

Watch your language!

Changing the culture of a nursing home happens in many ways, some very obvious and some more subtle. One of the subtle ways in which we can change our focus from a medical model to a community or social model of operation is through our use of language. If we truly want to create homes for residents, staff, and families, we should use language we'd use in our own homes and the community at large.

Institutional Language

Ward, hall, wing, hall
Facility, building
Resident, patient
Diaper
Feeder, feeder table
Nurses' station
Admit
Discharge
Housekeeping/housekeepers
Wanderer
Bib
Resident lounge
Diabetic, quad, CVA
Lobby
Dietary services
Dining room
Nursing assistants
Resident council
Physical therapy
Speech therapy
Bed-bound, bed-ridden
Culture change
Problem resident
Agitated

() shift
Work the floor
Blind/deaf
Brain damaged
Confined to a wheelchair
Behavioral problem
Retarded

Home Language

Household, street, neighborhood, avenue
Home, community
Elder, elderly, older adults, seniors
Brief, pad, use brand name
Person who needs assistance with dining
Work area, desk
Move in, new elder
Move out
Homemakers, environmental services
Walking, elope
Napkin, smock, clothing protector
Living room
A person with diabetes, Mr./Mrs./Ms.
Common area, parlor, foyer, living room
Dining services
Café
Resident assist., certified assist., caregiver
Homeowners association
Exercise class
Speech class
Limited to bed, unable to be up
Person-centered care, person-directed care
Person with behavioral symptoms
Active, communicating or demonstrating
distress or stress
() care team
Elder care, resident care
Visually/hearing impaired
Brain injury
Uses a wheelchair
Needs behavioral support
Person with cognitive disability

