


The Language of Stigma

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• CHECK IN

- Any questions or concerns about launch this month
- Anything else on your mind?

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Learning Objectives




By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Recall the nature of stigma and some of the challenges in addressing it
- Summarize the negative impact of stigma on accessing care and long term recovery
- Recognize how the language we use has an impact on treatment success

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Why is it Important to Talk About Bias and Stigma?




Stigma – a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance/quality or person


- Shame does not motivate positive change
- Judgment increases the burden on people who are already suffering
- Stigma is literally a killer
- **BUT WHY IS IT SO HARD**

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Function of Stigma and Stereotyping



- Stigma – Sorting people into in-groups and out-groups
- Social process by which social groups are devalued rejected and excluded
- Stereotyping
 - Negative, group-based attitudes and discrimination are justified by a widely held, oversimplified image of a person



Quotes on the Noise, PowerPoint

Stigma and prejudice - one animal or two? Phelan, Link and Dovidio. Soc Sci Med 2008 67(3): 358-367

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Why Do We Stereotype and Label?



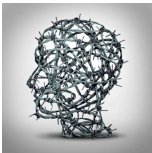
- Blaming individuals is easier than contemplating societal issues
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Structural oppression and white supremacy
- Inequality
- Categorizing helps the brain to make sense of complex information
 - “I’ve seen one, so I’ve seen them all ”

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What Stigma Does to People



- Exquisite sensitivity to rejection
- Social withdrawal and avoidance of opportunities for help
- Low self esteem/suicidal ideation
- Actual experience of devaluation and discrimination, horizontal hostility




Madness and Depression, openDemocracy, PowerPoint


Stigma and Treatment Keyes, Hatzembuehler et al, Am J of Epi 2010, 172(12) 1364-1372 2010
Stigma Power. Link and Phelan, Soc Sci and Med 103 (2014) 24-32

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Enduring Consequences for Clients



- Challenges to seeking care
- Higher perception of societal stigma directly reduced the likelihood of accessing services
- Impacts on successful recovery
- Stigma continues to impact people who are in recovery and threatens their success




Dr. Deb, PowerPoint


On stigma and its consequences. Evidence from a Longitudinal Study of Men with Dual Diagnosis of Mental Illness and Substance Abuse. Link, Streuning et al. J of Heal and Soc Beh 1997, Vol 88 (June) 177-190

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ADAI Washington State Syringe Exchange Health Survey: 2017 Results



- Reasons for not getting needed medical care
- 33% of respondents “don’t trust/like doctors”
- 26% “don’t want to be lectured/judged about drug use”




ACTUpMarchforsyringexchange, Kaysee Risk

<https://fdai.uw.edu/pubu/pdf/2017syringexchangehealthsurvey.pdf>

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Physicians’ Beliefs




- 37% of primary care physicians believed that drug addiction was “somewhat or a lot” a result of moral failings
- Simultaneously 87% reported drug addiction as a disease

Physicians’ Beliefs about the Nature of Addiction: A Survey of Primary Care Physicians and Psychiatrists. Lawrence et al, Am J of Addictions, 22, 255-260 2013

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Clinical Impact of Biased Language




- Myth of medical record as objective space
 - We can inadvertently pass on stigma in our chart note and perpetuate clinician bias
- Choices in words, descriptive language and client quotes
 - Directly impact future treatment decisions and quality of care

Does it matter how we refer to individuals with substance-related conditions? A randomized study of two commonly used terms. Kelly and Wetherhoff, Int J Drug Pol, 21(1) May 2010
Do words matter? Stigmatizing Language and the Transmission of Bias in the Medical record. Goddu et al, J Gen Intern Med, 33(5), January, 2018

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Unconscious Bias and Language



- Sometimes just the words we use have a bigger impact than we think
- A commonplace term to us might evoke prejudice and bias in others
- Words have powerful positive and negative associations that evoke feeling and action


Substance use, recovery and linguistics: The impact of word choice on explicit and implicit bias. Ashford et al, Drug And Alc Dep, 189, June 2018

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Combating Stigma

CF/AMP

- Let's look at what we know about OUD and the people who have the disease
- Reflect our compassion and respect by speaking mindfully ourselves
- Encourage our colleagues to use less stigmatizing language



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Any thoughts about Stigma

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- How have you seen this impact clients/recovery?

