

# Ten Types of Words to Avoid

- ◆ **Jargon-** Using the technical language of your profession is confusing to those who don't use it everyday. Readers become alienated, and judge you as inconsiderate. Save the *perp*, the *FC*, the *CY-47*, and *PACWIS* for worker notes, not formal documentation and business letters.
- ◆ **Euphemisms-** Confusion results from glossing over the negative concepts in our profession. Euphemistic language weakens the images in our writing, as well. Avoid those *engage in* and *dealing with the issue* expressions that pervade our records and cloud the significance of what's taken place in the case.
- ◆ **Idioms-** The language of a particular community or people can be interesting and colorful, but tends to be confusing to outsiders. Regional and childhood idioms can cause others to lower their opinion of you and your work product.
- ◆ **Slang-** If it is not in the dictionary, avoid using it.
- ◆ **Profanity-** The impact of the off-color remark or word can be offset by the offense taken. Unless quoting an irate client, or it's germane to the issue, drop it for another expression.
- ◆ **Office or Company Specific Phrases-** Much like the professional jargon, it's important to realize that others are not familiar with your lingo. SCOH is not a familiar term to those in the western part of the state. But Services to Children in their Own Homes is one that's understood by all.
- ◆ **Red Flag Words-** Referring to a woman in the office as a "girl" might be offensive. Suggesting that the "boys" in the office will move the desk and file cabinet might not get the help you had hoped to get!
- ◆ **Vague or Abstract Language-** In writing and service plans, we need to be as specific as we can. The job is hard enough without having to quibble over the meaning of an objective that could have been spelled out in concrete, measurable terms.
- ◆ **Overly Complex Words-** Don't go for the \$100 word when a \$5 one does the job. You'll do well if you remember to **write to express, not to impress**.
- ◆ **Cliches-** Worn out expressions lend little to your writing, and make you appear trite and hackneyed.

Source: [Smart Moves](#), Deep and Sussman