

OUR WORDS MATTER

Core Principle

Example

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| 1. Use person-first language | a person with diabetes, not a “diabetic” |
| 2. Avoid stereotypes and generalizations | “non-compliant,” “poor historian” |
| 3. Assign blame to the system, not the individual | “pt chooses” rather than “refuses” |
| 4. Eliminate pejorative terms | convict, prostitute, alien |
| 5. Think critically and be intentional about using social identifiers | race, SES and language don't belong in the one-liner |
| 6. State the facts – avoid interpretations | “patient alleges/claims 10/10 pain” |
| 7. Use inclusive language | “pt uses a wheelchair” rather than “wheelchair bound” |
| 8. Use the active voice | “I prescribed antibiotics” |
| 9. Don't weaponize quotes | patient is having “horrible” pain |

When in doubt, ask yourself:

If I were the patient reading/hearing this, how would I feel?