

Words Matter Worksheet

The words we use set the tone for our work and our interactions with each other and our customers. A new kind of “industrial” vocabulary has taken hold in healthcare and is creating barriers and changing the way we think about and talk about the people who are giving and seeking care.

Some examples of industrial language that is commonly used when talking about patients include:

“Compliant. Difficult patient. Non-productive time. Doctor's orders. No-show

What words do you use in your work, and in conversation with each other, that might be creating barriers to careful and kind care.

Pick a word/term that feels like an industrial healthcare word that you have experienced as a patient or that you have used in your work:

What is an Industrial word that I have heard, or that I use when talking about healthcare and our customers?	What does it mean? How does it impact my/my team's thinking and actions?	What could we use instead? And how might it change the way we think and speak about our customers?
E.g. Frequent flyer	A person who uses a lot of healthcare and has a lot of visits. Sometimes it feels derogatory because it suggests the patient is wrong to seek care.	“Regular customer” “Concerned patient” “A patient with unmet needs” Change: We will try to understand why this person keeps seeking services and why they think they are necessary. With that in mind, we can design better interventions to keep them out of the hospital, etc.