



MIND YOUR P's, Q's AND R's

If you are a recipient of “human services”, a parent of a child with a disability or work in the human service field you quickly realize there is a language used that is often hard to follow or understand. Unintentionally, human service workers use acronyms and terms that can be confusing or misleading. There is an assumption that the general public should be able to understand what we are trying to say. For example you may attend an IEP meeting that discusses APE, OT and SLP services especially if they need EI. To work in the field you may even need to be a QIDP. Phew!!

Like acronyms, words have evolved over time. The first recording of the “r-word” (retarded) in relation to being a description of someone who is “mentally slow” was in 1895. By the 1960's the word had taken on a partially derogatory meaning and rapidly became a term of mockery that was frequently interchanged with words such as idiot or stupid. Even today the r-word is often used as part of everyday language with little regard for the pain and damage it causes people —and the exclusion it promotes in our society.

Words are powerful. “The inaccurate use of medical diagnosis perpetuates negative stereotypes and reinforces an incredibly powerful attitudinal barrier. Disability diagnoses are often used to define a person's value and potential. Too often decisions about how a person will be educated, whether they will work or not, how they will live and what services are offered are based on the person's medical diagnosis instead of the person's unique gifts, individual strengths and needs.” (Kathie Snow)



The words we use unintentionally create barriers and misunderstandings. Even the word “program” promotes the idea of exclusion and separateness. In my work providing post-secondary opportunities at a local community college I fight hard that we not be described as a “program.” The MAICEI (Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative), another great acronym, provides students with disabilities the opportunity to go to college to take classes and participate in all aspects of college life. In this case describing MAICEI as a “program” implies something separate, segregated and for only those who qualify, the exact opposite of what the initiative is trying to achieve – full inclusiveness.

People with every good intention refer to students as the “MAICEI students” rather than being called by their names: Ethan, Anthony and Loren.

Labelling groups of people with disabilities in this way can create a slippery slope that leads to incorrect assumptions, further stigmatization and separateness.

All language conveys a message. Language is important. Unfortunately the language we use often obscures or complicates what we are trying to say. It is time to recognize the power of language, be more conscious of how we talk and change the way we think and speak.

Written by Ross Hooley

People who fill roles that are valued by others (example: photographer, employee, co-worker, voter, musician, volunteer, college student) will be granted the good things of life.

Another successful golf tournament was held on August 30, 2021. The tournament is held in memory of Louis Nisenbaum, the founding Executive Director of **The Nemasket Group**. Lou believed that all people, including those with disabilities deserve to be leading and a life envied by others. All these years later, the organization holds those same values and beliefs. **The Nemasket Group envisions all people leading successful lives that are rich and meaningful.**



Louis Nisenbaum
1948-2011
Gone but not forgotten!

The success of our golf tournament relies upon so, so many. Our Golf Committee would like to thank our golfers for being among our many generous supporters, our dedicated volunteers for giving of themselves, and staff of the Bay Club.

The Golf Committee would like to acknowledge our many major sponsors including BayCoast Bank, Bristol County Savings Bank, Tichon Seafood, Ray & Helen Killian, Primo Medical Group, Nordic Inc., Jeannie & Matey Smith, Ann Webster, Ray & Sue Drouin, DeBross Hathaway Marvel & Seafuels Marine, Barry Investment Advisors, Ocean Marine Insurance, Hans and Ann Ziegler, Robertson's GMC, Sylvia Group, Frank & Barbara Resnek, Chris & Patricia Arnold, and Shearwater.



Lastly, The Nemasket Group is eternally grateful to have a handful of people committed to the success of the golf tournament. Our 2021 Golf Committee members were John Bodenmann, Bob Marckini, Diane Tichon, Liz Pappas, Amy Cornell, Nicki Demakis, and Dustin Green.



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Did you know that when you shop for at smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2563405, AmazonSmile donates to The Nemasket Group, Inc? It's easy and helps our community!

The second week of September is recognized as **Direct Support Professional Recognition Week**. It is a weeklong celebration of the accomplishments of Direct Support Professionals not only across the country, but also right here in Massachusetts. One week is not nearly enough to properly thank our Direct Support Professionals for the selfless work they do 365 days a year. These dedicated professionals work tirelessly every day of the year providing thoughtful and compassionate supports to individuals and their families that receive services from **The Nemasket Group**. We rely upon Direct Support Professionals not only to care for people but also to provide essential support to help keep them connected to their family and community, while enabling them to lead successful lives that are rich with meaningful roles, and thereby opening doors to "the good things of life."



DIRECT SUPPORT
PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION WEEK
SEPTEMBER 12-18, 2021

