

USING NON-STIGMATIZING RECOVERY LANGUAGE

Words to avoid

Addict
 Alcoholic
 Drug problem, drug habit
 Drug abuse
 Drug abuser
 Clean
 Dirty
 Relapse
 A clean drug screen
 A dirty drug screen
 Former/reformed addict/alcoholic
 Opioid replacement, methadone maintenance
 Enabler/Enabling/Co-Dependent

Words to use

Person with substance use disorder
 Person with alcohol use disorder
 Substance use disorder
 Drug misuse, harmful use
 Person with substance use disorder
 In recovery/Not using drugs or drinking
 In active illness
 Return to active illness
 Testing negative for substance use
 Testing positive for substance use
 Person in recovery, person in long-term recovery
 Medications for addiction treatment
 Loving someone with unintentional consequences

Language of Recovery

Current Terminology	Alternative Terminology
Treatment is the goal; Treatment is the only way into Recovery	Treatment is an opportunity for initiation into recovery (one of multiple pathways into recovery)
Untreated Addict/Alcoholic	Individual not yet in Recovery
Substance Abuse	Substance Use Disorder/Addiction/ Substance Misuse
Drug of Choice / Abuse	Drug of Use
Denial	Ambivalence
Relapse Prevention	Recovery Management
Pathology Based Assessment	Strength / Asset Based Assessment
Focus is on total abstinence from all illicit and non-prescribed substances the CLINICIAN identifies	Focus on the drug CLIENT feels is creating the problems
A Drug is a Drug is a Drug	Each illicit substance has unique interactions with the brain; medication if available is appropriate.
Relapse	Recurrence/Return to Use
Relapse is part of Recovery	Recurrence/Return to Use may occur as part of the disease
Clean / Sober	Drug Free / Free from illicit and non-prescribed medications
Self Help Group	Mutual Aid Group
Drug Overdose	Drug Poisoning
Graduate from Treatment	Commence Recovery