videos is comical in their own ways, I believe that they also speak truth into our human condition and conversation about our language. Answer the following questions and create group conversation.

- What do you notice about the teacher in the first video? What does she do well at and what does she fail at?
- What is the "headmasters" response to the teacher? How does it change the teacher's demeanor? Is it for the better or the worse?
- In the second video, the 'teacher' has the best intentions. How do they change and why?
- What does this teach us about the way we use language and the effects that it may have on those we are directly interacting with?

Instead of...	Use...
GROUP HOME or STREET NAME	Jim's home
CLIENT/CONSUMER/PARTICIPANT	Individual served/use their name
SHIFT (referring to work times)	Support time
STAFF/WORKER	Friend/Support/Mentor
BEHAVIOR	Anxiety...upset...frustrated
CALM DOWN	Feel better
WORK	(Structured) Hangout/support
INCIDENT REPORT	Interaction Report

Above, you will find a diagram of words that are found in 'traditional' group home settings: compared to the use of gentle language that our organization desires to use. Are there other word combinations you would include?

1 Why do you think shifting our perspective and using "gentle" language is beneficial? Have you seen this in action? If so, how?

2 Changing the use of our language is critical in our support methodology, but is one of the more difficult tools to adjust. Have a conversation on how you (as an individual & as a team) are doing. How can you work to become better?

3 Create an action plan with your team to stretch yourselves in the use of your language: the desire is that you would implement this plan. What will you have to do? What will be the most challenging? What do you perceive could change?

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