

# LANGUAGE AND CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Importance of Language

The language we use is important to shape children's understanding of the world, as well as compassion and sensitivity towards themselves and others.



## Thoughtful Language

Understanding the impact that our words have leads to more thoughtful, and also more meaningful use of language.



## Positive Language

Using positive language to highlight a child's vibrant and free-spirited nature can have a positive impact on their self-esteem. It is better to say "They are an enthusiastic, energetic child" instead of "They are so crazy!" to avoid negative labeling.



## Negative Language

Describing positive, energetic behavior in children as "crazy" or "loony" may lead to confusion and upset later on when they understand the negative connotations of these words.



## Stigma

While overtly discriminatory language is now largely unacceptable, everyday language still contains words and terms that can have unintended negative effects on those living with mental health problems.

[www.emmapalmercooper.co.uk](http://www.emmapalmercooper.co.uk)



# LANGUAGE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



## Phrases to Avoid

Avoid using terms such as "crazy," "insane," or "psycho" as they can change views of the self and others, and unintentionally link negative experiences to mental health.



## Alternative Language

Use words like "wild" or "unbelievable" to express disbelief or negative behaviors, instead of using mental-health related language. For instance, you can use "This is wild because..." to convey surprise.



## Conscious Effort

Making a conscious effort to remove these terms from everyday language is important. It may take time, but it is necessary to create a more inclusive and understanding environment.



## Parents

Parents shape children's understanding of language and behavior. Being mindful of the language we use promotes a more respectful and inclusive community.



## Resources

On the next page are resources that explain more about using language about mental health, and suggestions for how to talk to children and young people about mental health.

# RESOURCES



## Mind Charity

<https://bit.ly/MindChildrenMH>



## MentalHealth.org

<https://bit.ly/MentalHealthlang>



## Guardian Blog

<https://bit.ly/GuardianPsychlang>



## Alternative words

Mental/Insane

Crazy

Psycho



wild, exciting

unexpected, unbelievable

acting oddly or unusually



## Contact

Feel free to contact me for more information, explainers or resources:

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