

WORDS MATTER

What we say and how we say it makes a difference to our patients with substance use disorder.



NON-STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

- Person with a substance use disorder
- Babies born with an opioid dependency
- Substance use disorder or addiction
- Use, misuse
- Risky, unhealthy, or heavy use
- Person in recovery
- Abstinent
- Not drinking or taking drugs
- Treatment or medication for addiction
- Medication for Opioid Use Disorder/Alcohol Use Disorder
- Positive, negative (toxicology screen results)



STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

- Substance abuser or drug abuser
- Alcoholic
- Addict
- User
- Abuser
- Drunk
- Junkie
- Addicted babies/born addicted
- Drug habit
- Abuse
- Problem
- Clean
- Substitution or replacement therapy
- Medication-Assisted Treatment
- Clean, dirty