



Non-Violent Inclusive Language Awareness

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My mother always said...



Cognizance

We use common phrases in our everyday speech, have you ever thought about the words that make up these phrases?

As our language has evolved, many of these common phrases have come to incorporate words that would otherwise be violent in nature or which are not inclusive with respect to others.

Examples and Alternatives

- Bullet points
- Shoot me an email
- Take a stab at it
- Roll with the punches
- Target audience
- When push comes to shove
- Take your best shot
- Execute a plan
- Blown away
- Dot point
- Send me an email
- Give it a try
- Take it in stride
- Key/intended audience
- When it comes down to it
- Try/do your best
- Follow through
- Astonished/impressed

Awareness is Key

By thinking more about the actual words we use, and not automatically reciting these common phrases, we bring awareness to what we are truly saying and how it could be perceived.





Non-violent and inclusive language builds on a belief in treating other people with compassion and respect, and in healthy communication that builds trust and connection between people.

The goal is not to prohibit certain words or phrases, but to think about and be aware of what you say. ***Awareness is the ultimate goal.***

Shot vs. Vaccine/Immunization

Considerations and Education are key!

Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

- 12% of adults have proficient health literacy, according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy.
- 9 out of 10 adults may lack the skills needed to manage their health and prevent disease.
- 14% of adults (30 million people) have below basic health literacy.
- Low literacy has been linked to poor health outcomes such as higher rates of hospitalization and less frequent use of preventive services leading to higher healthcare costs.

Concept background

- 1994 *A Pastoral Message of the U.S. Catholic Bishops was published*
- 1998 Sister Mary Jean Ryan set the tone for non-violent, inclusive language at SSM Health
- 2013 KentuckyOne Health Marketing and Communications Division published a Communication and Style Guide requiring the use of non-violent language.
- 2016 Public Radio International (PRI) aired a story correlating gun culture with everyday language permeation

In an open letter to employees, physicians and board members in 1998 Sister Mary Jean Ryan set the tone for non-violent, inclusive language, she wrote ...

“We know all too well that violence exists in our nation and the world. Every day, those of us in health care tend to the victims of violence in our hospitals and emergency rooms. We are fully aware that a woman is battered every 15 seconds.

But is it enough simply to care for those who have suffered at the hands of violent family members, friends, neighbors or strangers? Most certainly the violence will not end until we each take responsibility for promoting non-violence in our personal lives and in our communities.

How can we as individuals, whatever our roles in life, make a difference in creating safe and peaceful neighborhoods? One way is to be aware of our own language and the language spoken in our homes and offices. You may be asking, “How can that make a difference?” Don’t underestimate the power of language. We each can choose to speak to those close to us or to strangers in ways that create happiness and inspire, as opposed to language that demeans people or creates unhappiness.

Our overall goal with language is to help create healing environments for patients, their loved ones and for ourselves. At first glance, it may seem like a small thing, but it is something every one of us can do to make a difference and to make the world a kinder place. “

~ Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, FSM

Former SSM Health President/CEO

(Sister served as President/CEO from 1986-2011)

References

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Questions?

