

16. Session plan: Appropriate language

<i>Volunteer</i>	
Learning objectives	
<p>By the end of the session participants shall be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the rationale for using correct disability terminology and appropriate language. • List examples of acceptable and unacceptable disability terminology and appropriate language 	
Time allocated	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 minutes. 	
Resources needed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard or flipchart • Flipchart paper and markers • Post-it notes or small pieces of paper for each participant • Prestic or masking tape 	
Preparation	
<p>Familiarise with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate language session plan and Participant Manual contents. Review the list of appropriate and unacceptable language to see if this needs modification for the local context. <p>Draw:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three faces, each on the top of a sheet of flipchart paper: one happy 😊, one neutral 😐, one sad ☹. <p>Write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipcharts of the text within each of the boxes headed Write on BOARD in advance of the session to help the flow. 	
Trainer's notes:	
<p><i>The development of self-worth and self-esteem is a basic human need, and the language we use to talk to, and about, persons with disabilities can either contribute to or hinder this development. The emphasis should be on the person and not on the disability (persons first). The language we use to talk to, or about, persons with disabilities can convey respect or disrespect, closeness or distance, a formal or informal relationship. The words we use reinforce the idea or image the person has of her- or himself. They can make a person feel accepted or rejected, part of a group or isolated, loved or unloved, valued or pitied and worthless. The terminology and language we use can also determine the nature and design of interventions for persons with disabilities.</i></p>	

16.1 Introduction (5 minutes)

Volunteer

Write on BOARD:

Appropriate language learning objectives:

- Explain the rationale for using correct disability terminology and appropriate language
- List examples of acceptable and unacceptable disability terminology and appropriate language

Introduce the session.

Explain: This session looks at disability terminology and language and the importance of using - and encouraging others to use - correct disability terminology and appropriate language.

Read out the learning objectives from the board.

16.2 Language and labelling activity (50 minutes)

Volunteer

Explain the activity below.

Activity: Language and labelling

Groups	Split participants into four groups.
Instructions	<p>Acknowledge that this activity has been adapted from <i>Including Disabled People in Everyday Life – A practical guide</i> (1999), Save the Children UK.</p> <p>Note: <i>If there are participants in the group with challenges in writing or visual impairment, partner them with someone who can write down their ideas for them.</i></p> <p>Give each group about 12 Post-it notes or pieces of paper.</p> <p>Ask members of the groups to think of names/terms/expression they know, or have heard used, to describe children or adults with disabilities – the names that persons with disabilities have been called.</p> <p>One member of the group should write down the words or expressions - <u>one per piece of paper - and stick them onto the group's blank sheet of flipchart paper.</u></p> <p>Encourage participants to feel free to write any words they like (<u>in any language including local languages</u>), both positive and negative in tone, whether polite or not.</p> <p>Ask groups to look at each word or expression on their sheet of paper and think how it would make them feel to be called such a name.</p>

	<p>After groups have had 15 minutes to consider their words/expressions, the Trainer should invite the groups to bring them to the front of the room and stick them under the appropriate face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the name gives them a warm feeling, of self-respect and dignity, then they should stick it under the happy face. • If it feels neutral, neither friendly nor unfriendly, arousing no particular feelings, they should stick it in the middle under the neutral face. • If the name makes them feel rejected, unloved, undignified, ashamed, an object of ridicule, they should stick the name under the sad face.
Time	<p>Allow 15 minutes for the initial writing of words; 15 minutes to stick under the appropriate face; 15 minutes for discussion and feedback. (Total time: 45 minutes).</p>
Feedback	<p>When all the names have been stuck on the sheets at the front, ask participants if there is any name whose position they do not agree with. They can come and move it, explaining why.</p> <p>When a consensus has been reached about words that everyone feels happy to use, discuss what should be done with the rejected words. For example, they could be thrown in the bin, or torn up by participants.</p> <p>Summarise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should always be conscious of the possible effect of the names we give, especially to children with disabilities. • We cannot always tell what effect language may have on someone else. Encourage participants to listen to each other's opinions and feelings. • If there are any persons with disabilities, or parents of children with disabilities in the group, it is important to listen to the language they choose to use. • Persons with disabilities have actual names, like everyone else – use them! • Emphasis should be on the person not the disability (person first).

17 Appropriate language (15 minutes)

	<i>Volunteer</i>	
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After the activity, direct participants to the table in the Participant Manual. Use it to **highlight** any terms or expressions that have not, so far, been covered during the activity, and **discuss** as a whole group accordingly.

If the expressions 'living with a disability' or 'normal' don't get mentioned, explain that they are not appropriate. The expression 'living with' has crept into disability language due to the phrase 'living with HIV/AIDS'. It is better just to use 'person with a disability'. The use of normal implies persons with disabilities are 'abnormal'.

Highlight that sometimes people name children with disabilities 'Blessings' or 'Gift' at the suggestion of others to emphasize they are appreciated. But if used too frequently these names can also become a label. Therefore, emphasize that it is important to treat and name a child in the same way as a non-disabled child to avoid creating another barrier.

Ask if anyone would like to comment on if they will change anything about the language they use following this session.

Close the session.

