Discussion Guide for Buzzwords

This tool is a role-playing activity, designed to help child welfare workers and supervisors become more familiar with the process of recognizing and translating buzzwords into descriptive language.

Instructions

- ▶ Individually, in a small group, or with a partner, use these guidelines and questions to practice translating buzzwords into objective descriptions.
- ▶ Before you begin, review the list in the "Buzzwords: Moving to Behavioral Descriptors" tip sheet and mark buzzwords you have heard or seen. Add other commonly used buzzwords that do not appear on the list. Remember, buzzwords are words used to describe behaviors or observations; they are not stereotypes or slang words.
- ▶ Select one person in your group to act as a reporting party. The reporting party should describe an incident using buzzwords. "Ms. Smith" can serve as a generic example of the subject of the report.
- ▶ Designate another person in your group to act as the child welfare/intake worker and practice using all, or some, of the open-ended role-play questions below to clarify circumstances when buzzwords are used.
- ▶ Make sure every participant has the opportunity to play the part of the child welfare worker.
- ▶ If you are completing this exercise individually, imagine yourself in each role and record your answers accordingly.
- ▶ Use the space provided for each question to record the reporting party's responses.
- ▶ Once you have completed the role-playing activity, use the discussion questions below to talk about what you learned.

Role-Playing Questions

1. Can you give me an example of how Ms. Smith is (buzzword)?_____
   _____
   _____

2. When you say the child is (buzzword), what does that look like? _____
   _____
   _____

3. I can hear that you are (emotion). Tell me a little more about how Ms. Smith acts that makes her (buzzword). _____
   _____
   _____

4. I do not want to assume what you mean by (buzzword). Can you describe what you saw/experienced that makes him/her (buzzword)? _____
   _____
   _____

5. What you're saying sounds very concerning. Can you provide more details of the behaviors that make him/her (buzzword)? _____

_____

_____

6. You've just described him/her as (buzzword). Can you share an example(s) so I have a better understanding of your concern? _____

_____

_____

7. When you state that he/she is (buzzword), can you tell me more about the behaviors that can paint a better picture of what is meant by (buzzword)? _____

_____

_____

Discussion Questions

1. As a group:

   - Discuss which approaches were most effective in translating the buzzwords into behavioral descriptions and why. Record answer here: _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

   - List areas in your agency where you might find buzzwords (e.g., hotline/screening, case transfer summaries, court reports, supervision, etc.). _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

   - Brainstorm suggestions for next steps to implement this change in your agency. Record ideas here: _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

2. To improve child welfare decision-making, list what you are willing to do individually to ensure more descriptive language replaces unexamined, subjective buzzwords in child welfare reporting and documentation. _____

_____

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_____

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