

Donation Sensitivity Education

Newsletter Article

Power of Words in Donation and Transplantation

Language sensitivity plays an important role in the misconceptions and fears about organ, tissue and eye donation. Avoiding terminology that causes concern among families and the general public, not only helps further their understanding but also improves acceptance of the donation process.

Many terms may be confusing and carry negative connotations. Some terms like “Harvest” can even be offensive to donor families. It is very important to use correct terms when communicating with public and in clinical settings. For instance, “harvest” and “cadaveric donor” are outdated terms and can be considered insensitive to donors and families. It is preferred to use the terms “recover” or “procure” and “deceased donor”. Please reference the table on “Recommended Terminology and Terminology to Avoid”.

At LifeNet Health, our priority is to honor our donors and donor families. It is important that we use the right words to communicate; to be sensitive and compassionate to those who have given the gifts of donation and to their loved ones. Donor sensitivity embodies respect in all that we do at LifeNet Health as well as that of our partners. As partners in donation, it is important to us that we share with you our experience and expertise when it comes to the appropriate, sensitive language to convey empathy and compassion to the families and friends of donors.

Recommended Terminology	Terminology to Avoid
Donor / Deceased Donor	Cadaver
Recover	Harvest / Take
Donated tissue / Gifts	Body parts
Delivery after death	Stillborn
Died by suicide	Committed suicide
Fetus / Fetal Demise	Pediatric Donor

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