



Trauma-Informed and Hope-Centered Language Checklist



Date: _____

HAS PERSON-CENTERED LANGUAGE BEEN USED?

- Focus on the person, not the condition, e.g. use 'person with a disability', not 'disabled person'.
- Focus on what individuals have real control over.

ARE THE CORE TENANTS OF THE SCIENCE OF HOPE INCLUDED?

- Use specific hope-centered language, e.g., goals, pathways, and willpower.
- Frame challenges as opportunities for progress rather than insurmountable problems.

HAS STRENGTHS-BASED LANGUAGE BEEN USED?

- Use empowering language, e.g. use 'youth with untapped potential', not 'at-risk youth'.
- Highlight assets before needs.

HAS INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE BEEN USED?

- Use culturally respectful and gender-neutral terms.
- Respect an individual's preferences; when possible, ask individuals how they prefer to be identified.

HAS ACCESIBLE LANGUAGE BEEN USED?

- Use clear, simple words.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms, e.g. use 'non-custodial parent' not 'NCP'.

HAS SENSATIONAL OR FEAR-BASED LANGUAGE BEEN AVOIDED?

- Use factual, neutral wording, e.g., use 'serious challenge', not 'devastating crisis'.
- Frame challenges as common experiences, not personal failures.

HAS LANGUAGE THAT REINFORCES STIGMA AND/OR SHAME AVOIDED?

- Avoid negative terms, e.g. use 'living with', not 'suffering from'.
- Use language that emphasizes support and solutions rather than blame.

