**Use of strength-based language in our work**

The way we communicate and the language we use can have a significant impact on the children, young people, and families we work with both now and when information and records are accessed long into the future.

We want our communications to empower the individuals they refer to and ensure they are both positive in tone and empowering.

There are many examples where words can be changed for alternatives which we would consider to be strength based.

To help you in further developing your skills in this area we wanted to provide some examples for you to use in your practice and report writing which we hope you find useful.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTH BASED TERMS** | **NEGATIVE TERMS** |
| Challenge | Problem |
| Living with / recovering from / experiencing | Suffering from |
| Engage | Intervene |
| Persistent / chooses not to / isn’t ready for / working to find ways to engage | Resistant |
| Barrier to change | Unfit |
| Protective / upset | Aggressive / angry / hostile |
| Taking action to . . . | Difficult family situations |
| Is clear what they want | Demanding |
| Finding their way | Rebellious |
| Enthusiastic / energetic | Hyperactive |
| Pays attention to many things / multitask | Lacks focus |
| Holds strong beliefs | Defiant |
| Values connections | Attention seeking |
| Instinctive | Impulsive |
| Reported | Allegation / disclosure |

As with all areas of our practice we are keen to develop and share good practice throughout our service. If you have additional strength-based terms which could be used in place of terms that could be construed as negative, please email [Amanda.cole@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.cole@westsussex.gov.uk) and we will regularly review and update the examples list.