LANGUAGE TO AVOID

When talking with or about someone with a disability, a good rule of thumb is to use language that you would use if you were talking about yourself. Use everyday language. Avoid jargon.

Avoid	Why?	Use instead
Client/consumer	De-personalizes; implies the person has power to make changes or choices	Use person's name or person who uses supports/services.
My person or My group	Possessive or controlling	Use person's name or the person I support or this group.
Let or allow	Controlling; Implies power over	Use assisted or supported.
Transported	Objectifies	Use gave a ride or provided transportation for.
I bathed John or I dressed John or did hygiene	Implies you are doing something to John, not that he is a participant	Use I assisted John with bathing or I supported John to get dressed.
Functioning level	Disrespectful	Use how is John.
Refused or non-compliant	Disrespectful or controlling	Use chose not to or decided not to.
Toileting or toileted	Not common language; objectifies	Use person used the bathroom/restroom or I supported John to use the restroom.
Referring to a person as a behavior or a wheelchair (ie- I have 2 behaviors and 1 wheelchair in my group today)	Disrespectful; de-personalizes; objectifies	Use person's name and if needed, what supports he/she needs
Place someone (such as I placed John at Henderson home)	Disrespectful; not common language	Use John moved to Henderson home.
Outing, venture, out in the community	Not common language, leaves the person out	Use we went to the park, the movies, etc.
Training	Not common language, de-personalizes	Use teach, support.
I did a plan on somebody	De-personalizes; objectifies	Use I supported John in developing his plan.
Non-verbal person	Disrespectful; not person first	Use person who doesn't use words to communicate.