



# Drug Related Stigma

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# What is Stigma?

Stigma involves negative attitudes or discrimination against someone based on a distinguishing characteristic, such as a mental illness, health condition, or disability.

Social stigmas can also be related to other characteristics including gender, sexuality, race, religion, and culture.



# Stigma Occurs on Multiple Levels

**Intrapersonal or Internalized**: self-imposed stigma

- "I'm never going to be good enough."

**Interpersonal**: Stigma from others

- "They're just a junkie."

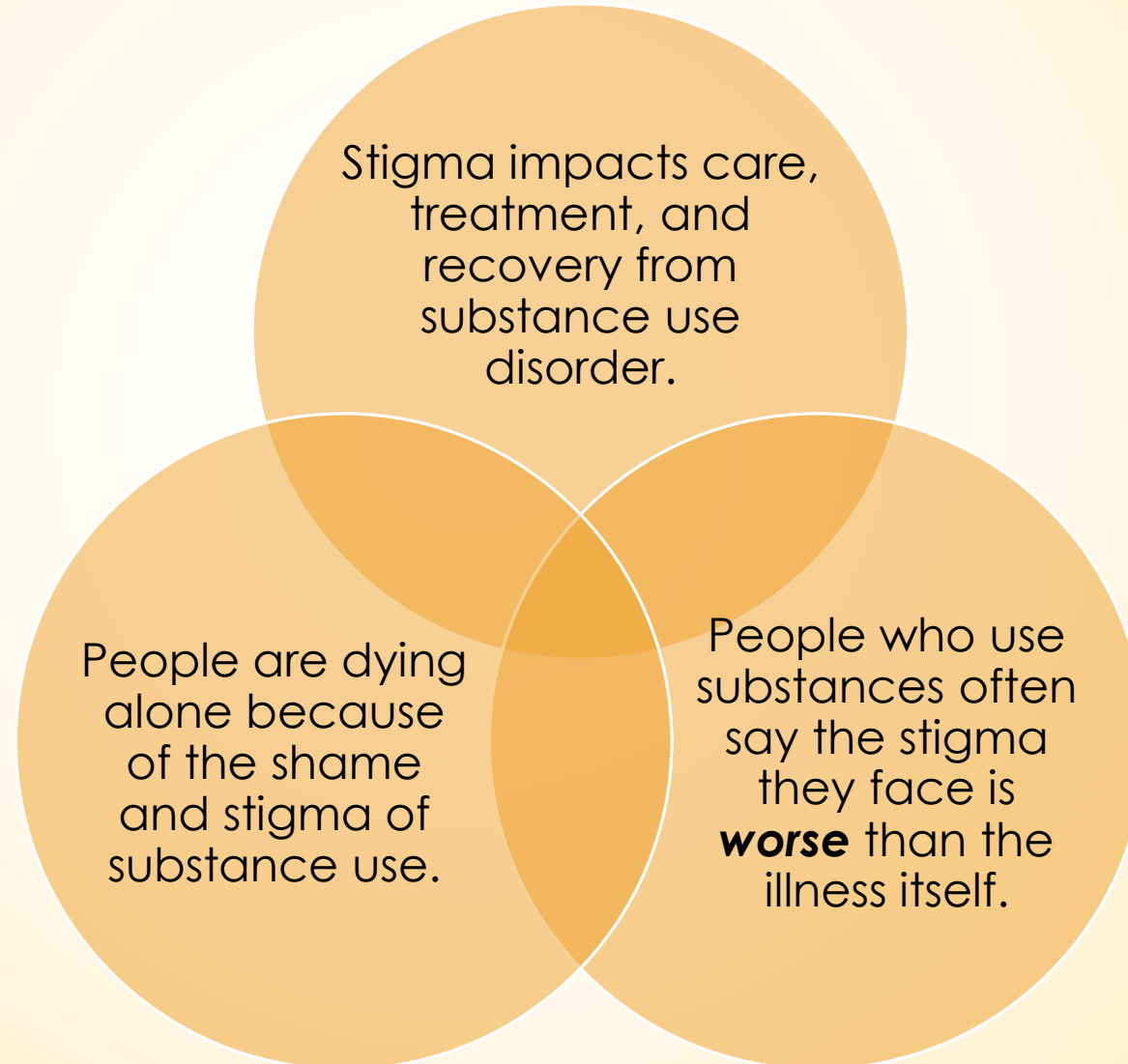
**Structural or Institutional**: Discriminatory or exclusionary policies, laws, and systems.

- Non-violent drug possession felony (ex: housing, food, college, travel, voting, etc.)

**By Association**: Being married to someone either is in active use or former use, working with people who use drugs



# The Impact of Stigma





# What Does Stigma Look Like?

Biases

Anger/Fear

Avoiding

Discriminating

Shaming

Stereotyping



# Approaches to Reduce Stigma

## Know the FACTS

- Educate yourself about substance use and substance use disorder!

## Be aware of your attitudes and behaviors

- We can change the way we think and act. See people as individuals, not as labels or stereotypes.

## Focus on ANY positive change

- Recognize and applaud people who are making positive changes despite their challenges.



# Choose Your Words Carefully

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A way to reduce stigma is by making changes to the way we speak about people who use substances and the substance use itself.

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Use people-first language. Ex: A person who uses drugs. A person experiencing homelessness.

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Use language that reflects the medical nature of substance use disorders: Avoid terms that suggest that addiction is a moral or personality failure; rather than a diagnosed medical issue.

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Use language promotes recovery: optimistic, supportive, and respectful of one's autonomy.

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Avoid slang and idioms: these terms can have negative meanings and be stigmatizing.



“Protest any labels that turn people into things. Words are important. If you want to care for something, you call it a flower; if you want to kill something, you call it a weed.”

– Don Coyhis

# THE LANGUAGE OF STIGMA

S.U.D. (SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER) EDITION

TERMS TO DISCARD:	REPLACE WITH:
ADDICT	PERSON LIVING WITH S.U.D.
DRUG USER SUBSTANCE ABUSER	PERSON WHO USES DRUGS
CLEAN SAMPLE DIRTY TEST	POSITIVE FOR DRUGS NEGATIVE FOR DRUGS
CLEAN	ABSTINENT
ADDICTION DRUG HABIT/PROBLEM	S.U.D. CHAOTIC DRUG USE
NON-COMPLIANT	NOT ENGAGED
RELAPSE/SLIP	RETURN TO USE
BATTLING ADDICTION	LIVING WITH S.U.D.
NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME (NAS)	NEONATAL OPIOID WITHDRAWAL (NOW)
ADDICTED BABY	SUBSTANCE EXPOSED
REPLACEMENT THERAPY	O.U.D. MEDICATION MAT

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Thank you!

Comments & Questions

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