



Mind Your Language

Attendee Information

Thank you for joining us today. All of the information below was included in the session.

Session Aims & Objectives;

- Be able to explain why the language that we use is important
- Explore what the language that we use is really saying and the impact that this can have on children and their families
- Understand how the language that we use can impact;
- How we as professionals respond to and safeguard children who are exploited and their families
- How other professionals respond to and safeguard children who are exploited and their families both now and in the future
- How wider society responds to and safeguards children who are exploited and their families
- Describe how you will use and influence the use of language going forward

Why is the language that we use when talking and writing about children who are exploited and their families important?

- Impacts thoughts, feelings and behaviours which influence culture
- Impacts understanding and acknowledgement of harm
- Influences professional response to harm and safeguarding decisions
- Prevent or ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Influences attitudes and beliefs which impact on public opinion and response
- Impacts legal and safeguarding outcomes for children and families
- Change or reinforce culture
- Impacts on a child's self-identity and development

Language, self-identify and development

"The way in which children and young people are described, spoken about and represented is important in how children and young people begin to develop a sense of self and an understanding of their behavior within society", McAdams 2011

"Narratives that are 'problem saturated' have an immense impact on the sense of self of children and young people, in particular there is evidence that they internalize these 'problem saturated' narratives", Looyeh, Kamali & Shafieian 2012

Language can criminalise the child and/or their family

- Kayden is selling drugs'
- 'Aimee is choosing to shoplift'
- 'Chris and his gang are responsible for the majority of burglaries in the area on the night in question'

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Language can adultify the child

“...the adultification of young black boys through language which fails to acknowledge the true status of the young person as a child”, Davis & Marsh 2020.

Language can dehumanize the child and/or their family

“The process of seeing an individual as less than human is initiated through the narratives developed about them”, Luna 2015

“Dehumanisation serves the function of inhibiting our moral compass whereby we are able to sit comfortably with judgements and actions which we otherwise would not reach if the whole person was seen”, Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta & DiTomasso 2014

How does the language we use give abusers more power?

- Allows the abuse to continue
- Reduces the likelihood of disclosures
- Stops us protecting children and reducing their vulnerability
- Unites the victim and the abuser

The things that you do make a difference

“... supporting practitioners through reflecting and challenging their own use of unhelpful terms, shaping the language used by practitioners and in turn aids in shaping an eventual shift at a whole system and service wide level”, Munro, 2011; Martin, 2016; MacEachern, Dennis, Jackson & Jindal-Snape 2019

Things to Remember

- Hear the child’s voice through the language you use
- Recognise the power that the language you use has
- Reframe
- Challenge
- Own your mistakes
- Hold each other to account
- Professional curiosity
- Are the harm and risk clear?
- Recognise the impact of trauma on behaviour
- Does the language that you’re using put responsibility for the abuse on the abuser or the child and their family?
- Description and context
- Consistency
- Check understanding
- Look after you!



Further information

- <https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2021/07/Making-Words-Matter-A-Practice-Knowledge-Briefing.pdf> - Making Words Matter, NWG, NHS & SPACE
- Terms & Conditions U Tube documentary- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kno5T4y5SBY>
- Urban Dictionary
- <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/child-exploitation-language-guide> - The Children's Society Appropriate Language Guide
- Emojipedia

Any comments, queries, questions or feedback please contact
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Thank you!