To reduce stigma and help people get the treatment they need, avoid these all-too-common language mistakes:

**DON’T SAY:**
- Drug abuse, addiction
- Junkie, addict, crackhead, druggie
- Ex-addict, former addict
- Dirty, clean
- Opiate substitution treatment
- Clean, sober
- Relapse

**SAY:**
- Substance use disorder
- Person with a substance use disorder, active drug user
- Person in recovery
- Positive, negative drug screen
- Medication assisted treatment
- In recovery
- Recurrence of use

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**WORDS MATTER**

Stigmatizing language perpetuates negative stereotypes, spreads misinformation, and keeps people with substance use disorders from seeking help.

FROM THE 2016 SURGEON GENERAL’S REPORT ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND HEALTH

78 people die every day in the United States from an opioid overdose.

Only 20 percent of people who currently need treatment for opioid use disorders are receiving it.

Reasons for not seeking treatment:
- Lack of access to treatment
- Fear of rejection by family and friends
- Fear of losing their job
- Fear of failure in their effort to change