



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

RESOURCE

“Say it Better” Student Worksheet

A reflection and activity sheet to help you think about language and mental health.

Step 1: Recognize Language

What are some things you’ve heard people say about mental health that might be harmful or misleading? This could be at school, on social media, or in everyday conversations.

Write a few examples below:

Step 2: Language Check-in

Review the examples in the table below and discuss as a class or in small groups. Think about how these phrases can be harmful and how we can say things in more supportive ways.

Common Phrases or Language	Why It’s Harmful or Stigmatizing	A More Supportive Alternative
“I’m so OCD about my desk.”	Minimizes OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), which is a serious mental health condition.	“I really like to keep things organized.”
“She’s being bipolar!”	Misuses a clinical diagnosis as an insult or casual description.	“She seems to be having a tough day emotionally.”
“He’s totally psycho.”	Dehumanizes and reinforces fear around mental illness.	“He seems really upset or overwhelmed.”

Step 3: Practice Reframing

Choose at least one phrase you've heard or used before and practice saying it better.

Phrase I've heard or used:

Why it might be harmful or misleading:

What I could say instead:

Step 4: Reflect and Share

Answer one or more of the following prompts:

Why do you think people use these kinds of phrases?

How can changing our words help others feel more supported?

What could our class or school do to change the conversation around mental health?

“Say It Better” Badge (Optional)

Cut out and decorate your badge below. Use colors, drawings, or symbols that matter to you.

Keep it somewhere as a reminder that *your words matter*.

My words matter.
I choose to
SAY IT BETTER.