



PROMPT TN

Preventing Rural Opioid Misuse through Partnerships and Training in Tennessee



Words Matter: How We Talk about Substance Use Disorder and Addiction

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Disclosures



- Dr. Ginley has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Objectives



- Discuss background of stigmatizing language in substance use
- Recognize three stigmatizing assumptions related to treatment for persons with substance use disorders
- Review steps we can make to reduce use of stigmatizing language

Stigma Through Language



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Why do we have so many stigmatizing terms

- Historical context
- Professional medical organizations
- Policy



Stigmatizing Assumption: Ambivalence about change



- “treatment resistance”
- “drop out”

Stigmatizing assumption: Treatment is always necessary



- “treatment nonadherence”
- Treatment focused on empathy leads to more change than treatment focused on confrontation

Stigmatizing assumption: Abstinence only

- “relapse”
- “falling off the wagon”



What can we do?



- Check our stigmatizing assumptions
- Learn new language
 - Recovery-oriented language
 - People-first language
 - Health-focused language

SAY THIS

Person with a substance use disorder

Person in recovery

Person living with an addiction

Person arrested for a drug violation

Chooses not to at this point

Medication is a treatment tool

Had a setback

Maintained recovery

Positive drug screen

NOT THAT

Addict, junkie, druggie

Ex-addict

Battling/suffering from an addiction

Drug offender

Non-compliant / bombed out

Medication is a crutch

Relapsed

Stayed clean

Dirty drug screen



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From <https://www.healthynh.org>

Conclusions

- Remember our history
- Check out assumptions
- Focus on recovery and health
- Put people first
- Convey hope



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