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# Culture Change in Practice

## Resisting Resistance

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**"Culture Change in Practice" is our own weblog where people can become involved in a conversation about Culture Change as it is practiced by professionals in real nursing homes. Feel free to join the conversation, or post a comment about something you have learned on your journey.**

[www.culturechangenow.com/weblog.html](http://www.culturechangenow.com/weblog.html)

With change comes some resistance. Because culture change in an organization needs to be deep and will effect everyone, it is important to address resistance as soon as detected so as not to allow it to grow and spread.

One good way to find resistance and make it work for your organization is to listen for key words that are sweeping generalizations like "never," "always," "everything," "everyone," "every time," etc. These words signal some strong emotions brewing as well as situations that are not being properly addressed.

We tend to use broad generalizations when we are trying to make a case for something we feel strongly about. Often those words are paired with other generalizations such as "He always makes a big deal out of it," or "She never helps out," or "every time I make an effort nobody seems to care." We exaggerate in an effort to get some attention for our issue or to try to use such statements to get the last word on an issue – "That will never work. End of conversation."

The other side, of course, is that positive generalizations can be tricky too. "This way is much better," or "Everyone likes it that way," or "Everything will be easier" can deny some of the struggles folks face and more complex emotions that need to be worked through. This can stir up resistance.

When you hear this sort of language, it should be a cue that you are dealing with a situation that needs to be looked at more deeply. Ask the person to clarify his or her situation with specifics – When exactly? Who exactly? What are or are not the specific actions? Describe the situation in more detail. There is no way "nobody ever helps out" can be remedied without specifics. And then, make it a point to move away from that sort of language to enhance communication.

As a culture change organization moves toward individualized care, we can see that all sorts of different situations benefit from individualized attention as well. So, like person-centered care, taking the time to make sure our words portray our thoughts and feelings accurately and in detail may take a little extra thought and effort but the benefit to progress will be well worth it.

Here is an activity that can help make folks in your organization aware of such language and how to use it as a door to open into deeper understanding and communication.

**Read or paraphrase the blog to introduce the topic. Then, ask for examples of these sorts of generalizations, perhaps things people have been hearing as changes are happening in the organization. List them on a flip chart for everyone to read. Ask people to pair up and each pair take one of the examples. Give them a few minutes to talk about the statement, where it might be heard and what kinds of emotions are behind it. Then, each pair should role-play a conversation about getting to the root of the statement in front of the whole group. When all the pairs have had a turn, take a few minutes to highlight some of the techniques used to get to the bottom of the situation.**