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Internalized Stigma

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Stigma becomes personally relevant – label is taken onto oneself

↓

Response – attempts to avoid stigma; social withdrawal, concealment of problems, denial of condition

↓

Negative consequences – decreased social support, decreased likelihood of recovery

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Person-First Language

CF/AMP

+ Helpful	Person with opioid use disorder (OUD), patient, client	- Stigmatizing	Junkie, addict, drug abuser, substance abuser
	Person in long term recovery, addiction survivor		Recovering addict

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Attribution Theory

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- When looking at others, we assign their behavior to character
 - We focus on internal drivers over situational/external factors
 - It's easy to see behaviors, hard to see context/history
- BUT we judge ourselves by our intentions
 - We understand the complexity of our own behavior – "Oh, I never meant to..."

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Circumstances, Not Character

CF/AMP


+ Helpful	Formerly incarcerated person	- Stigmatizing	Ex-convict, felon, offender, criminal
	Victim of sex trafficking, person who does sex work		Prostitute, escort

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A Disease is Not a Choice

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- Opioid Prescribing in the USA 2018¹
 - Still double the rate of 1999
 - 5% of world's population, 80% of opioid prescriptions
- 53% of people who use heroin and 10-20% prescribed opioid pain meds develop OUD²
- Important factors
 - Biology
 - Environment
 - Exposure



1 Doctors And Dentists Still Flooding U.S. With Opioid Prescriptions NPR 07/17/20
2 OUD epidemiology, pharmacology, clinical manifestations, course, screening, assessment and Diagnosis Eric Strain and Andrew Saxon, Up to date, 12/2019

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Non-Shaming Descriptions

CF/AMP

+ Helpful	Using prescribed opioids not as directed/more than prescribed	- Stigmatizing	Prescription drug abuser
	Substance use disorder, chronic brain disease		Substance abuse, substance dependence

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Opioid Medications are not the Same as Street Drugs

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Definition of Addiction: "compulsively using a drug despite harm"

Taking a prescribed medication to manage a chronic illness does NOT meet that definition

Medications are **SAFE** and **EFFECTIVE**

New England Journal of Medicine

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Humanizing Comments

CF/AMP

+ Helpful	In recovery, disease in remission	- Stigmatizing	He's clean
	Active addiction, problem substance use		Drug habit

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Chronic Disease Management

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- People with any serious health condition deserve to
 - Understand the condition and treatment options
 - Understand they can make choices about care
 - Be actively involved in making decisions
- Full spectrum of support services tailored to patient's choice should be offered

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Striving not to Judge

CF/AMP


+ Helpful	Intoxicated	- Stigmatizing	Wasted, strung out, high, partying
	Recurrence of use/symptoms		She's relapsed

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National Academy of Sciences
Consensus Report April 2019

CHAMP

- OUD is a treatable chronic disease
- FDA-approved medications to treat OUD are effective and save lives
- Long term retention on MOUD is associated with improved outcomes



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Supportive Clinical Language

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+ Helpful	Medication treatment/ Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)	- Stigmatizing	Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)/Opioid Substitution Therapy
	Urine Drug Screen negative/positive for...		Dirty/clean Urine Drug Screen

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Discussion

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- Why is it hard for us (and our colleagues and our patients) to change our language around substance use disorders?
- Did you find any of the suggested language odd or awkward (or stupid!)?
- Recovery Dialects handout

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Questions & Discussion



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!

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Please complete evaluation in chatbox

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