

SAY THIS, NOT THAT

When Discussing Opioid or Substance Use Disorders



Words are powerful. They can contribute to stigma and create barriers to accessing effective treatment. Use first-person language and focus on the person, not the disorder. Here's a helpful guide when discussing opioid or other substance use disorders.

Avoid These Terms:

Use These Instead:

● Addict, user, drug abuser, junkie

● Person with opioid use disorder or opioid addiction, patient

● Addicted baby

● Baby born with neonatal abstinence syndrome

● Opioid abuse or opioid dependence

● Opioid use disorder

● Problem

● Disease

● Habit

● Drug addiction

● Clean or dirty urine test

● Negative or positive urine drug test

● Opioid substitution or replacement therapy

● Opioid agonist treatment

● Relapse

● Return to use

● Treatment failure

● Treatment attempt

● Being clean

● Being in remission or recovery