



You Say Potato...

When interacting with professionals, historically families have been approached from an “expert” model. Professionals often look at families from a clinical perspective and use clinical language. As you might imagine, this conveys to the family that they do not possess the resources they need to solve their problem and they require someone to solve it for them. The language that comes from the “expert” model significantly interferes with the ability of professionals and families to partner successfully in their families’ care.

Family Driven Care enables us to replace the language used in the “expert” model with language that will strengthen families and support them to make informed decisions for their children.

It seems like such a small thing to focus on, but when you realize that if you can change the way a person talks, you are one step closer to changing the way they think, you will then see the impact of a few small words.

| What We Hear: Deficit Based Language | What We Want to Hear: Strengths Based Language |
|---|---|
| The family needs an assessment | It may help to explore the family history, traditions and cultural perspectives |
| The family refuses to engage in services | It appears that the services do not match the needs of the family |
| The family is resistant | The family is multi-stressed |
| The child is acting out | The child appears to have unmet, misunderstood needs |
| The family will not comply with the plan | The family needs access, voice and ownership of their plan |
| The home is a disaster | The family needs support managing the home and establishing routine |
| The child is a sex offender/fire starter | The child has...behaviors |
| The family is not meeting their goals | The goals of the family appear to be challenging |
| The parents are adversarial | The parents are resilient and strong advocates |
| The parents need services | The parents have unmet needs |
| Client/case | Family/child |
| The family is chaotic | The family needs support in developing structure and routine |
| The child is explosive | The child is challenged with emotional regulation and distress tolerance skills |
| The child is unmanageable | The child needs support with distress tolerance |

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