

Reframing Language

“Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me”, is an old saying and mantra that is used as a defensive method to push back at hurtful insults. In truth, words are powerful and when used for evil, can be devastating and cut far deeper than bones. Words can be an expression of a anger or negative thoughts, that become a belief or mindset about ourselves, a particular situation, or group of people. A negative thought spoken out loud can not only insult someone but can prevent us from seeing past stereotypes. These feelings can prevent us from providing support, building and developing relationships or partnerships.

Reframing is a restating a negative word or thought and making it more positive. **Reframing** is a powerful tool to help us begin changing our mindset by changing our language.

The following activity can be done as a (15 mins) team building exercise and should be followed up by the stereotyping activity. In a presentation, pull out a few examples to embed in PowerPoint (5-7 mins). Printable question and question/answer sheet provided.

Reframing Exercise – Questions Sheet

1. They are unreasonable	
2. They look down on women.	
3. They are lazy.	
4. They are in denial about their problem.	
5. They are punitive with their children.	
6. They have too many kids.	
7. They don't plan ahead.	
8. They expect too much.	
9. They don't get involved with their children's schools.	
10. They let their children behave inappropriately.	
11. They are never on time.	
12. They don't do enough to turn their lives around.	

Adapted from: Multicultural Early Childhood Team Training Leadership Institute & PEATC.

Reframing Exercise- ANSWERS

1. They are unreasonable	They are passionate.
2. They look down on women.	Cultural positions are followed with respect to women.
3. They are lazy.	Life is more than work.
4. They are in denial about their problem.	They have a different outlook on life.
5. They are punitive with their children.	Teaching children to behave appropriately is a parent's responsibility.
6. They have too many kids.	Family is what gives life meaning.
7. They don't plan ahead.	It is important to be spontaneous & creative.
8. They expect too much.	They have high expectations.
9. They don't get involved with their children's schools.	A parent has many demands on their time and chooses to focus on home.
10. They always look to others to solve their problems.	Guidance is needed to find appropriate services.
11. They are never on time.	Punctuality is not important.
12. They spend money foolishly	Enjoyment is important to them.

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