

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE!

While talking about “*respect*” during a self-assessment workshop, there was a lengthy discussion about the importance of language. Cheryl Rennick, one of the staff members who was participating from Community Living York South, realized there really were two languages - one for people who receive support, and one for people who don't. She went home and wrote the following story about her life using language that is typically used for people who receive support. There really are two languages and we need to stop it!

This morning I got up early so that I could complete my hygiene routine before everyone else was up.

At breakfast, I asked my husband, “What activity would you like to participate in this weekend? Shall we stay home and do our relaxation program or would you prefer to go on an outing?”

“An outing?” he asked.

“Yes” I said. “You know, go out into the community somewhere.”

“I wouldn't mind inviting the Martins over to play some euchre.” he suggested.

“The Martins!” I exclaimed. “I don't think so. They're much too low functioning for us. How about inviting the individuals from Willow Lane?”

“Sure.” He said. “Sounds like fun to me.”

Suddenly something occurred to me. “We can't invite the Willow Lane Gang! Remember the last time they were here they drank too much and then suddenly went into behaviours!”

“Behaviours?” he asked.

“Yes! Remember when he trumped her ace and then she began to verbally aggress against him and we had to de-escalate the situation? After they went home I needed to be PRNed!

“Well then,” said my husband, “Why don't we just go out to a restaurant?”

“Great idea! Should we make it a one on one activity or would you prefer to socialize with a few of our peers?”

Sound familiar? Is this happening around you? If it is, it's time to do something about it! Although this story uses humor to demonstrate this issue, it is a serious matter. Without question we should only have one language for everyone!